What is strategy anyway?

“...strategy as 'the way we do things around here.' It is the basic philosophy of the business.”

Mark Zweig

The word “strategy” is kicked around a lot in the A/E industry when referring to the “business” of the business. But, like many other words, I find it widely misunderstood and subject to different interpretations. That causes confusion. And confusion is bad, especially when it comes to strategy. It’s the one thing everyone must agree on.

I like to define strategy as “the way we do things around here.” It is the basic philosophy of the business. When the philosophy is known to all – and all agree on the validity of it – then everyday decision making is easy. When the philosophy isn’t known – or different owner/managers espouse widely divergent philosophies – every decision – even small ones – becomes difficult. I don’t know about you but I will pick “easy” over “difficult” every time (except, perhaps, for computerized Scrabble where “easy” is just too easy!).

Every firm needs to define its core strategies. Strategies about growth – how will it be achieved? Strategies for client satisfaction – what is the firm’s philosophy on how to make that real? Strategies for quality – how will the firm ensure the quality of its work products exceeds the standards set by clients and themselves? Strategies for hiring – do they hire raw material at entry level, train and promote, or go after rock stars who have already proved themselves at other companies? Strategies for marketing – how will the firm make itself a brand name in the sectors it works in? Who will do the selling?

You get the idea. This stuff is crucial. Philosophical alignment is a must or all that...

Conference call: Eileen Pannetier

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2
BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON WINS $59M CONTRACT FROM THE U.S. NAVY’S BATTLESPACE AWARENESS AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS PROGRAM OFFICE

Today’s complex environment demands our naval forces have access to enduring innovations and technology to accelerate the sharing of information, and improve readiness and capability. The Navy’s Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence is tasked with supporting this effort by providing effective and affordable naval information warfare capabilities that our warfighters need to accomplish their mission. Together with the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, PEO C4I acquires and develops command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems necessary to ensure information warfare and provide the foundation for network-centric warfare. Booz Allen Hamilton has been awarded a five-year, $59 million Professional Support Services contract, under which Booz Allen will provide acquisition, program, contracts, installation, and operations management expertise to the 21 DoD programs and projects executed by the Battlespace Awareness and Information Operations Program office. As the prime awardee, Booz Allen will provide seamless, end-to-end acquisition lifecycle support.

“On today’s highly dynamic battleground, it is essential to have the right partners on your team to provide vital information at the appropriate time,” said Steve Soules, Booz Allen executive vice president and leader of the firm’s Navy and Marine Corps business. “We look forward to continuing to support the U.S. Navy’s PEO C4I, helping to ensure that Navy warfighters around the world are well equipped at any moment.”

PMW 120 delivers assured intelligence, meteorology, oceanography, and information operations data, products, and services that provide information warfare capabilities to the fleet, cutting the time to strike critical or sensitive targets and offer our Naval Forces with the ability to seize and control the Information domain high ground. Booz Allen, as a longstanding partner with PEO C4I, will deliver a deep understanding of PMW 120 mission requirements combined with demonstrated expertise in the areas of acquisition, program, contracts, installation, and business management. High quality, trained and certified functional experts will work alongside the government to support successful implementation of program plans in alignment with the DoD’s evolving acquisition requirements.

ARCONIC WAIVES LIMITED VOTING COMMITMENT CONTAINED IN 2016 SETTLEMENT WITH OAK HILL CAPITAL Arconic announced that it has waived the limited voting commitment of Oak Hill Capital Partners III, L.P., and Oak Hill Capital Management Partners III, L.P. Oak Hill received Arconic shares as part of the sale of Firth Rixson to Arconic at the end of 2014. The commitment was contained in an August 2016 agreement resolving a working capital adjustment related to the sale.

The agreement did not restrict Oak Hill from selling shares of Arconic at any time, and if Oak Hill were to sell any shares, the voting commitment would terminate with respect to those shares. The voting commitment was added after the financial terms were finalized; no additional value was given for the commitment. At the time of the agreement there was no pending proxy contest.

The settlement agreement with Oak Hill, of which the voting commitment was a part, was not considered material at that time and therefore was not publicly disclosed. Arconic promptly disclosed the commitment as soon as it confirmed that Oak Hill was a shareholder as of the record date for the contested 2017 Annual Meeting.

After reviewing in the context of the current active proxy contest, management and the Arconic board determined that this provision should be waived in order to facilitate the fullest participation by all shareholders in the current proxy contest.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

will happen is arguments will break out or paralysis will set in. And then the people who do the actual work get torn apart.

If you are the leader, it is up to you to set the strategies. You need to get input from clients, friends, and employees, as well as secondary research data. And then decide where you want to go and HOW you want to get there. Put it in writing. Share and discuss. Sell and cajole if you must. But get it done and let it be known to all. No one else can do this for you. It is your job.

And the truth is this – many different strategies can work. There is no one best way to do things. The important thing is to have A way you do things – and to stick with it long enough to bear fruit. 

MARK ZWEIG is Zweig Group’s chairman and founder. Contact him at mzweig@zweiggroup.com.
A mind for media

The landscape keeps changing, but accept it and roll with the punches. The payoff could be big for your firm.

In media, the only constant is change, and here’s what we’ve got our eyes on for the coming year at Zweig Group and across the AEC industry.

Live video:
- What started out as a handful of piggybacked apps (Meerkat, Periscope, etc.), tied to various other systems has become a native functionality on almost all major platforms. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram all carry this feature and it’s gaining the attention of marketers, subject matter experts, and an ever-broadening viewership.
- Our own Mark Zweig has been known to make an appearance on the Zweig Group Facebook Livecam, talking about everything from A/E industry news to inspirational ideas. The greatest thing about Facebook Live is that once completed, the video can be made available on your page indefinitely.

Social commerce:
- Your customers are already there. Why make them leave their favorite platform to buy your product? An increasing number of services are becoming available across many of the major apps to expand the reach of your e-commerce campaign. Zweig Group is currently testing this on Facebook with a few of our AEC industry books and guides. While I’d like to make the store more prevalent on the page, this entry into social commerce is nice. You can even set up your store within Facebook if you don’t have a provider.

“Our own Mark Zweig has been known to make an appearance on the Zweig Group Facebook Livecam ... The greatest thing about Facebook Live is that once completed, the video can be made available on your page indefinitely.”
ON THE MOVE

GREGG STEPHENS, LYNDON NANCE, AND TARA CORBETT JOIN ATWELL

Consulting, engineering, and construction services firm Atwell, LLC announced Gregg Stephens, PG, has joined the firm as project manager, environmental. He will be based in Atlanta, Georgia. Stephens will manage projects and teams performing assessments and remediation of hazardous waste sites, and chemical/petroleum releases and evaluations of groundwater resources.

Stephens has more than 25 years of experience in field operations which include subsurface drilling, sampling, aquifer characterization, and geophysical investigations. Prior to joining Atwell, Stephens was a principal geologist in charge of developing the Southeast United States for a global professional services firm. In addition to project management, his responsibilities included oversight of the environmental department, staff, and administrative personnel utilization. Stephens is a decorated veteran of the United States Army, and a registered professional geologist in five states. He has a bachelor’s degree in geology from the Ohio State University.

“We are excited to have Gregg join our team. He will be a great mentor and manager. His leadership skills and environmental experience make him a great asset to our team,” said Atwell Director, Environmental Services, Bobbi Westerby.

Lyndon Nance, RPLS, PS, has joined the firm as team leader, oil and gas. Based in San Antonio, Texas, his responsibilities include management of survey activities for oil and gas projects including site control, client relations, and oversight of project teams for the national firm. Nance has extensive experience in land surveying, including land development, pipeline, commercial, and industrial projects.

Formerly the owner and president of LP Nance Land Surveying, he brings years of experience in leading projects and teams, and overseeing quality control. He has held positions as project manager and project surveyor with John Chance Surveys, Inc., and Pape-Dawson Engineers. His experience includes surveying multiple projects for Talisman, Regency, Plains Pipeline, and TexStar.

Nance has expertise in drone technology and holds an FAA Remote Pilot in Command License. Nance is a registered professional land surveyor in Texas, North Dakota, and Colorado. He earned a bachelor’s degree in geomatics from Texas A&M University.

“We’re happy to have Lyndon join our team. His expertise in drone technology is in line with our commitment to continuous improvement. He will help drive efficiencies that will translate to added value for our clients,” said Atwell Vice President, Survey Operations, Drew Celovsky.

Tara Corbett has joined the firm as project manager, environmental. Based in Denver, Colorado, she will manage projects and teams performing multidisciplinary permitting projects and she will support coordination of engineering, regulatory permitting, and construction planning for utility-scale renewable energy projects.

Corbett has extensive experience in managing multidisciplinary environmental permitting projects and supporting coordination of engineering, regulatory permitting, and construction planning for utility-scale wind and industrial projects. Corbett has specialization in local permitting and land use planning, particularly in relation to sensitive resources. She has developed local and state level permit applications in many regions of the United States.

Corbett has managed a number of projects for large U.S. based wind developers and also has experience permitting solar projects, natural gas facilities, pipelines, transmission lines, and a wide range of development projects. She has conducted due diligence, permit, and regulatory compliance reviews for projects throughout the United States. She consults regularly with local and state agencies and supports coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and with state wildlife agencies on potential project recommendations.

“We are happy to have Tara on our team. Her experience with the renewable energy industry, local permitting and State Public Service Commission processes, coupled with her leadership skills make her a great asset for our team,” said Atwell Director, Environmental, Bobbi Westerby.

Real-time data:

The gap between data collection and delivery is shrinking daily. We want immediate access to real-time information. When major news breaks, consider how quickly Twitter picks up on it versus the major news outlets. Everyone is a reporter, editor, and broadcaster in real time. Our access to live content is unprecedented but that brings up major considerations on quality, truth, and spin, so tread skeptically and search many sources.

“An increasing number of services are becoming available across many of the major e-commerce apps to expand the reach of your ecommerce campaign. Zweig Group is currently testing this on Facebook with a few of our AEC industry books and guides.”

Topic based information delivery:

The sanctity of the major media outlets has been lost with the advent of the #hashtag. Hashtags and keywords tie various subjects together by way of content rather than source. Google, Twitter, and Facebook users search the internet at large for a particular subject and pull content from various news sources, blogs, social comments, and scholarly sources. Marketers use hashtags and keywords to tie content from multiple platforms to a single source or provider. In the coming months you might find yourself searching #infrastructure #trump #maga.

These are only a few of the latest trends we’ve been working on and experimenting with in Zweig R&D. I’d love to hear your experience with any of these or others. Find me socially @jaythornton000.

JAY THORNTON is Zweig Group’s director of IT and e-commerce. He can be reached at jthornton@zweiggroup.com.
IF YOU’RE NOT GOING VIRAL YOU MAY HAVE A VIRUS

This combination of seminars is a powerful antidote for stalled growth.

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.

AEC Business Development Training

This 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.

TZL MEMBER EXCLUSIVE $125.00 OFF ANY SEMINAR REGISTRATION

USE COUPON CODE: TZLMEMBER

zweiggroup.com/seminars/ for more information

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.
Conference call: Eileen Pannetier

CEO and founder of Comprehensive Environmental Inc. (Best Firm #3 Environmental for 2016), a 30-person firm headquartered in Marlborough, MA.

A cornerstone of great project management? “Be available,” Pannetier says.

A CONVERSATION WITH EILEEN PANNETIER.

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

Eileen Pannetier: Making sure that we understand the clients’ needs is the first crucial step. We encourage project managers to build their communication skills and develop a good rapport with the client from the start. A good clear scope detailing any assumptions we’ve agreed to with the client is key. Next, we follow up with frequent, informative communication – verbally and in progress reports. It doesn’t happen often, but if there’s a problem with an invoice, we communicate immediately with the client to see if there’s anything that can be modified to ensure they get what they need.

“Making sure that we understand the clients’ needs is the first crucial step. We encourage project managers to build their communication skills and develop a good rapport with the client from the start.”

TZL: What’s the recipe for creating an effective board? Is there a secret to effective ownership transition?

EP: CEI is an employee-owned company by a first-class group of principal engineers and scientists...
who were nearly all promoted from within. These people are the management team who participate in the shareholders’ and board of director meetings. Training and practice are our secret weapon in effective ownership transition. Principals mentor junior staff, work out backlog, and identify niche areas of marketing that they are interested in pursuing. Then the marketing and ownership folks provide them with uniform tools that have proven effective for CEI. The result is a team approach where everyone knows what their role is. The roles may rotate at times, and as a team, there is great coordination and forward movement of the company. Everyone pulls together. One vital aspect is identifying key skills that these talented team members bring to the group and cultivating those skills to help build and grow the firm.

“We put our existing clients’ needs first and it’s these clients that provide us with the best opportunity to win new jobs.”

TZL: How do you go about winning work?

EP: We put our existing clients’ needs first and it’s these clients that provide us with the best opportunity to win new jobs. New work from repeat clients makes up the bulk of our business and while developing effective marketing campaigns and establishing technical leadership in our industry is important, earning exceptional references and the respect of our existing clients is crucial to repeat work and winning new clients.

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

EP: Making sure that you aren’t just competitive, but that you’re going to rank number one. Coming up with the best strategy and then turning it into a winning proposal is hard work. The proposal process can involve so many multifaceted levels of assessment and strategies, it can be easy to get off track. We are constantly checking in to see that we’re progressing as needed, and that our strategy and philosophy come through clearly.

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

EP: It’s three-pronged:

1) Establish a good channel of communication with the new client from the start
2) Identify exactly what they’re looking for and how CEI can be of assistance
3) Be available

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?

EP: CEI’s success is based on our incredible staff, their innovative thinking, and custom client approach. Marketing is easy when you have excellent references and successful projects! However, we’re always trying to find ways to increase our marketing to grow the firm, and are continuously improving our strategy and efforts.

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

EP: We’ve installed state-of-the-art videoconferencing centers. Although videoconferencing has been around for years, these new centers offer our staff crisp audio and video with a virtual conference room extension from just about any electronic device whether you are in the office, working from home, on a job site, or anywhere in between. These centers have helped us reduce travel time and environmental impacts while maintaining the open communication we feel is essential to a successful project team. We also upgraded our computer system and increased our on-call IT services and security to monitor today’s threats.

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

EP: CEI provides several incentives to attract talented staff. They include:

- Great clients
- A solid mentoring program
- A strong sustainability vision and team
- A high degree of technology and innovation
- Advanced learning and opportunities for growth
- The ability to make a difference in the world
- Control over their own destiny
- Encouraging out-of-the-box thinking (it’s even rewarded)
- A kid and dog friendly family atmosphere
- Established pathways to ownership and advancement
- Flexible working hours
- A day-to-day sense of accomplishment

“Everyone pulls together. One vital aspect is identifying key skills that these talented team members bring to the group and cultivating those skills to help build and grow the firm.”

CEI also offers very competitive benefits and a solid support team at all labor levels. Being ranked as one of the Best...
BUSINESS NEWS

USAID AWARDS TETRA TECH $46 MILLION CONTRACT FOR IMPROVED URBAN MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE IN GUATEMALA Tetra Tech, Inc. announced that the U.S. Agency for International Development has awarded the company a $46 million contract to improve governance and the delivery of key municipal services, including improvements in small-scale infrastructure for urban municipalities in Guatemala where citizens feel unsafe. Under the Urban Municipal Governance contract, Tetra Tech will help USAID improve the capacity of municipal governments in Guatemala to respond to the needs of citizens.

Working with the government of Guatemala and local civic groups, Tetra Tech will support the strengthening of public financial systems and the development of service delivery plans for local governments to promote improved governance practices in the region. Tetra Tech will also provide technical assistance and much needed resources to establish services and upgrade existing infrastructure, such as parks, community centers, water systems, and sanitation facilities.

“Tetra Tech is pleased to continue to support USAID’s work in Central America, including working to address the many challenges facing urban centers in developing countries today,” said Dan Batrack, Tetra Tech’s chairman and CEO.

Tetra Tech is a leading, global provider of consulting and engineering services. The company is differentiated by Leading with Science to provide innovative technical solutions to its clients. Tetra Tech supports global commercial and government clients focused on water, environment, infrastructure, resource management, energy, and international development. With 16,000 associates worldwide, Tetra Tech provides clear solutions to complex problems.

ARCONIC NETS $243 MILLION FROM SALE OF YADKIN HYDROELECTRIC Arconic Inc. announced its receipt of a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the Yadkin Hydroelectric Project to Cube Hydro Carolinas by Alcoa Power Generating Inc., a subsidiary of Alcoa Corporation. Yadkin encompasses four hydroelectric power developments (reservoirs, dams, and powerhouses), known as High Rock, Tuckertown, Narrows and Falls, situated along a 38-mile stretch of the Yadkin River through central North Carolina.

The sale agreement was originally announced in July 2016 as part of the company’s strategy to continue to strengthen its balance sheet and maximize cash flow through sales of non-essential assets.

Upon the separation of Alcoa Corporation from Arconic Inc. on November 1, 2016, Alcoa Power Generating Inc., including Yadkin, became part of Alcoa Corporation. Under an agreement reached as part of the separation, Alcoa Corporation was to remit to Arconic the net after-tax proceeds from the sale of Yadkin. Arconic has received cash of $238 million in the first quarter of 2017; the company expects to receive an additional $5 million in the second quarter of 2017.

Arconic creates breakthrough products that shape industries. Working in close partnership with its customers, The firm solves complex engineering challenges to transform the way we fly, drive, build, and power. Through the ingenuity of its people and cutting-edge advanced manufacturing techniques, Arconic delivers these products at a quality and efficiency that ensures customer success and shareholder value.

CONFERENCE CALL, from page 7

Firms to Work For The last six years straight has also helped!

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

EP: This depends on who at CEI you ask since our staff is made up of individuals from all walks of life. We offer low premium family health and dental plans, flex time, 401(k) match, professional development support, and a host of other benefits. We find that certain benefits are more important to some individuals than others which is why we offer a wide variety.

“We offer low premium family health and dental plans, flex time, 401(k) match, professional development support, and a host of other benefits. We find that certain benefits are more important to some individuals than others which is why we offer a wide variety.”

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.

EP: CEI will celebrate 30 years of business this April and it’s been 100 percent organic growth. By keeping our services and clients diversified we’ve been able to ride out the ups and downs of the industry while creating steady growth. Our staff is our number one company asset and it’s been their determination and industry innovation that has helped CEI grow.

TZL: What’s the greatest challenge presented by growth?

EP: We have to carefully consider large growth opportunities when presented to us since CEI is not a “hire and fire” type of firm where individuals are hired for a project and then let go when the project ends. We carefully consider each new hire as an important company investment – hopefully a long-term one. So we want to make sure we have the backlog to keep individuals busy long after those first initial projects.

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

EP: Technology is ever changing and we see great opportunities in the engineering and environmental fields using various new field, assessment, modeling, and remediation methods in the coming years. We are off to a great start in 2017 and look forward to what the next five years brings.
Tease them

If you’re looking to sell, it’s critical you attract the right buyers with a detailed yet concise overview of your firm.

The M&A transaction “teaser” is the first document that a prospective buyer will review about your firm. This document is designed to make the sale process simpler and more efficient by attracting the right potential buyers while screening out irrelevant ones.

Strategic buyers typically review hundreds of acquisition opportunities each year and buy approximately 1 to 2 percent of them. For an AEC firm owner or CEO looking to successfully sell their business, this places a tremendous emphasis on the quality of the offering materials.

1) Don’t forget to include the basics. Buyers should have a clear understanding of the firm after reading through the teaser. Include:
   - How the firm generates revenue
   - When the firm was founded
   - Number of full-time employees and any details about second-tier leadership
   - Services offered and markets the firm operates in
   - The general background of the management team
   - Overall financial profile: three years of historical revenue/NSR and EBIT/EBITDA and at least two years of projected revenue and EBIT/EBITDA
   - Three to five transaction highlights that discuss the unique strengths of the firm (e.g. market share leader, three-year historical review, growth of 15 percent or more, management experience, etc.)

2) Clearly define the transaction objectives. What is your goal for this transaction? Prospective buyers will appreciate firm owners who are upfront about their reasoning for wanting to conduct a transaction.

See NOAH HUNT, page 10
WILLDAN AWARDED $10.9 MILLION ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONTRACT FROM CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS
Willdan Group, Inc. announced that it has been awarded a $10.9 million contract by the City of Lawrence, Kansas, for a comprehensive energy-efficiency and facility-improvement project encompassing 40 city-owned buildings. The contract follows an investment grade audit performed by Willdan that projected the city’s annual energy and maintenance savings, and recommended specific energy conservation measures. As part of its turnkey contract, Willdan will be responsible for all facets of project implementation and ongoing performance measurement and verification.

“This single contract combines many of our technical capabilities, including renewable energy generation, energy efficiency design, expertise in a wide variety of facility types, and assistance with Green Bond financing,” stated Tom Brisbin, Willdan’s CEO. “Willdan’s performance contract guarantees the energy savings to fund the costs of the City’s project. We anticipate a 12-month project duration, after which we will provide measurement and verification services to quantify the energy savings achieved.”

This project includes a 100-kW rooftop solar array, converting all building lighting to LED technology, redesigning the HVAC systems at the Holcom Recreation Center, modifying air distribution and other systems to resolve indoor air quality deficiencies at the indoor aquatic center, replacing failing chillers and boilers, upgrading antiquated rooftop HVAC units and split systems, and redesigning building envelopes with higher efficiency technology.

TRIUMPH AWARDED CONTRACT WITH KOREA AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES FOR KF-X AIRFRAME MOUNTED ACCESSORY DRIVE
Triumph Group, Inc. was selected by Korea Aerospace Industries, Ltd., to provide Airframe Mounted Accessory Drives on the new KF-X fighter aircraft. The contract is in support of the latest generation of the air superiority fighter, which is scheduled to make its first flight in mid-2022 and begin low-rate initial production in 2024. The KF-X program is slated to benefit the Republic of Korea Air Force and the Indonesian Air Force.

“We are pleased to support the KF-X fighter program, which will replace the aging Korean fleet of F-4s and F-5s, as well as equip the Indonesian Air Force,” said Tom Holzthum, executive vice president of Triumph Integrated Systems. “This win will allow Triumph to showcase the extensive capability and experience of our Geared Solutions business.”

Triumph Integrated Systems’ Geared Solutions site in Park City, Utah, will design and produce the AMADs, which receive and distribute engine power to operate generators, pumps and other aircraft systems, and also carry the main engine starter turbine. The AMADs on the KF-X fighter jet will feature the latest innovations in the company’s aircraft accessory gearbox product line.

THE CHEMOURS COMPANY AWARDS JACOBS LONG-TERM FIELD SERVICES CONTRACT: SUCCESS CONTINUES FIELD SERVICES GROWTH IN THE US, EIGHTH WIN IN TWO MONTHS
Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. received a five-year field services contract from The Chemours Company FC LLC for its Washington Works Facility in West Virginia. The Washington Works Facility is Chemours’ largest production facility, producing fluoroproducts for construction, semiconductor, automotive, aerospace, and household goods industries. This is the eighth field services win in two months as Jacobs continues to enhance its capabilities and presence in North America.

Jacobs will provide small capital construction, ongoing maintenance and turnaround development for the entire Chemours facility. The staff and trades professionals executing the contract will join a team of engineers and planners supporting the Chemours facility from Jacobs’ Charleston, West Virginia office.

“We have a long and extensive history delivering maintenance services across North America and the U.K.,” said Jacobs Global Field Services Senior Vice President Valérie Roberts. “This contract builds on the trust Chemours has in our engineering teams and reputation in maintenance services. It brings us one step closer to providing end-to-end solutions support – creating the best possible value for this facility and Chemours.”

3) Keep it concise and professional in appearance and tone. It’s best to keep a teaser to one full page in length, which will ensure every word is adding value.

- Always use a professional font (e.g. Arial or Calibri).
- Send the teaser as a PDF file.
- Avoid using flowery language and hyped-up adjectives to describe your firm. These hurt your credibility.
- Double and triple check for grammar issues and spelling errors.

“A teaser provides a bird’s-eye view of your firm, and gives a potential buyer an overview of your firm’s history, financials, and desired transaction. The goal of a teaser is not to sell your firm, but to pique buyers’ interest to find out more.”

5) Every teaser must clearly answer the following question: What is the source of your firm’s competitive advantage? The core of your firm’s value is tied to how sustainable its competitive advantage is. Competitive advantage dictates your firm’s ability to generate, maintain, and grow revenue over the long-term. Prospective buyers will use this outlook as the basis for their estimation for your firm’s valuation.

A teaser provides a bird’s-eye view of your firm, and gives a potential buyer an overview of your firm’s history, financials, and desired transaction. The goal of a teaser is not to sell your firm, but to pique buyers’ interest to find out more.
Victory or defeat

The talent war is here. Building a bigger pipeline of leaders and doing it much earlier in their careers is critical if you want to win.

We sometimes have too much tradition and are slow to adapt to trends outside our industry. One of these trends is around leadership – specifically empowering people with more responsibility early in their careers. Traditionally in the AEC industry, companies have elevated leaders based on their proven capability and only when they have also met a high threshold of experience.

Leading a growing company today is more challenging than ever before. We are in a period of healthy economic expansion in nearly every sector and the war for talent has heated up beyond what we’ve experienced in more than a decade. Finding the right leadership talent at nearly every level is a priority to support growth and maintain great service with clients and owners. And even absent growth, the normal transition from one generation to another requires emerging leaders to take on more responsibility earlier. Yet a recent study reveals that only about a third of businesses across all industries are fully prepared to transition leadership duties from one generation of leaders to the next. For each of the above situations, it’s past the time to get back to growing leaders.

“How do you identify, develop, and retain those future leaders? It’s work and takes constant vigilance to be successful. An important first step that is often overlooked is the assessment of the

See GERRY SALONTAI, page 12
leadership style within your company. Studies argue that the best type of leadership is determined by situational variables in an organization, which can vary between types of businesses, companies in the same business, and over time. Identifying the leadership style that best fits a company includes the assessment of the type of work, the complexity of the organization, the qualifications of the followers, and the culture that exists. The assessment of the best style(s) that fit your company increases the chance you will find and develop the best candidates to lead.

When do you begin this process and how do you recognize a good leader? Much earlier than we ever have before. One must look past the experience and rather focus on the characteristics of the individual while making judgments about their ability to lead. This initial step of finding leaders seems to be the most elusive. One must always be on the “prowl” for potential leaders that work for you now and those you could attract to your company to add strength to the “bench.” The ability to influence others, communicate well, deliver results, a positive attitude and resilience, vision, integrity, and a team player are just some of the traits to look for. You can usually spot them in action during everyday activities. They tend to be good with clients, their peers, and subordinates. Leaders participate well, ask good questions, and strive to make constructive contributions during the conduct of meetings. And leaders almost always accomplish the goals or tasks you give them and have a voracious appetite to take on more.

“One must always be on the ‘prowl’ for potential leaders that work for you now and those you could attract to your company to add strength to the ‘bench.’ The ability to influence others, communicate well, deliver results, a positive attitude and resilience, vision, integrity, and a team player are just some of the traits to look for.”

So now you’ve found potential leaders. What’s next? You need to invest the time and cost of developing them to realize their full potential. It’s a continuous process that takes full commitment. But it doesn’t take a sophisticated Harvard-type development program to be successful. Leadership development can be scaled for the size of a company – accomplished through simple programs and activities. Leaders are best developed simply participating in the learning and sharing experience of your business. Informal mentoring, coaching, special company projects/assignments, providing promotional opportunities, and formal education all provide an opportunity to develop leaders.

“The talent war has arrived. Building a bigger pipeline of leaders and doing it much earlier in their careers is critical for a sustainable company.”

The first step with leadership development is to measure readiness and, more importantly, the learning “gaps” that need to be filled. Essentially what qualities, experience, and skills will be needed for them to be successful. The best approach is also to look at each of these in a context of the future, not for today, using the “what got you here may not get you there” philosophy. A development program should be constructed at the highest level of the company to monitor and track progress of all candidates in the company but can be administered very simply through the annual goal setting and review process. The key is to have “candid” dialogue of not only dreams and aspirations, but also those areas of improvement that are needed in their leadership journey. And after all efforts are made for development, if there are serious flaws that will not allow them to be successful, they should be told.

How do you keep those that show the most promise? This is perhaps the most difficult part of this journey. A company needs to certainly create an environment for leaders to continue to grow and prosper while rewarding them for their accomplishments. The key is to continually challenge them with new and varied assignments. It’s also important to bring them along in selected decision-making forums you may have in the company. Simply put, engaging them constantly in the business will keep them loyal and tied to the company.

This article was not meant to be a comprehensive outline of a program for finding, developing and keeping leaders. Rather, it’s written to inspire those reading this to get a more formal program/approach in place, to get their programs back on track, or focus current efforts with greater intensity. The talent war has arrived. Building a bigger pipeline of leaders and doing it much earlier in their careers is critical for a sustainable company.

GERRY SALONTAI is the founder of Salontai Consulting Group, LLC. Contact him at gerry@salontai.com.