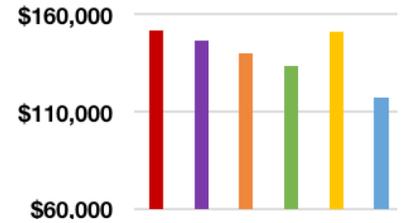


## TRENDLINES

Net service revenue



According to Zweig Group's 2016 Financial Performance Survey, smaller firms generated more net service revenue per employee than larger firms. Firms with **1-24 employees** generated the most revenue with \$152K per employee. Firms with **25-49 employees**, **50-99 employees**, and **100-249 employees** generated \$146K, \$140K, and \$133K per employee respectively. Firms between **250-499 employees** bucked the trend, generating more than \$150K per employee. Firms with **more than 500 employees** generated the least revenue per employee with \$117K. (Special discount to TZL subscribers: Use code **SRVY35off** to order surveys at 35 percent off at [zweigroup.myshopify.com/collections/frontpage](http://zweigroup.myshopify.com/collections/frontpage))

## Getting something done

“There are dreamers and planners, and then there are those who actually get something done. For every one of those who gets something done, there are 20 who can only talk about it.”



Mark Zweig

### EDITORIAL

There are dreamers and planners, and then there are those who actually get something done. For every one of those who gets something done, there are 20 who can only talk about it.

Why do these people plan but fail to implement their ideas? Here are my thoughts:

- 1) If you don't try, you won't fail.** Failure isn't fun. I think this is the number one reason people don't chase their dreams. By not actually doing anything, they can maintain the fantasy about "what if" it's successful. This fantasy is what drives them. Doing it could potentially ruin it. So don't do anything.
- 2) It's hard work!** The "doing" part takes time and real effort. A lot of people don't want to put that out. Maybe they are lazy. Perhaps they are undisciplined. Or they may not actually have any time to devote to the implementation of whatever it is. But the bottom line is the same. Nothing gets done.
- 3) They have gotten by without "doing" for so long – why "do?"** These people still got their pay increased and positions elevated without being doers. They are well-educated and well-spoken, though, and that has been enough to distinguish them from their peers and move up.
- 4) They are "above" doing.** Some people think because they have a certain position in the firm, or degrees and registrations, or ownership, that they no longer have to do anything. They can just "direct others." It's not the way to garner respect from your team, however.
- 5) They never learned how to "do."** People who didn't grow up on a farm or have parents who

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

## MORE COLUMNS

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# Conference call: Tim Carl

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## BUSINESS NEWS

**MIYAMOTO ESTABLISHES D.C. OFFICE** Miyamoto International, the global earthquake and structural engineering firm, opened an office in Washington, D.C. this week. The firm has added eight offices globally since 2014 and its presence in Washington, D.C. positions Miyamoto at the forefront of the international development community.

"We recently executed the most difficult programs in post-disaster Haiti and Nepal and disaster reduction programs in Latin America. We are known experts in urban disaster reduction, response, and reconstruction," said Miyamoto CEO Kit Miyamoto. "Our D.C. office enables us to work with the international development clients more effectively. We see tremendous opportunities to serve and empower vulnerable communities worldwide."

Elizabeth Petheo, formerly with the World Bank, will lead the office.

Petheo is widely respected in the international development community for creating and executing world-class development programs and initiatives. She brings extensive experience leading high-profile initiatives in complex global environments, including Haiti post-earthquake and Sri Lanka during the civil war. An alumna of MIT, she said she welcomes the opportunity to join Miyamoto, an industry leader.

"I was drawn to the challenge of advancing Miyamoto's mission of making the world a better, safer place, and look forward to new opportunities for international development partnerships for disaster-risk reduction," said Petheo.

Miyamoto International provides critical services that sustain industries and safeguard communities around the world. The company has 19 offices in 12 countries worldwide.

**AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC CELEBRATES WITH GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR ITS FIRST MAJOR EXPANSION, PACIFIC VISIONS** The Aquarium of the Pacific, one of the nation's largest and most-visited aquariums, celebrated its future Pacific Visions wing with a groundbreaking ceremony today and announced Clark Construction as the general contractor. The 29,000-square-foot, two-story sustainable structure is designed by the San Francisco-based architecture and design firm **EHDD**. The first major expansion project ever undertaken by the nonprofit

aquarium, Pacific Visions, slated to open in late 2018/early 2019, will be the new focal point of the institution and will engage the public with epic ocean stories and inspire them to create a better future for our planet. The main aquarium building will remain operational throughout the construction phase.

"Pacific Visions will create a forum for the important issues affecting our ocean. We are honored to be working with the Aquarium of the Pacific and aim to contribute to the inspirational aspect of the new wing by evoking the depth and mystery of the ocean through architecture, particularly the dynamic glass facade," said Duncan Ballash, EHDD president.

Pacific Visions is designed as a biomorphic structure. Complementing the aquarium's existing building, Pacific Visions will have a façade made up of more than 800 non-reflective glass panels covering an area of 18,000 square feet. The Pacific Visions project includes the Honda Pacific Visions Theater, new Dr. Allen and Charlotte Ginsburg Entrance and front pavilion, changing exhibit gallery with live animals, art gallery, and orientation gallery. The two-story, 300-seat Honda Pacific Visions Theater will include a 32-foot-tall, 130-foot long, 180-degree arc digital projection wall and a 30-foot-diameter floor projection disc to immerse visitors in a virtual ocean environment. The theater will bring to life epic ocean stories, allowing audiences to discover new species, witness the processes and phenomena of Earth's ecosystems, and grapple with the many challenges facing the natural world. Seats will be wired for interactivity, providing visitors opportunities to explore a range of possible alternative pathways to the future and to discover how our activities will determine the future.

Pacific Visions is supported by the City of Long Beach with a \$15 million matching grant, a \$5 million matching grant from John, Michelle, Mario, and Therese Molina, and \$5 million from American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Private donations and commitments of \$1 million or more have been given by James and Marilyn Simons, Allen and Charlotte Ginsburg, Don Temple Family Foundation, SMG, and one anonymous donor. The Aquarium has secured \$42 million of the \$53 million total cost for Pacific Visions.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

were "do-it-yourselfers" or hobbyists or crafters or home renovators may just simply not have learned how to do anything. Everything they learned came from reading and they didn't get the benefit of seeing how gratifying it is to actually do something.

**Regardless of the "why" we don't have more doers, A/E firms need them badly. Be sure to look for a history of "doing" when you hire and also be sure to recognize how valuable this characteristic is when doling out rewards. ▀**

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[thezweigletter.com/category/podcast/](http://thezweigletter.com/category/podcast/)

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## OPINION



## Different every year

As social media continues to change, so too does the way it affects the A/E industry. Stay in touch with the times or get left behind.



**Christina  
Zweig**

**MARKETING  
MATTERS**

**A**rchitecture, engineering, planning, and environmental consulting firms appear to be embracing social media, with 96 percent of respondents to Zweig Group's 2016 *Marketing Survey of A/E/P & Environmental Consulting Firms* reporting they use some sort of social media for marketing/business development purposes. That figure was only 26 percent in 2008.

Social media can help your A/E firm be more successful – in fact 45 percent of firms surveyed by Zweig Group received inquiries from social media marketing. Of the 45 percent, 79 percent received three or more projects from those inquires. Just a couple years ago I used to say, “You probably can’t get a project off Facebook, but it’s important to use social media for exposure/brand building/etc.” Now, I’d actually say you can get a project off social media!

“Social media can help your A/E firm be more successful – in fact 45 percent of firms surveyed by Zweig Group received inquiries from social media marketing.”

intern Sanjay Jenkins – to keep in mind in today’s modern social media world.

Here is a brief summary of basic guidelines – developed in part by Zweig Group marketing

See CHRISTINA ZWEIF, page 4



CHRISTINA ZWEIG, from page 3

#### General tactics:

- Post regularly.
- Maintain a consistent voice on each platform.
- Link to your social media profiles on your websites. Mention them in any press materials.
- Use the strengths of each platform and do not share the same thing in the same way at the same time.
- Use good images and photography.
- Respond as quickly as possible.

#### Twitter:

- **Space and plan.** There are a lot of tweets on Twitter and it's easy for your 140-character message to get lost in the feed. Space out your tweets, post often, but don't spam. For best results, create and schedule posts in advance. It is generally not a good idea to come into the office and say, "What should we post today?"
- **Stay relevant, add value.** Think about what your customers need and tailor your posts to satisfy those needs. No one wants to see 10 posts of your holiday party (unless it's REALLY good).
- **Hashtag.** It may seem childish at times but hashtags increase the number of impressions your tweet receives. Keep hashtags relevant, too. Don't know which hashtags to use? Use a hashtag search program (there are many free tools online) to find which hashtags have been used most with certain keywords. Hashtags allow you to reach out to a wide audience (#business is a very general term) but they can also help with targeting niches.
- **Retweet!** You should not always be posting your own stuff. You should be following people/organizations relevant to your industry and business and they will most likely post content that can add value to your own followers. Hit the retweet button! For more punch, quote the tweet and add your own spin on the content.
- **Follow, follow, follow.** Search for hashtags, follow followers of associations/organizations/people who are in your industry or community.
- **Communication is a two-way street.** The best part about Twitter is how easily it lets you engage with other people. See a neat post? Put down a relevant comment. Respond and converse!

"Instagram and the AEC industry are a natural fit, as people working in this industry are creating and working in the built and natural environment. You should have plenty of content to post to your page."

#### Instagram:

- **Use 11 or more hashtags on every post.** This has to be the first tip because it is the one that rarely gets used. There have been numerous case studies that have shown that the

posts with the best engagement all have 11 or more relevant hashtags. Instagram will also show you which hashtags have been used the most.

- **Post beautiful photos and videos.** Instagram and the AEC industry are a natural fit, as people working in this industry are creating and working in the built and natural environment. You should have plenty of content to post to your page.
- **Hashtags are useless if no one is searching for them.** Don't use your own firm's hashtag by itself (unless it has value already).
- **Use Stories or go live.** Interact with your audience in real time. Show them your world through your eyes. Live streams disappear at the end of each session so make sure to record important things in some other way if you want to redistribute later!

"There are a lot of tweets on Twitter and it's easy for your 140-character message to get lost in the feed. Space out your tweets, post often, but don't spam. For best results, create and schedule posts in advance."

#### Facebook:

- **Post different types of content.** A long line of blog posts might be good for SEO but it will be boring for anyone scrolling through your Facebook page. Mix blog posts from your website with videos, photos, audio content, etc. Upload videos separately to Facebook rather than posting the link to YouTube so it will be easier for people to watch.
- **Share relevant content.** Facebook is one of the easiest places to share content created by others that is relevant to your own audience. It's a natural part of using Facebook and people are more receptive to it.
- **Create insanely targeted ads.** If you haven't used Facebook's ad platform yet, you need to.

#### LinkedIn:

- **SlideShare and extended content.** LinkedIn's SlideShare platform is a great resource to display presentations as well as learn about other relevant topics. LinkedIn is a good place to post longer, more involved articles.
- **Use LinkedIn sponsored ads.** Sponsored updates provide a better way to put your content in front of your desired audience.
- **Offer expertise in discussion groups.** The goal of this type of marketing is to establish thought leadership so when it comes time to work with someone, the reader will remember that your company knows how to address their particular pain point.

Zweig Group recently published an *AEC Industry Social Media Guide*. Email [czweig@zweiggroup.com](mailto:czweig@zweiggroup.com) if you're interested in receiving this full-length complementary publication. ▀

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# ZWEIG GROUP SEMINARS

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## NEW SEMINARS FOR 2017

### LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR AEC PROFESSIONALS

This 2-day seminar was specifically developed to provide design and technical professionals with the skills to become more competent leaders. This course helps attendees develop and re-affirm the leadership skills, strategies, and techniques that will help them grow personally and professionally.

**April 25-26** - Washington, DC  
**May 23-24** - Denver, CO  
**November 7-8** - San Francisco, CA

### EXCELLENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Excellence in Project Management seminar is designed to help professionals in architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental consulting firms become more effective in managing projects, leading teams, and growing their firm.

**May 3** - Miami, FL  
**June 6** - Houston, TX  
**August 16** - Detroit, MI

### REAL MARKETING AND BRANDING FOR AEC FIRMS

The first real true marketing course for AEC firms. Designed to bring clarity and distinction between marketing and sales (Business Development), this course will aid all levels of staff to understand how to market the firm and build the brand in their respective roles. This course is complementary to "AEC Business Development Training," making the two courses together the ultimate training for driving growth.

**July 27** - St. Louis, MO

#### OTHER SEMINARS OFFERED IN 2017

- THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY
- AEC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
- GROWING A PROFITABLE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL FIRM
- FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR NON-FINANCIAL MANAGERS

In-House Training and Speaking Engagements for your next event are available.

You may qualify for professional development credit. Zweig Group is registered with the AIA Continuing Education System (AIA/CES) and is committed to developing quality learning activities in accordance with the CES criteria.

[zweiggroup.com/seminars/](http://zweiggroup.com/seminars/) for more information



# SPOTLIGHT ON: Fulfillment

## PROFILE



## Conference call: Tim Carl

CEO of HGA (a multiple Hot Firm award winner), a national, 750-person integrated architecture, engineering, and planning firm based in Minneapolis.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent



Tim Carl,  
CEO, HGA

“Our most successful proposals help the client visualize the journey they will take with us,” Carl says.

“We believe our collective intelligence is a key to better decision making, and ultimately, our success.”

### A CONVERSATION WITH TIM CARL.

**The Zweig Letter: What’s your philosophy on fee/billing and accounts receivable? How do you collect fees from a difficult client?**

**Tim Carl:** It starts with face-to-face communica-

tion between the right representatives of both consultant and client to build a clear understanding of contract language, the fee alignments with services, and communication expectations. Clients are billed monthly with payment due upon receipt and based on contract terms.

HGA works hard to build strong, ongoing relationships with our clients – the strength of that relationship is central to successfully navigating fee issues. Project leadership leads the communication with the client, often with the resources and support of firm leadership. Firm leadership gets directly involved with the client when necessary.

**TZL: What’s the recipe for creating an effective board?**

**TC:** We look for diversity – of thought, experience,





practice area, discipline, geography, gender, ethnicity, etc. We believe our collective intelligence is a key to better decision making, and ultimately, our success. We look for strategic thinkers who know how to collaborate, speak up, and follow through, and value leaders who can best connect what's happening on the outside with what's happening on the inside. Additionally, we have an outside board advisor from a different industry who brings fresh perspectives.

**TZL: Is there a secret to effective ownership transition?**

**TC:** We've been lucky. Our founders wanted to build a culture of collaboration and they backed that sentiment up with their business model. Our firm has experienced broad ownership for most of its history. Granted, the percentages may have morphed a little, but in general, 20 to 25 percent of employees have been shareholders. We collaborate on and integrate practice and business. We are transparent with our financial information and seek to have each shareholder strategically engaged in our success. These efforts have resulted in relatively smooth transitions without voids created by employee departures.

**TZL: How do you go about winning work?**

**TC:** We strive to connect with our clients at the deepest level. We work beyond just minimizing risk. We bring added passion, creativity, and insight to each opportunity to make an impact that is measurable and meaningful. Our experience and expertise in a particular project type is often an entry point, however, we win work through our research to understand the client's needs, through demonstrating how we will listen to them and then creatively applying what we learn to their great benefit.

“We strive to connect with our clients at the deepest level. We work beyond just minimizing risk. We bring added passion, creativity, and insight to each opportunity to make an impact that is measurable and meaningful.”

**TZL: What's the greatest problem to overcome in the proposal process?**

**TC:** Connecting our experience, approach, and culture directly to the clients' needs. We must balance the time, resources, and the hard work of understanding the client, their culture and the specific challenges of their project, and then tell that story of understanding in a way that they can quickly absorb and relate to. Our most successful proposals help the client visualize the journey they will take with us.

**TZL: Once you've won a contract, what are the “marching orders” for your PMs?**

**TC:** Project leadership works hard to move the project forward in sync with our proposal. Before work plans and schedules are formed, the team will confirm scope and expectations with the client and then kick off the project with a project initiation meeting. Every project must begin by gathering team members from every discipline to discuss and document collective goals (budget, building performance, design, delivery, other) so that there is diversity in the input and identification of opportunities and a shared vision for how we define success.

“There isn't one benefit that is going to meet the needs of all 750 employees and their families, so we ask what matters to them and then work to incorporate a program that matches their needs.”

**TZL: How does marketing contribute to your success rate? Are you content with your marketing efforts, or do you think you should increase/decrease marketing?**

**TC:** Marketing built on the research necessary to strategically differentiate us in each of our markets and as a national firm has proven to dramatically increase our success rate.

We are in the process of amplifying our marketing efforts through more effective and consistent methods of storytelling that make our point of view more transparent and to differentiate us in each of our markets.

**TZL: What has your firm done recently to upgrade its IT system?**

**TC:** Our IT team has been working tirelessly to upgrade our systems over the last year, focusing in particular on the following:

- Infrastructure and network upgrades
- Implementing the most recent updates to Windows/Office products
- Incorporating cloud-based solutions to support unified and consistent systems across our eight offices
- Enhancing mobility to support choice in how and where our employees work
- Security, security, security. The protection of our data, as well as that of our clients, is of the utmost importance to us. We have upgraded all of our firewalls, enhanced our network auditing and reporting, and emphasized security awareness on our staff through comprehensive training and education.

**TZL: What's the best way to recruit and retain top talent in a tight labor market?**

See CONFERENCE CALL, page 8

## TRANSACTIONS

**JQ, ONE OF TEXAS' TOP ENGINEERING FIRMS, ACQUIRES DALLAS-BASED STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING FIRM JQ** has acquired the Dallas, Texas-based structural engineering firm, **Baldauf Herrin & Associates, Inc.**, according to JQ's CEO, Stephen H. Lucy. The acquisition will enable JQ to grow its service capabilities in the federal and corporate markets, while adding industry veterans to its senior leadership team.

"I have known Tom Herrin and Steve Baldauf for more than 30 years," says Lucy. "We were looking for experienced, technically competent professionals who could support and grow our business relationships and mentor our younger leadership team." Baldauf and Herrin will join JQ as principals and will office out of

JQ's corporate headquarters in Dallas' design district.

According to Lucy, "Our cultures align, and we share common values and a vision of how to serve our clients. The acquisition presents great opportunities for JQ to continue the sustained growth of the firm."

Says Tom R. Herrin, P.E. of BHA, "We are excited to be joining the JQ team. The merger gives us confidence that our clients will benefit immensely from the combination of our resources and the bench strength of JQ's professional, technical personnel to support their project needs."

BHA clients are concentrated in the federal and corporate markets – market sectors that JQ has targeted for continued growth.

BHA clients are located primarily in Texas, but federal work can take the firm anywhere nationally.

Over the years, some notable projects include: Harrison Hall Academic Building at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas; the Four Seasons Resort Villas and Pool in Irving, Texas; Hancock County Emergency Operations Center in Mississippi; the Volar Barracks renovation in Fort Hood, Texas; and numerous projects for a global telecommunications company.

Previously, Herrin was engineer of record for Exxon World headquarters and EDS World headquarters, and Baldauf was supervising structural engineer on the Superconducting Super Collider.

CONFERENCE CALL, from page 7

**TC:** First, demonstrate a depth and breadth of creative opportunities with measurable impact on the clients and communities we serve. Second, manage our practices through our values: practicing empathy, cultivating curiosity, embracing originality, doing the hard work of truly listening, and leaving a shared legacy.

**TZL: What's the key benefit you give to your employees? Flex schedule, incentive compensation, 401(k), etc.?**

**TC:** Flexibility and variety. There isn't one benefit that is going to meet the needs of all 750 employees and their families, so we ask what matters to them and then work to incorporate a program that matches their needs. For example: offering the choice between PPO and HSA options for healthcare has resonated with our employees. We've added a paid parental leave benefit this year which does not benefit everyone, but is a message to the organization that we value our employees and want to help them in that stage of their life. Retirement planning and financial planning appeal to a segment of our population, but the goodwill generated from matching identified needs with programs positively affects everyone.

"Our most successful proposals help the client visualize the journey they will take with us."

**TZL: How do you raise capital?**

**TC:** On an annual basis, HGA's board of directors offers stock to associate vice presidents and vice presidents.

**TZL: What's your preferred strategy for growth, M&A or organic? Give us a synopsis of how your firm effected growth in the recent past.**

**TC:** Organic growth, by far, is the most sustainable path for us. While we have a strong vision for where the firm is going, we empower leadership in each of our offices to collaboratively craft a vision for growth that embraces opportu-

nities unique to their talent and to their region. Through our growth planning process we are able to look collectively at the visions for growth in each of our offices and identify gaps and make connections that help us all move in the same direction. Gaps are addressed through a combination of internal promotions, strategic hires, and acquisitions.

"While we have a strong vision for where the firm is going, we empower leadership in each of our offices to collaboratively craft a vision for growth that embraces opportunities unique to their talent and to their region."

**TZL: What's the greatest challenge presented by growth?**

**TC:** Having each person at HGA feel intimately connected with their teams and communities while still being able to take advantage of the larger HGA experience. We want the best of both worlds – and this requires a lot of intentional, open and honest communication among us all. High level, effective communication across the firm is the greatest challenge.

Organic growth and growth through strategic hires and acquisitions all require the right investments – in research, infrastructure and labor – to be successful.

**TZL: What's your prediction for 2017 and for the next five years?**

**TC:** We've experienced sustainable growth over the last 20 years. Through our growth planning process we have a comprehensive perspective of how we might grow year-over-year for the next five years. Our intentional planning balances how we drive business success with how we cultivate our practice and elevate the art and science of our work to have the most enduring impact on our clients and communities. ▀



## Peace of mind

Succession planning is tough, but if you put a plan in place and are careful to re-evaluate as circumstances change, you can succeed.



**J. Mark  
Lundy**

### GUEST SPEAKER

**E**very privately-held/family-owned business can bank on a change in ownership and a change in leadership. With the baby boom generation that is at or near retirement, there is an above average wave of ownership and leadership changes expected in all privately held companies in the near term. Even still, studies have shown that most privately held companies have not developed a formal and written succession plan.

As the owner of a closely held business, you may be thinking a lot about what's next for your business, family, and future. How well you manage and prepare for a succession event may be the decisive factor in the overall financial success of your business and its stakeholders. Wisely managing this event will help you capitalize on the fruits of your labor. Failing to plan for this event could throw your future into a tailspin.

While some may believe succession is years away, can you and the stakeholders sustain an unexpected event that accelerates the timing of this transition?

Developing a holistic succession and continuity

“How well you manage and prepare for a succession event may be the decisive factor in the overall financial success of your business and its stakeholders.”

plan that protects you and all stakeholders can provide peace of mind and reassurance. Given the obvious need and benefits of developing a succession plan, why do so many fail to do so? First, day-to-day operational demands seem more urgent than “long-term” succession planning.

See J. MARK LUNDY, page 10



## BUSINESS NEWS

**STEVEN ELIAS, PE, NAMED ENGINEER OF THE YEAR** Steven Elias, PE, division manager of Pennoni's Winter Haven, Florida, office has been named Engineer of the Year by the Florida Engineering Society. Founded in 1916, FES promotes and defends the professional interests of all engineers in the state of Florida. Elias is recognized as Engineer of the Year in the FES Ridge Chapter, which includes Florida's Hardee and Polk counties.

This award is given to the one member of FES each year who best exemplifies the ideal image of the professional engineer. Engineer of the Year awards recognize the nominated engineer who has made the most outstanding

contribution to the advancement of engineers in either industry or government.

Elias consistently demonstrates the qualities of an Engineer of the Year with his professional and community-driven accomplishments. He is extremely active with community and service organizations, both local and international, including Rotary International, Candy Canes for Kids, Florida Engineering Society, and numerous economic development and civic groups. Candy Canes for Kids has reached seven different cities including Winter Haven, Dundee, Lake Hamilton, Polk City, Lake Wales, Mulberry, and Eagle Lake over the past nine years. This past year, there were a total

of 14 families who received several hundred gifts and approximately 20 Publix meal bags because of Elias and his office's efforts.

Elias directs Pennoni's municipal and environmental engineering projects in central Florida, including marketing, planning, design, and construction administration of strategic projects. His efforts have resulted in over \$238 million in grant and loan funding assistance to central Florida municipalities since the year 2000. He was honored with the Changemaker Award twice, in 2011-2012 by Rotary Zone 34 and Rotary District 6890. Elias received the award at a celebratory luncheon on February 21, 2017.

J. MARK LUNDY, from page 9

Second, more often than not, leadership has not been through a succession event, and the lack of knowledge and experience related to developing a plan can easily lead to procrastination.

“Wisely managing this event will help you capitalize on the fruits of your labor. Failing to plan for this event could throw your future into a tailspin.”

It's also important to remember that not all succession plans are equal. While a well-developed plan can perpetuate success, a poorly designed plan can lead to failure. While there are many, some common reasons why succession plans collapse include:

- A failure to consider the perspective of all stakeholders, including shareholders, leadership, and family
- Developing a plan by starting with a review of liquidity options, instead of first developing goals and objectives
- A singular focus on tax driven planning versus goal driven planning
- Failure to resolve conflict within the business or among stakeholders
- Failure to pick and or train a qualified and capable leader(s) to succeed current leadership

An effective succession plan should include a thoughtful approach that accounts for the interplay between business, ownership, and family. If done correctly, a succession plan will align with your goals while addressing contingencies, gaps, and opportunities. As previously mentioned, many business owners fail to address succession due to lack of time and experience. Therefore, it is important to begin the process by identifying a lead advisor who can manage planning and implementation. This will help you efficiently use your time to develop a thoughtful and comprehensive plan.

The right lead advisor will begin the process with discovery. During this phase, the advisor works with you to gather

information, identify stakeholders (which typically doesn't just mean shareholders!), and clarify objectives. In the second phase – integrated planning – the advisor will work with you to compare your current state to your desired state and identify gaps, opportunities and risks, prioritize needs and develop a road map to meet business, ownership and family objectives. A critical component of succession planning is clarifying stakeholder objectives and reconciling differences when possible. The final phase of the process is implementing the plan you've developed. It's critical for your lead advisor to be involved in this process.

Remember that succession planning doesn't always revolve around planning for an ultimate sale to a third party. Through the succession planning process, it is common for the stakeholders to decide they want to remain “independent.” In that case, succession planning is still extremely important. Developing a plan to transfer ownership and remain independent requires a thorough evaluation of the facts, goals, and objectives. Also, remaining independent highlights the need to develop, retain, and/or attract the necessary leadership to perpetuate the business.

“Succession planning doesn't always revolve around planning for an ultimate sale to a third party. Through the succession planning process, it is common for the stakeholders to decide they want to remain ‘independent.’ In that case, succession planning is still extremely important.”

The brevity of this article means we've only scratched the surface on the issues and topics related to the development of an effective succession plan. However, one final thought – effective succession planning is a never-ending process that requires re-evaluation as circumstances change. Succession planning will likely always be a concern (as it should be), but having a plan in place will hopefully give you the peace of mind to get a good night's rest. ▀

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## The short list

If you make it that far in the interview process, don't forget to show the potential client your best asset – your ability to make a human connection.



**Bernie  
Siben**

### THE FAST LANE

A few weeks ago, your A/E team submitted a proposal to provide design and construction phase services for a major public project – a local transit agency's new park-and-ride facility covering approximately 12 acres and including multiple bus lanes with covered platforms, parking for personal vehicles, drop-off and pick-up areas, landscaping, and an air-conditioned building for public and driver restrooms, a snack shop, storage space for maintenance equipment and supplies, and fencing around the site.

It is a significant project with a significant budget.

This afternoon, the short list was announced and your team is on it, along with three other teams. And your team has the first interview spot.

Now you have to figure out what will ace the interview and win the project for your team – what will answer all the owner's probable questions and set the bar so high that none of the other three teams can get over it.

It is a reasonable assumption that all four short-listed teams are technically qualified to do the

“You have to figure out what will ace the interview and win the project for your team – what will answer all the owner's probable questions and set the bar so high that none of the other three teams can get over it.”

work. So your technical credentials are not the main focus of the presentation. Instead, there

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## BUSINESS NEWS

### **KENGO KUMA & ASSOCIATES SELECTS DASSAULT SYSTÈMES' "DESIGN FOR FABRICATION" INDUSTRY SOLUTION EXPERIENCE**

Dassault Systèmes, world leader in 3-D design software, 3-D digital mock-up, and product lifecycle management solutions, announced that **Kengo Kuma & Associates**, Japan's leading architecture firm, is using the "Design for Fabrication" industry solution experience to enhance the quality and efficiency of its architectural designs with a cloud-based collaborative design environment.

KKAA's designs introduce organic materials that are native to an architectural site's region – a sophisticated blend of architecture and nature that infuses bamboo, wood, stones and other resources with lengths, angles, cross-sections, arches, patterns and other parameters. Notable projects include the V&A Museum of Design in Dundee, Scotland, the China Academy of Art's Folk Art Museum, and Saint-Denis Pleyel Emblematic Train Station.

Dassault Systèmes' "Design for Fabrication"

industry solution experience, based on the 3DEXPERIENCE platform, provides KKAA with a reliable digital design and collaborative environment, for concept design through fabrication of any architecture project. This BIM enhances KKAA's parametric design operation and data accuracy capabilities in its design and downstream processes. It also helps KKAA handle organic materials, whose different shapes, lengths, and other irregular factors make their use in architecture difficult.

"Design for Fabrication" offers KKAA the scalability to support projects with colleagues in Tokyo, Paris, and Beijing. It facilitates real-time access to a single source of project data, enabling KKAA to create more informed designs anytime and anywhere, reduce later rework, and more accurately predict project costs and timelines. KKAA has the flexibility to improve and refine designs to reflect detailed customer requirements, and can share design models with all stakeholders.

"Design for Fabrication' provides us with design control capabilities that improve our design speed and accuracy dramatically," said Toshiki Meijo, chief of design division, KKAA. "Our team can access a single digital resource to better coordinate projects, gather feedback and make any necessary design adjustments. In the future, we plan to deepen this level of collaboration in order to manage multiple projects across offices worldwide while maintaining the high caliber of our designs."

"Our industry solution experiences tailored for the architecture, engineering and construction industry provide digital continuity between design data and the fabrication model for the shop floor, to reduce redundant design, waste and rework," said Marty Doscher, vice president, AEC industry, Dassault Systèmes. "Architects at KKAA can more efficiently work with fabricators and builders across the globe to create breathtaking architectural experiences."

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are two things you must accomplish. The first is to answer three questions about your approach to the project. The second is to convince the owner your team is the one with which he/she will most enjoy working.

The three questions you must answer to the owner's satisfaction are:

- 1) How will you do my project?
- 2) Why will you do it that way?
- 3) What benefit comes to me from your team and your approach?

These three questions are your technical approach. This discussion will probably require graphics and/or photographs to help the owner's representatives visualize your approach.

"A formal, stand-up presentation looks more 'businesslike' but doesn't help foster connections. A more informal structure might keep the session on a person-to-person basis and help forge connections."

The second thing – convincing the owner your team is the one to select – is more about style, about demonstrating your team's ability to make a connection. Again, there are three questions, but this time they must be answered before you put your presentation together.

**1) Choosing the presentation team.** Obviously, the principal and project manager go. Should you include leaders of the most important technical disciplines? Should you include subconsultants? For some public sector short-list interviews, it is wise to "show the rainbow."

**2) Choosing structure.** How formal or informal do you want to make the session? A formal, stand-up presentation looks more "businesslike" but doesn't help foster connections. A more informal structure might keep the session on a person-to-person basis and help forge connections.

"You must remember that this is a short-list interview, and an interview is – by its very definition – a question and answer session. Therefore, you do well to make sure that nothing interferes with the interaction of your humans and those of the owner."

**3) Choosing media.** Obviously, you need some visuals. But a lot of people think slideshows and/or videos get in the way of making connections between people. Once you have made your choice of formal or informal structure, the choice of media should be an easy one. In the last few years, I have often said that the next big presentation "thing" will be humans – sitting down, having a conversation, demonstrating your ability to connect in a way that ends in a successful project.

When an A/E team takes the time to design a slideshow, especially when that slide show also includes video, there is a strong tendency for the slideshow to become the star of the presentation. And more than that, technical firms have a strong tendency to gravitate toward the newest technology and look for opportunities to show it off.

You must remember that this is a short-list interview, and an interview is – by its very definition – a question and answer session. Therefore, you do well to make sure that nothing interferes with the interaction of your humans and those of the owner. ▀

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