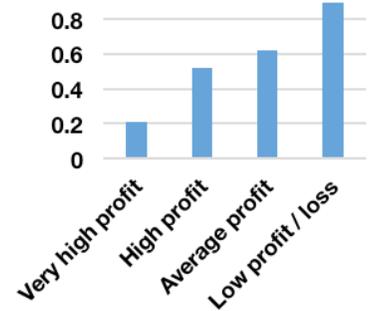


TRENDLINES

Debt financing



According to Zweig Group's recently released 2017 *Financial Performance Survey*, firms extended their commitments to debt financing in 2016. With interest rates going up, firms took advantage of historic lows. The overall median "third party interest-bearing debt to equity ratio" almost doubled from last year. The ratio is calculated as, *long-term debt + line of credit/total owner equity*. The lower the value, the easier it is for the firm to borrow money.

OPEN FOR PARTICIPATION
zweiggroup.com/survey-participation/



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People will let you down

“Let’s face it, we’re all going to get let down by an employee at some point in time. The point is to acknowledge that – not accepting it as normal, but learning from it – so we don’t repeat the same mistakes over and over again.”



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

Did you ever hire someone who didn’t work out? Someone who effectively “fired themselves” by either refusing to accept your coaching and input or recognize the signs that they were in trouble and change their behavior? I have – more than once. And like any parting of the ways with an employee – perhaps someone you even considered a friend – it’s not fun.

The important thing is to learn from it. Here are some thoughts:

- 1) No matter what happens, no matter how angry you may be with someone who let you down, do not vilify them.** It didn’t work out. They may have completely disappointed you. They may have put in so little effort it was ridiculous. They may have been unwilling to accept direction or criticism. But that doesn’t necessarily make them a “bad” person who you need to talk trash about. Best to keep your thoughts to yourself and move on. It will help you and them. But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be honest about why you are letting someone go (if that is what happens). They need to know so they don’t repeat it in their next job.
- 2) Be more careful in your hiring.** I’ve always been one who likes to spot talent in people. I also care about the situation some people are in – people who I think are good people. As a result, sometimes I will take a chance on someone who perhaps I shouldn’t be taking a chance on. Sometimes that works out beautifully and I can feel good. Sometimes it doesn’t and I feel bad. The important lesson, though, is to be very careful in your hiring. Don’t be blinded by your desire to help someone. Look at their past work experience. Did they get fired or quit from each job? What led to that?

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

MORE COLUMNS

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Acquiring an opportunity

TRANSACTIONS

INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM STUDIO HIVE TO JOIN DLR GROUP: 14 STUDIO HIVE DESIGN PROFESSIONALS WILL RELOCATE TO DLR GROUP'S NICOLLET MALL OFFICE DLR Group announced the acquisition of Minneapolis-based interior design firm Studio Hive. Founded in 2003 by Janice Carleen Linster, FASID; Shari Bjork, LEED AP; and Shawn Gaither, AIA, Studio Hive is consistently ranked as one of the leading interior design firms in the Twin Cities. Studio Hive is a recognized leader in the design of workplace, sports, and higher education environments, for clients including Gray Plant Mooty, Fox Rothschild, the University of Minnesota, UCare, as well as interior design at many of the collegiate and professional sports stadiums in the Twin Cities.

Studio Hive's 14 design professionals will relocate to DLR Group's Renaissance Square location at 520 Nicollet Mall by early April. With the addition of Studio Hive, DLR Group will have 80 employee-owners in Minneapolis.

"A common culture is instrumental when bringing two firms together. Studio Hive and DLR Group share a commitment to design excellence and our collective client base will be well served," said DLR Group CEO Griff Davenport, AIA. "Studio Hive is recognized locally and nationally as an innovator in the practice of workplace interiors and this elevates the depth and expertise of our Workplace Studio both in Minneapolis and nationally.

Linster will head the Minneapolis Workplace Studio. She will collaborate with DLR Group Workplace Leader Cassandra Griep, CID, IIDA, and with Bjork and Gaither, to meet the needs of clients in the Twin Cities. Linster also will join the DLR Group Global Workplace Studio, led by Angela Castleton.

"Our clients have operations and interests on the ground in markets across the country," said Castleton. "The addition of Janice, Shari,

and Shawn adds depth to our local and global practices, and enhances the strategic thinking and design expertise we can deploy to meet the needs of our clients anywhere at any time."

"The opportunities available to our staff for personal and professional growth at DLR Group are virtually limitless," said Linster. "Cassandra and her team have built an innovative Workplace Studio. We are excited to join forces and collaborate to grow an award-winning Workplace Studio in the Twin Cities and across the country with DLR Group."

Gaither will join the firm's Higher Education Studio, bringing more than 15 years of experience working on college campuses, including design at the University of Minnesota.

"Janice, Shari, Shawn, and the entire Studio Hive team add proven and experienced design talent in Minneapolis. This will positively impact the mentoring and professional growth of the entire office," said Davenport. "I am also very excited to offer ownership and a wide range of new design and career opportunities – new market types, services, and geographies – for Studio Hive design professionals to explore at DLR Group."

DLR Group is a 100 percent employee-owned firm and all Studio Hive design professionals will have the opportunity to purchase stock and invest in the future of DLR Group.

DLR Group is an integrated design firm delivering architecture, engineering, interiors, planning, and building optimization for new construction, renovation, and adaptive reuse. DLR Group promises to elevate the human experience through design. This promise inspires sustainable design for a diverse group of public and private sector clients; local communities; and the planet.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

Look past the resume for tell-tale signs of what has led them to where they are now. And pay attention to those signs!

3) Be compassionate. Don't give up on the person. Your job and work environment may have been ill-suited for them but that doesn't mean all jobs and environments are. If you can still help these people, you should try to. Best to keep everyone being friends to the extent it's possible and not have anyone out there taking potshots at you or your company. Plus, the truth is, some of these people could easily land at a client organization where they could really cause you some trouble!

4) Let it go. Stop obsessing about why things didn't work out and move on. Everyone has to do this to heal the emotional wounds and free their minds for whatever lies ahead. Take the lead on forgiveness. Take the high road every time.

Let's face it, we're all going to get let down by an employee at some point in time. The point is to acknowledge that – not accepting it as normal, but learning from it – so we don't repeat the same mistakes over and over again. ▀

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thezweigletter.com/category/podcast/

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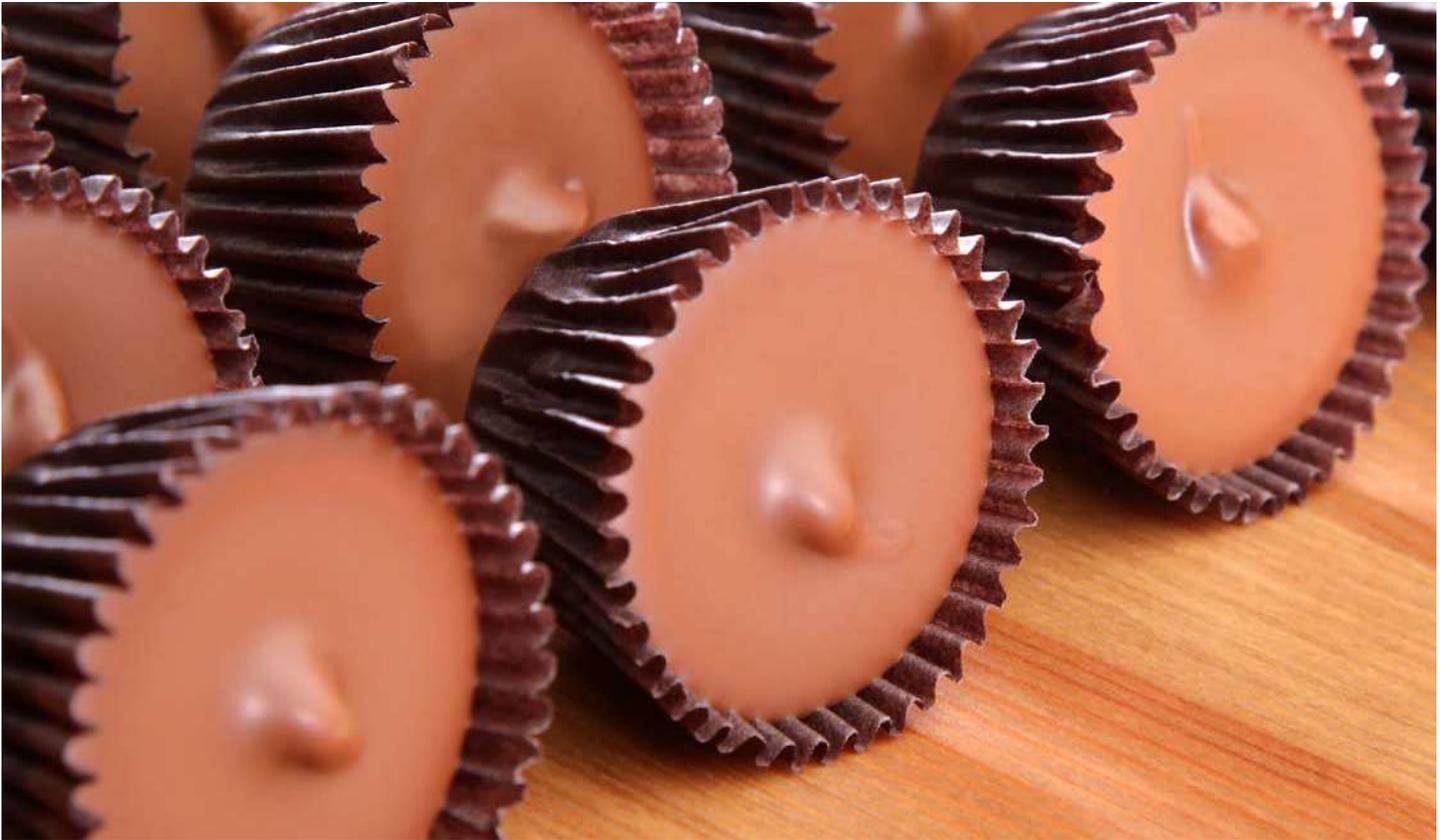
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OPINION



Peanut butter and chocolate

Don't expect your PMs to be great leaders just because they are competent professionals. They need training and practice to be effective.



**Bill
Murphey**

**CONTINUING
ED**

Like peanut butter and chocolate; peas and carrots; Bert and Ernie. Project management and leadership go hand-in-hand in the AEC industry. A PM without effective leadership skills is like a Tootsie Pop without the Tootsie Roll center – hollow and lacking an essential core.

How well an architect, engineer, or consultant performs in a PM role largely depends on how well they can lead and inspire others. Poor leadership directly correlates with late and over-budget projects, something you've probably seen. How are your projects doing under the guidance of your lowest performing PMs? I'm sure you know the answer.

Promoting or moving someone into a project management position requires more than just a new business card. It requires a proactive effort on the part of the firm's senior leaders to ensure all PMs are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in completing the firm's work.

I often wonder if people assume we're all born with the gift of leadership; that we all have this

“A PM without effective leadership skills is like a Tootsie Pop without the Tootsie Roll center – hollow and lacking an essential core.”

magical, innate skill we can just tap into anytime it's needed. To say we're born with the ability to lead others is akin to saying we're born to be professional athletes. The truth is, like great athletes, great leaders have to study and practice. Sure, some of the needed skills should be born into us, such as being nice to everyone and clearly communicating with others, but oftentimes they're not.

See BILL MURPHEY, page 4



BUSINESS NEWS

JACOBS SUPPORTS EUROPEAN NUCLEAR YOUNG GENERATION FORUM 2017 Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. is a Gold Sponsor for the European Nuclear Young Generation Forum 2017 to be held from June 11-16, at the Victoria Warehouse in Manchester, U.K. ENYGF brings together students and young professionals from across the nuclear energy generation industry to provide an international platform for sharing experiential knowledge and best practices.

This year's event will be organized by the U.K. Nuclear Institute's Young Generation Network. The theme for ENYGF2017 is "Innovation in Nuclear: a Rich Heritage and our Bright Future." The program includes expert speakers, interactive workshops, and technical tours to nuclear energy sites around the U.K., as well as extensive networking opportunities with some of the industry's leading technical experts. ENYGF2017 will also showcase the U.K. nuclear energy industry's innovation and expertise.

"With the significant investment programs planned for U.K. Energy, it is critical for the

nuclear and infrastructure industries to remain highly focused on attracting new talent," said Jacobs Vice President Aerospace and Technology Europe Peter Lutwyche. "The European Nuclear Young Generation Forum is a great opportunity for Jacobs to meet the next generation of innovators and for young people to learn more about the future of the industry. We look forward to engaging with the delegates, sharing insights from some of our exciting projects, and contributing to the technical innovation discussions that will emerge over the week."

PRELIMINARY AWARD OF PROJECT ZUIDASDOK TO FLUOR, HEIJMANS AND HOCHTIEF JOINT VENTURE Fluor Corporation announced that the Zuidasdok project has been preliminarily awarded to Zuidplus, the joint venture with Fluor, Heijmans and Hochtief. The contract includes widening and partial underground installation of the A10 South motorway and expansion of the Amsterdam Zuid station in the Netherlands.

The design and construction contract is worth approximately \$1 billion of which Fluor has

a 42.5 percent share, Heijmans 15 percent, and Hochtief 42.5 percent. The contract also includes seven years of maintenance for the tunnels. Zuidasdok is a joint project by the City of Amsterdam, ProRail, and the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management of the Netherlands (Rijkswaterstaat).

The widening and partial tunneling of the A10 South motorway will create accessibility and new public spaces to the Zuidas district, improving quality of life in the area. Space will also be created for the new Amsterdam Zuid station making it a high-quality public transport hub. The widening will also take place at the junctions De Nieuwe Meer and Amstel.

"This preliminary award is of great importance to Fluor as it supports our strategic plan and we will be executing the project with partners who also have a proven track record of delivering similar undertakings," said Hans Dekker, president of Fluor's infrastructure business. "We look forward to using our design build expertise to successfully deliver this important project with cost and schedule certainty."

BILL MURPHEY, from page 3

Don't assume that just because your professionals have been around a while that they know what it takes to be high-performing PMs. And don't assume they'll know what to do when they receive that tap on the shoulder telling them it's their turn to take the baton.

Set your project managers on the path to success by ensuring they've received training in the essential leadership skills every project manager should possess:

- **Communication.** Great project managers know how to talk with people. Not to people, but with them. They know how to inspire confidence and gain the trust of others. They must also be comfortable speaking to groups of strangers. Help them overcome the natural fear of public speaking by having them give a presentation in front of a group of your firm's employees.

"How well an architect, engineer, or consultant performs in a PM role largely depends on how well they can lead and inspire others. Poor leadership directly correlates with late and over-budget projects, something you've probably seen."

- **Business development.** As a professional service firm, you must be able to sell all your services. Are your project managers aware of every service your firm provides? Can they sell those services to their current clients? If not, consider sending your team through a business development training course where they can learn how to be better "doer-sellers."

"Excellent project managers are leaders who inspire their teams to accomplish the things others thought were impossible. Like peanut butter and chocolate, leadership and project management is a perfect combination."

They need to know how to offer solutions to your clients across multiple fronts.

- **Decision making.** Project managers have to make tough decisions and have uncomfortable conversations. Give them the authority to make things happen. Like an over-bearing parent, over-involved principals are not helping their PMs grow. Give them the training, the tools, the people, and then let them lead.

- **Fungibility.** Change is inevitable in this industry. If it weren't, there wouldn't be thousands of articles on scope creep. Great project managers are nimble enough to adapt to any situation that may arise during a project. They're calm under pressure and are able to break problems into smaller chunks so their teams can more easily solve them.

Leadership is the vital element in all successful companies and it's an especially important characteristic of successful PMs. Good project managers can usually get things done as expected. Excellent project managers are leaders who inspire their teams to accomplish the things others thought were impossible. Like peanut butter and chocolate, leadership and project management make a perfect combination. ▀

BILL MURPHEY is Zweig Group's director of education. Contact him at bmurphey@zweiggroup.com.

ZWEIG GROUP SEMINARS

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR NON-FINANCIAL MANAGERS

The Financial Management for Non-Financial Managers seminar is designed to help design and technical professionals become more comfortable dealing with financial management and accounting and to help them gain a better understanding of the financial factors affecting professional business services firms.

April 19 - Washington, DC

August 9 - Cincinnati, OH

AEC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

AEC Business Development Training is a one-day seminar that was specifically developed to help design and technical professionals in architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental firms become more comfortable dealing with clients and promoting the firm and your services.

April 27 - San Antonio, TX

June 29 - Minneapolis, MN

November 16 - Seattle, WA

OTHER SEMINARS OFFERED IN 2017

- THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY
- REAL MARKETING AND BRANDING FOR AEC FIRMS
- LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR AEC PROFESSIONALS
- EXCELLENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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/ for more information



SPOTLIGHT ON: Fulfillment

OPINION



Acquiring an opportunity

When the company you acquire has better ideas than your firm's, you have to remain open to change and be willing to learn.



**Paul
Greenhagen**

**FIRM
FOUNDATION**



Acquisitions help companies in many ways. They enable access to the professional talent, revenue, and market share that would not otherwise be readily available. Acquisitions also provide insight into new and potentially better ways of doing things. The challenge with the latter is being open to change and leveraging what is learned without compromising workplace culture in the process.

When considering companies for acquisition, it is important to look for those with similar cultures. When cultures are not aligned, the potential for success greatly diminishes. A company's culture is who they are as an organization, which includes their standards of practice. It is difficult to anticipate how these standards will differ between merging companies until the acquisition is complete. In a few of the acquisitions Westwood has made, we've discovered post-

"When considering companies for acquisition, it is important to look for those with similar cultures. When cultures are not aligned, the potential for success greatly diminishes."

acquisition that some of the standards of practice were different between our company and the



company we acquired. We have discovered that getting the organizations aligned around a common standard of practice comes at a cost, sometimes one that we weren't anticipating.

“A company's culture is who they are as an organization, which includes their standards of practice. It is difficult to anticipate how these standards will differ between merging companies until the acquisition is complete.”

After one acquisition of a smaller firm, we discovered differences in how their team utilized CAD software to design projects. Both of our companies effectively produced quality deliverables for our clients using the same CAD software, although the firm we acquired utilized a more efficient process. On the surface this sounds really positive. However, to implement their process would require a change in our standards of practice, which, as I mentioned earlier, is an element of culture and therefore a company's sacred ground.

The problem we faced was complex. The acquired employees were frustrated and felt they were taking a step backwards having to use a less-efficient system. This situation increased the risk of losing good employees if something wasn't done to solve the problem. Conversely, modifying Westwood's current standards of practice meant that our existing project teams would be forced to change. This, too, could lead to frustration and increase the risk of losing good employees.

We needed to move quickly and solve the problem. Here are my thoughts on balancing this type of culture clash:

- **Engage both sides in the discussion.** Any significant change requires a full assessment of the value of the new process before implementing the change. When an acquired company has a different standard of practice and prefers their own methods, it is important to understand their process and the value it would bring to the acquiring company. Getting feedback from experts in both companies will provide a unique perspective to draw from when assessing the value of any process change.
- **Bring in an outside expert.** Getting input from an industry or technical expert external to the company can provide an unbiased perspective on the process change being considered. The expert's insight could help identify where speed, accuracy, and consistency can be gained in either process. This type of external assessment could help identify when a change can directly benefit our employees and clients, and support our bottom line.
- **Conduct a system comparison.** Summarizing the team's discussions and assessments in a side-by-side comparison

provides leadership a tool for decision-making and communication. Pros and cons and a vision of the current and future state, with and without the investment, could be part of this comparison. In the end, it should help identify the similarities and differences between the processes so a solution can be derived and a path forward determined.

- **Weigh the benefits and costs.** Whether the choice is to stay with your current process or implement a process from an acquired company, there are benefits and costs to consider. Don't change and you risk losing the good people you just acquired, falling behind in technology, and/or missing out on increased revenue opportunities. Change and risk losing existing employees and investing in unplanned initiatives and their perceived ROI. Both can feel like a gamble. As with any financial investment, it is important to determine the cost and perceived value that would come from any change. If the cost is relatively low compared to the long-term benefit, it might be a no-brainer to change a process. Conversely, if there is significant up-front investment and the process will be hard to implement, it may be determined to delay or not move forward at all.
- **Create and communicate the plan.** The decision to go with a new process can be hard on those who are forced to change and on those who are required to implement the change. Whatever is decided, defining the plan and clearly communicating how the change will impact the team is critical.
- **Weigh in from the top.** A strong message of support from the president/CEO helps communicate that a change to a standard of practice – or the decision not to implement the change – is critical to the success of the business. This communication provides an opportunity to engage employees, get people onboard, and demonstrate what it really means to work together toward the same end goal: success for the company, its employees, and its clients.

“Any significant change requires a full assessment of the value of the new process before implementing the change. When an acquired company has a different standard of practice and prefers their own methods, it is important to understand their process and the value it would bring to the acquiring company.”

Part of Westwood's culture is to be a leader in technology. Through an acquisition, we found that we were doing things that risked that position. It was an “Aha” moment. We thought we were leading and found we could be better. Advancements in technology happen fast and companies cannot afford to get complacent. We must continually seek better ways to do business – ways that are beneficial

See PAUL GREENHAGEN, page 8

ON THE MOVE

SAM LOCKLEAR ELECTED TO FLUOR'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS Fluor Corporation announced that Sam Locklear, president of SJL Global Insights LLC, and retired U.S. Navy Admiral, was elected to its board of directors effective February 1, 2017. In addition, Joseph W. Prueher, who has served on Fluor's board since 2003, has elected to retire effective May 3, 2017.

"The addition of Admiral Locklear to Fluor's board of directors provides the company another top-tier advisor with a global business perspective and demonstrated leadership credentials," said David Seaton, chairman and chief executive officer of Fluor. "Locklear's nearly four decades of global experience serving in the United States Navy will further enable and bolster Fluor's strategy to become the integrated solutions provider of choice for its clients around the world.

"On behalf of Fluor Corporation and all of our colleagues, I would also like to thank Joseph Prueher for his more than 13 years of excellent service to our company," Seaton said. "He has provided our company with great value and has been a tremendous mentor to me personally."

Locklear retired from the U.S. Navy in 2015 as a four-star admiral after 39 years, including 15 years as a flag officer. During his tenure, Locklear served as Commander for the U.S. Pacific Command, Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, and Commander of NATO's Allied Joint Forces Command. He was ranked 11th among the 100 most influential people in global defense issues by *Defense News* in 2013.

Locklear also serves on the board of directors for the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the Advisory Board for the Center for Strategic and International Studies Sumitro Chair for Southeast Asia Studies, and as a senior advisor to the Center for Climate and Security.

Admiral Locklear graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1977. He is a 1992 graduate of the National Defense University's Industrial College of the Armed Forces and holds a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University. He received numerous awards and decorations including the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star and decorations from South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and France.

MARK RAWL JOINS ATWELL Consulting, engineering, and construction services firm **Atwell, LLC** is pleased to announce Mark Prawl, PE, has joined the firm as senior project engineer of power and energy. Based in Denver, Colorado, his responsibilities include protection and control design packages and associated engineering studies for high voltage substation projects for the national firm.

Prawl has extensive experience in the design, construction, operation, and estimating of high voltage substation projects and a variety of power plant projects, including fossil, nuclear, geothermal, and solar CSP. He is also experienced as both an electrical and I&C project lead engineer with experience in power plant and substation/switchyard design.

Prior to joining, Prawl's recent project experience included completion of HV equipment upgrades at several existing substations for a large northeast utility (115kV, 230kV, 345kV, and 750kV). The typical project also included station service distribution system upgrades (medium and low voltage distribution). He also recently supported a Department of Energy contract (Nevada Nuclear Security Site), including performance of a health analysis study of the site power distribution system (480V through 138kV).

"Prawl's design skills and experience in a variety of power plant types, including,

fossil, nuclear, geothermal, and solar plants are a great addition to our team," said Atwell Director of Power and Energy, Ryan Anderson. "He brings the industry knowledge, expertise, and responsiveness necessary to meet our clients' needs and help expand our growing power and energy market."

HANSON HIRES LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Kelly Gust, learning and development manager, recently joined **Hanson Professional Services Inc.**'s (#35 Best Firm Civil for 2016) Springfield headquarters. Her responsibilities include partnering with the vice president of human resources and business leaders to drive talent management and leadership development strategies as well as develop tools and solutions for performance management, succession planning, coaching, and career planning to develop staff to meet the firm's needs.

Prior to joining Hanson, Gust was a director of learning and development for H. D. Smith in Springfield. She also served as a training and development manager for Hot Topic Inc. in City of Industry, California; senior manager of organizational capability for Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. in White Plains, New York; and a human resources consultant for talent management for Southern California Edison in Rosemead, California.

Gust earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology from California State University, Long Beach. She is a member of the Association for Talent Development and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and is certified as a senior professional in human resources and strategic workforce planning.

Hanson is a national, employee-owned consulting firm providing engineering, planning and allied services.

PAUL GREENHAGEN, from page 7

for clients. This includes producing work faster, more accurately, and more cost effectively. With each acquisition, it is important to ask the right questions to determine if processes are aligned, identify where there are gaps, and work to create solutions that bring the team together.

Early on, Westwood didn't realize the depth of opportunities and challenges we would encounter during the acquisition process. The real value of M&As for Westwood is that they align perfectly with our brand promise to retain better people and deliver better results. Acquisitions bring new experiences, talent, and ideas that can help propel us to the next level. We get the most out of

"Acquisitions bring new experiences, talent, and ideas that can help propel us to the next level. We get the most out of an acquisition when we are open to change and are willing to learn from the companies we acquire."

an acquisition when we are open to change and are willing to learn from the companies we acquire. ▀

PAUL GREENHAGEN is president and CEO of Westwood Professional Services. Contact him at paul.greenhagen@westwoodps.com.



Live simply – simply live

We've all heard about (and do) multitasking, but the real ticket is figuring out how to do one thing at a time, and do it well.

Editor's note: Perry Shea will be a speaker at the 2017 Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference in Seattle, Sept. 21-22.



**Perry
Shea**

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

We live in a world of rapid change, quick pace, and communication overload. Don't you wish you could find a magic wand to make your work and personal life just a little easier to manage?

We found our magic wand in a company called SIMPLIFY! Today SIMPLIFY! is a trusted SCJ partner.

I was introduced to Bethanne Kronick of SIMPLIFY! a few years ago at a professional training session sponsored by ACEC. The productivity training session tag-lines pulled me in with "Learn to improve organizational and efficiency skills" and "Take home new tools and techniques to manage your work and personal life."

That first exposure to the SIMPLIFY! training became foundational for my company and created a new way of thinking for our staff. It has provided a common understanding and vocabulary within our organization, making it easier to support and

"One of the key SIMPLIFY! take-aways is busting the myth that multitasking is a strength. I am a strong believer that single-tasking makes us more focused, more efficient and more available."

respect each others' efforts to improve ourselves. All of our employees go through this training with 15-18 staff in each cohort. It has been positively received by everyone.

I learned many years ago that investing in your

See PERRY SHEA, page 10



BUSINESS NEWS

FLUOR NAMED TO FORTUNE MAGAZINE'S WORLD'S MOST ADIRED COMPANIES LIST
 Fluor Corporation was named by *FORTUNE* magazine as the top-ranked engineering and construction company in its 2017 World's Most Admired Companies list. It is the sixth year in a row Fluor has earned the top designation among its peers in the

engineering and construction market sector. "To be recognized as a World's Most Admired Company and first in our sector for six straight years is a tremendous honor and a testament to our 60,000 employees who work hard every day to make a difference in some of the most extreme conditions and locations all over the

globe," said David Seaton, Fluor's chairman and CEO.

FORTUNE's World's Most Admired Companies list is considered a definitive report card on corporate reputations. This year marks the 34th year of *FORTUNE's* World's Most Admired Companies list.

PERRY SHEA, from page 9

people improves not only their work experience and performance, but also their home and family life. At SCJ we believe strengthening the way you organize and approach your day will pay significant dividends to both the firm and you personally.

One of the key SIMPLIFY! takeaways is busting the myth that multitasking is a strength. I am a strong believer that single-tasking makes us more focused, more efficient, and more available. To be effective, our brains can only focus and process one thing at a time. When you try to multitask – or what is really rapid "switch-tasking" – you are doing nothing optimally.

"Being in the now, and focused, will allow you to recapture more than 25 percent of your day – this is a huge amount of time that otherwise is wasted because of the mental clutter and multi-tasking."

With SIMPLIFY!, single-tasking will become the new norm and will dramatically change your day and how you work with your peers and clients. Being in the now, and focused, will allow you to recapture more than 25 percent of your day – this is a huge amount of time that otherwise is wasted because of the mental clutter and multitasking. Believe me, embracing just this one notion that single-tasking is king will change your life.

The full-day training also helps you understand what impacts your day. It provides tools to be more in control of competing interests that complicate decision making and prevent tasks from being completed. Here are a few examples of SIMPLIFY! tools:

- **Create focus time each day.** Be disciplined and set aside time each day to focus without interruption from others. I have focus time each morning (60-90 minutes) to start my day and it allows me to prioritize my tasks, organize email, and identify the top three things to accomplish in the day and more. For others at our firm, this is time they dedicate to one specific task or project to make significant progress with a block of time.
- **Establish a media to capture the thoughts in your head.** We use capture cards (index cards) as a means to write down ideas, thoughts, and key words when they pop into our heads. The capture cards provide an easy and efficient way for a "brain dump" and are used to help our staff in many ways. A few examples include:
 - Creates a to-do list for action



- List tasks for delegation
- Provides reminders and future tasks for action
- Lists future tasks and dates for delivery

Capture cards are placed in conference rooms, lobby areas, and all offices and workstations. I even have them at home to capture quick thoughts and ideas so I don't lose what was in my head at that moment in time.

- **Managing your workspace.** Does your workspace reflect organization or clutter? Techniques are presented to improve workflow and effectively manage not only paper, but also electronic media. This is a huge piece of the training that positively impacts the way you feel and operate throughout the day.

Interruptions, communication protocols, email management, and response time expectations are all covered in the training.

Another beauty of SIMPLIFY! training is how customizable it is, with room for each person to discover which productivity practice works best for them. The day immediately after training participants receive a one-hour personal meeting with the trainer. This one-on-one time helps people determine what's best for them and provides help for immediately applying their newly learned tools and techniques.

"I encourage you to consider implementing these strategies. You will be amazed by how making simple changes to your daily routine helps you manage your work day and personal life."

SIMPLIFY! and its teachings are part of our company culture and DNA, with the tools and techniques creating new habits. I encourage you to consider implementing these strategies. You will be amazed by how making simple changes to your daily routine helps you manage your work day and personal life.

You will not be disappointed. ▀

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Up the ante

Open book management is a big card to play, but it puts everyone on your team at the table, and that's where you want them to be.



**Will
Schnier**

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

One of the trendier ideas in management consulting as of late has been the concept of open book management. It can mean a lot of things to a lot of people, depending on who you ask. I believe that most stodgy engineering firms would be repulsed by our interpretation of what it means at BIG RED DOG. Luckily for us, we've been stodge free since we launched in 2009, so there is no harm and no foul in how we do it.

In my last article for *The Zweig Letter* I discussed our annual business plan process. Everything we do starts with our business plan. We firmly subscribe to the mindset that if we don't know where we're going, any road will take us there. So having the business plan and updating it every year should be table stakes for every engineering and architecture firm. In addition to your professional license, this is the minimum ante to see the cards dealt and to play the game.

The leadership at our firm strongly believes that if you expect people to execute your business plan, they must know two things. First, everybody

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needs to know what the business plan says and what goals have been set. Second, everybody needs to know how the firm's performance is

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BUSINESS NEWS

SUNCOKE ENERGY AWARDS MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL PROJECTS CONTRACT TO FLUOR Fluor Corporation announced that SunCoke Energy, Inc. has awarded Fluor a contract to provide certain maintenance support and capital project services at SunCoke coke facilities in the U.S. Fluor will book the undisclosed contract value in the first quarter of 2017.

Under the five-year contract, Fluor will provide maintenance and capital project services at SunCoke's U.S. domestic coke facilities, which produce high-quality coke for use in steelmaking. Fluor will transition onto the sites in early March 2017 and work alongside SunCoke employees.

"With a detailed transition plan, we are partnering with SunCoke on a seamless transition to the sites with no disruption to current operations," said Dale Barnard, vice president of North American maintenance, modification, and asset integrity operations for Fluor. "We will implement our asset performance management process and identify specific opportunities to reduce SunCoke's total ownership costs."

AECOM AND WASHINGTON RIVER PROTECTION

SOLUTIONS WIN CAMPBELL INSTITUTE'S 2017 INNOVATION CHALLENGE AECOM, a premier, fully integrated global infrastructure firm, announced that together with Washington River Protection Solutions, an AECOM-led team, it has won the Campbell Institute's 2017 Innovation Challenge for its Physiological Monitoring Program, which eliminated heat-stress disorders by adapting wearable technology for its remote field teams.

The Innovation Challenge honors organizations for their achievement in the implementation of an innovative program that addresses specific environmental, health, and safety challenges.

WRPS is responsible for the safe storage of 56 million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste stored in underground tanks at the Hanford Site, a decommissioned nuclear production complex in Richland, Washington.

Employees faced an elevated risk of heat stress by working remotely in heavy personal protection equipment on the project site, where summer temperatures average above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. To ensure an effective heat stress monitoring program, WRPS developed a chest-mounted device that remotely measures employees' body temperature and heart rate.

The data is transmitted back in real time to a trained technician who uses it to monitor the employees for signs of heat stress.

JACOBS JOINT VENTURE RECEIVES LETTER OF INTENT FROM OIL SEARCH FOR FACILITIES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., in a joint venture with Monadelphous Group Limited received a letter of intent from Oil Search Limited for a new proposed five year contract to provide engineering, procurement, and construction services for oil and gas production facilities in Papua New Guinea.

The joint venture is expected to provide a wide range of brownfield project services, including engineering, procurement, civil, mechanical and electrical works on pipelines, utilities, facilities, and supporting infrastructure.

"We expect to contribute significant value to this strategically important project by leveraging our previous experience in providing engineering services to Oil Search in Papua New Guinea," said Jacobs Senior Vice President Andrew Berryman. "In particular, we recognize a key focus is to increase the efficiency of Oil Search's brownfield project program through optimised constructability input during the design phase."

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benchmarking against the written plan, and they need to know it in as close to real time as we can manage.

The information that we share in our open book management report to our team members is the same type of information that we provide to the owners of our firm. We're unequivocal about sharing the information because if everybody has a sense of how we're doing relative to our stated goals, then everybody can also take the appropriate actions to help the company perform better for our clients. An added benefit of our approach is that our engineers, planners, and designers, both new and those with significantly more experience, learn the metrics and terminology of what it takes to run a business. The metrics and information we're sharing is providing some financial literacy to a group of folks that typically have never been trained to speak that language.

"We're unequivocal about sharing the information because if everybody has a sense of how we're doing relative to our stated goals, then everybody can also take the appropriate actions to help the company perform better for our clients."

So what do we include in our monthly report to the entire staff? We share our revenue performance – what we billed for the previous month overall and our net service revenue. This is displayed in tabular and graphic form so they can

observe the trends over the period of several months. We share our accrual and cash basis income results. We share our accrued bonus pools.

"We're living in an age where information is real currency. It costs us nothing to spend that information freely for the benefit of our team members and our company."

We know that cash is king in a people-dominated business. We are a broker of man-hours, after all. So it's critical to us that we share our liquidity status. Every month our people are updated on how much cash we have in the bank, how much money is owed to us through our accounts receivable, and how much money we owe other people, which is known as accounts payable. The measurement of liquidity for us is cash plus accounts receivable, less accounts payable.

Finally, we share our project wins for the month. That information includes the client information, the project information, the project fee, and who was responsible for bringing it in. By sharing the breadwinners monthly with the entire team we are creating a healthy competition for our team members to be on that list and to have an impressive number of both wins and total new fees coming into the firm.

We're living in an age where information is real currency. It costs us nothing to spend that information freely for the benefit of our team members and our company. ▀

WILL SCHNIER is CEO of BIG RED DOG Engineering & Consulting. He can be reached at will.schnier@bigreddog.com.