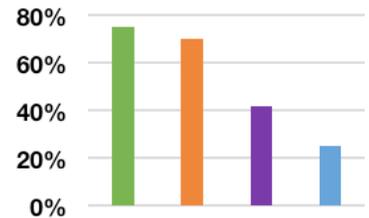


## TRENDLINES

### PM owners



In Zweig Group's 2017 *Project Management Survey*, we asked if project managers were owners in their firms. Seventy-five percent of PMs in **very high-profit** firms said they were owners compared to 70 percent in **high-profit** firms, 40 percent in **average-profit** firms, and only 25 percent in **low-profit** firms. This is consistent with previous findings that incentive programs can develop more efficient workflows. If PMs have a larger stake in the outcome of their work, they tend to find ways to improve a project's profitability.

**OPEN FOR PARTICIPATION**  
[zweiggroup.com/survey-participation/](http://zweiggroup.com/survey-participation/)



## FIRM INDEX

Bechtel.....	2
BHC Rhodes.....	6
EAPC Architects Engineers.....	10
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates.....	4
Pennoni.....	4
Rex Nichols Architects.....	12
Tamarkin Architecture P.C.....	12
Terracon.....	8

## Miscellaneous ramblings

“Sometimes I have a variety of thoughts I want to share with our readers but none of them merits a full 500- to 1,000-word editorial. This week is one of those weeks.”



**Mark Zweig**

### EDITORIAL

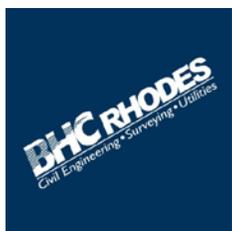
Sometimes I have a variety of thoughts I want to share with our readers but none of them merits a full 500- to 1,000-word editorial. This week is one of those weeks. Here are a few things that have been on my mind:

- People in the A/E business are so honest and ethical that those of us who have spent our careers working in this industry are unequipped to deal with dishonest/unethical people. What that means is we are vulnerable because we are too trusting! That makes it easy for dishonest people to steal from us. My theory is that this is one reason – among several – that A/E firms struggle with at-risk design/build projects. Keep your guard up, friends – and be careful what clients you work with, what people you do business with, and who you hire.
- You need young people! You may not think they can do anything when you hire them but believe me, your firm will get out of step with technology, work environment, and more if you don't have a steady stream of young people joining it. Not to mention the energy they bring! The fact is us old farts may know a lot of stuff but times are a-changing! And the younger folks are the ones to keep us in-tune with those changes.
- Facilities are a big deal. People may complain when they are jammed together but too much space will kill the buzz and turn your firm into a morgue. I have seen a couple spaces recently that blew me away. Architects lined up at tables against a wall – each one with about 4 feet by 30-inches to work in. With rents costing what they do in San Francisco, Boston, and New York, I think people working in little spaces will have to become more common. Are you wasting space?

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

## MORE COLUMNS

- GUEST SPEAKER: A resilient safety culture [Page 3](#)
- GUEST SPEAKER: Who needs commissioning? [Page 9](#)
- GUEST SPEAKER: Securing cyber security [Page 11](#)



# Conference call: Kevin Honomichl

Page 6

## ON THE MOVE

**BARBARA RUSINKO ELECTED TO BECHTEL GROUP INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS** Bechtel, a global engineering, procurement, and construction leader, announced that Barbara Rusinko, president of the nuclear, security, and environmental global business unit, has been appointed to the Bechtel Group, Inc. board of directors. Rusinko has been with the company for 33 years. In her time at Bechtel, Rusinko has served in a variety of leadership and operations roles.

“Barbara exemplifies excellence in project execution, inclusive leadership, collaborative customer partnerships, and keen business acumen needed to build our company for the long term,” said Brendan Bechtel, Bechtel’s chairman and chief executive officer. “As a member of the board, Barbara will continue to have a positive and lasting impact on our company, our customer relationships, and our culture.”

Rusinko joined Bechtel in 1985. She was initially responsible for construction piping supports on field assignments at three nuclear power plants around the United States. Later, she held engineering management roles at the Savannah River Remediation project in South Carolina. In 2000, Rusinko served as chief engineer for Bechtel’s government services company overseeing the performance of more than 700 engineers and designers. She also held senior engineering management roles on projects, including Yucca Mountain, the national nuclear waste repository, and the Waste Treatment Plant in Washington state. In 2011, Rusinko transitioned to Bechtel’s oil, gas, and chemicals global business unit where she managed a refinery project in Thailand and then the liquefied natural gas business line. She also served as project manager on the Queensland Curtis LNG project, where she partnered with Bechtel’s customer to build and lead a high-performing team which delivered

one of the most successful projects in Bechtel history.

In 2016, Rusinko became president of Bechtel’s nuclear, security, and environmental global business unit, leading a multibillion dollar portfolio of engineering, construction, project management, and facility operations projects for government and private sector customers in national security, environmental cleanup, and commercial nuclear power generation. A proven leader, Rusinko has pioneered enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion efforts.

Recently, Rusinko was elected to the United States National Academy of Engineering. Rusinko also serves on the board of directors of the Nuclear Energy Institute and on the corporate partnership council of the Society of Women Engineers. She was honored with a 2016 Global Leadership Award by the Society of Women Engineers for her service as a role model for the next generation of engineers and builders.

Bechtel is one of the most respected global engineering, construction, and project management companies. Together with the firm’s customers, Bechtel delivers landmark projects that create long-term progress and economic growth. Since 1898, Bechtel has completed more than 25,000 extraordinary projects across 160 countries on all 7 continents. Bechtel operates through four global businesses: Infrastructure; nuclear, security, and environmental; oil, gas, and chemicals; and mining and metals. Bechtel’s company and culture are built on more than a century of leadership and a relentless adherence to its values, the core of which are safety, quality, ethics, and integrity. These values are what Bechtel believes, expects, delivers, and lives.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

- Individual people behave in largely predictable patterns. As a manager, you need to understand those behavioral patterns for each of the people who work for you. Try not to put them in situations where their expected response would be less than desirable. Get people into the roles that they are most likely to succeed in, and don’t jam round pegs into square holes (if you are smart). You know what people are going to do. Don’t try to change them. It’s frustrating and futile!
- “Reply to all” is a scourge on all of us! What an incredible time-waster this is for everyone. The amount of reading and deletion – or if not deleted – server space wasted by reply to all emails in A/E firms is staggering. My advice is put a stop to it! You have to address this or it will become cultural in your firm.
- Texting is becoming a bigger and bigger part of how people communicate today. If you are one of those people who “doesn’t text,” you better get with the program and learn how to do so quickly. If you don’t you won’t be able to be as responsive as you should be today. ■

MARK ZWEIG is Zweig Group’s chairman and founder. Contact him at [mzweig@zweiggroup.com](mailto:mzweig@zweiggroup.com).



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

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## A resilient safety culture

The well-being of your staff cannot be sacrificed for other priorities such as production, profitability, and convenience.



Kate  
McGee

GUEST  
SPEAKER

As the director of health and safety for an AEC firm, I often find myself asking, “What is our safety culture?” and “What needs to be done to improve it?” Recently, I have been framing these questions around the concept of a resilient culture, i.e., a culture in which safety is a “way of life.” Hallmarks of such cultures are a shared sense of organizational pride and commendable incident rates.

A resilient culture means continuously improving processes, committed leader and employee interventions, and systematic auditing. However, getting to a resilient place can be a struggle, especially for firms where safety is an afterthought. Regardless of where a firm lies in its journey to a safer workplace, here are some key measures leaders in our industry can focus on to promote a safer workplace:

**1) Visible management commitment to safety.**

Does your staff know they have your support in saying no to unsafe work? Are you sure? It’s easy for staff to prioritize the obvious, immediate rewards of production, profitability, and convenience over the

“Getting to a resilient place can be a struggle, especially for firms where safety is an afterthought.”

potential consequences of an unsafe act – especially those acts where workers have a low perception of risk. To overcome these strong motivational factors, leaders should clearly convey to their staff that safety is an essential component of the work and should not be sacrificed for other priorities. Don’t forget to “lead by example.” Actions speak louder than words and your staff will emulate your behavior.

See KATE MCGEE, page 4



## BUSINESS NEWS

### **DETROIT RIVERFRONT CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES WINNING FIRM OF INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION TO REIMAGINE WEST RIVERFRONT PARK**

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy announced that New York-based landscape architect firm **Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates** was selected as the winning firm of its international design competition to transform the 22-acre West Riverfront Park in downtown Detroit into one of the most dynamic public spaces in the world.

"This design competition has captured the interest and the imaginations of not only Detroiters, but of people throughout the world," said Matt Cullen, chairman of the Conservancy's board of directors. "The creation of West Riverfront Park would be one of the most significant public space projects undertaken in our city's history. It has the potential to become a world-class gathering place and drive economic growth in Southwest Detroit for generations."

Since the Conservancy opened West Riverfront Park in 2014, it has become a popular destination for Detroiters and tourists who enjoy the park's wide-open spaces and sweeping views of the Detroit and Windsor skylines. At 22 acres, it is comparable in size to Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York City and Maggie Daley Park in Chicago.

"It was love at first sight when I saw the Detroit River," said Michael Van Valkenburgh, president and CEO of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. "I immediately recognized that this new park could draw the city to the water's edge. My team and I spent a lot of time exploring Detroit and meeting many Detroiters in the process. We're looking forward to making West Riverfront Park an amazing place."

MVVA is known worldwide for its creative and unique urban design with projects that include parks, plazas, cultural institutions, colleges and universities, and gardens. Clients include Princeton University, Harvard University, Wellesley College, The Menil Collection and Waterfront Toronto.

The firm's projects have received many significant professional honors for design excellence and for innovation. MVVA's work with Brooklyn Bridge Park was awarded the Brendan Gill Prize from the Municipal Art Society of New York in 2010, which is given to a work of art that best captures the energy and spirit of New York City. Additionally, the firm was selected as the Firm of the Year by the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2016. Last year, the firm received the Global Award for Excellence from the Urban Land Institute for its work on the Corktown Common Project in Toronto.

"This park will have a profound impact on the lives of Detroiters and will be a regional draw for recreation," said Mark Wallace, president and CEO, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. "The work that has brought us to this moment has been one of the most inclusive and transparent processes that has been undertaken in public space design anywhere."

From its launch in 2017, the West Riverfront Park Design Competition has incorporated a unique community-led design process in which the public has been encouraged to share their ideas and input. To date, the Conservancy has held more 20 public meetings on the future of West Riverfront Park. Additionally, the Conservancy created a Community Advisory Team of Detroiters who visited New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia to bring back ideas for the future of West Riverfront Park.

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation provided a \$345,000 grant to make the West Riverfront Park Design Competition possible. The grant comes from the foundation's "Livable Communities" focus area that seeks to create strong and sustainable communities by supporting parks, trails and green design.

"We're proud to support the design competition and welcome MVVA to this pivotal project for Detroit," said David Egner, president and CEO of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. "Transforming West Riverfront Park into a world-class gathering space allows our community to take a significant step toward revitalizing the entire West Riverfront. This project has the potential to make a significant positive impact that will resonate throughout our region for many decades."

The public first viewed the work of the four firms during formal presentations in February. The presentations were followed by a two week public exhibition at which the models and renderings were on display.

The winning firm was selected based on the decision of the jury that the Conservancy assembled for the competition, as well as from feedback during the public exhibition of the models and renderings.

"As Detroit's revitalization continues, one of our guiding principles has been that the riverfront is for everyone, and this design delivers on that promise," said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. "We all remember just over a decade ago when our riverfront was lined with parking lots and cement silos. The fact that four of the best design firms in the world participated in this competition shows just how far our International riverfront has come under the leadership of the Conservancy."

KATE MCGEE, from page 3

**2) Establish clear expectations.** In addition to visible commitment, leaders must establish clear expectations when it comes to safety. This includes establishing unacceptable levels or risk, lines of authority and responsibility, and safe operating procedures. Expectations and safe work practices should be memorialized in written documents and staff should be well versed in the requirements. Documented training establishes employee understanding. Accountability to these expectations should also be supported through positive and negative consequences. Keep in mind when considering negative consequences for personnel (i.e., disciplinary action), it's important to first consider what operational factors may have contributed to that person's actions, rather than defaulting to the convenient response of personnel error. Staff will be resistant to a safety program that appears to unfairly penalize its workers.

**3) Provide tools for open communication.** Front-line workers and supervisors can be an organization's best asset for hazard recognition and response. Providing ways to communicate and address safety concerns supports the resiliency of the

"What is your safety culture? Where do you want to be? Depending on where your firm lies, you may be prone to preventable accidents. Pursuing a resilient safety culture will mitigate risk and improve the workplace."

workforce. Programs such as Health and Safety Committees, Stop Work Authority, near-miss reporting, and blame-free incident investigations empower staff with tools to report and respond to unsafe conditions.

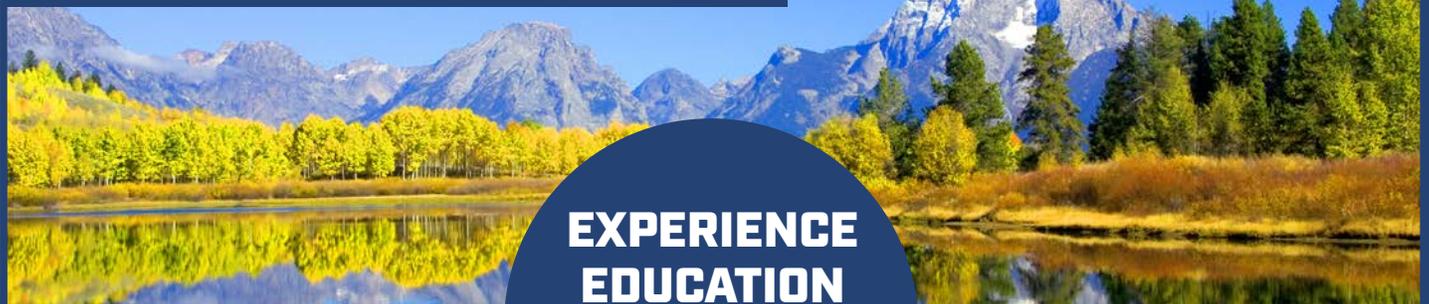
**So, what is your safety culture? Where do you want to be? Depending on where your firm lies, you may be prone to preventable accidents. Pursuing a resilient safety culture will mitigate risk and improve the workplace. ▀**

KATE MCGEE is director of health and safety at Pennoni. She can be reached at [CMcGee@pennoni.com](mailto:CMcGee@pennoni.com).

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Recruiting and retention		Business development and sales
Marketing		MBA in an hour
Firm ownership and transition		How to lead a successful firm
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## PROFILE



BHC Rhodes did surveying and civil engineering for the Kansas State University Foundation.

# Conference call: Kevin Honomichl

Co-founder and president of BHC Rhodes (Hot Firm # 15 for 2017), a 130-person civil engineering firm based in Overland Park, Kansas.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent



Kevin Honomichl, Co-founder & President, BHC Rhodes

“Profit centers go against the dynamic of a team culture,” Honomichl says. “We win/lose together. Profit centers are countercultural and would never make us better.”

### A CONVERSATION WITH KEVIN HONOMICHL.

**The Zweig Letter: What’s your policy on sharing the firm’s financials with your staff? Weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually? And how far down into the org chart is financial information shared?**

**Kevin Honomichl:** You need to balance transparency with confidentiality. Annually, we share financial information with all staff. That information is focused on how we did the year before and we

talk about things like 401(k)s and discuss if we did what we said we were going to do. Once a month we share more detailed financial information with shareholders. Project managers also get income sheets on a monthly basis and can then communicate to their team how things are going. I find that you need to give people the information that will be helpful in their roles. They don’t need to have everything all the time. During the recession, people wanted to know everything. We gave it to them straight. It was ugly. They really want to know more about things like our war chest and reserves. We strive for profitability and share in rewards.

**TZL: The design-build delivery model appears to be trending upward. What are the keys to a successful design-build project? What are the risks?**



**KH:** The key to success lies in the relationship of the team members. You can't just throw together a team. There needs to be thoughtful consideration behind each choice (i.e., Does each team member have the same objective? Is there trust? Is there role understanding?). The risk happens when information doesn't flow well between team members.

“You need to balance transparency with confidentiality. Annually, we share financial information with all staff.”

**TZL:** The talent war in the A/E industry is here. What steps do you take to create the leadership pipeline needed to retain your top people and not lose them to other firms?

**KH:** It takes time for roles to open up so you have to constantly engage and provide leadership training for people at all levels in the company. “Pipeline” is the operative word here. You need to have plenty of people ready to step up – specifically people who reinforce your company's culture.

**TZL:** As you look for talent, what position do you most need to fill in the coming year and why?

**KH:** I'm sure my answer is like many others – mid-level project managers. We also need seasoned technical staff. We try to target internal referrals but are getting tapped out. We use all channels to recruit – website, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and staffing agencies. It's incredibly competitive out there right now.

**TZL:** While plenty of firms have an ownership transition plan in place, many do not. What's your advice for firms that have not taken steps to identify and empower the next generation of owners?

**KH:** It's a long runway. We're a first-generation firm and have a stock ownership plan in place. It's different for every firm. Focus on leadership development. I don't think ESOPs are the end all. It takes careful planning.

**TZL:** There are A/E leaders who say profit centers create corrosive internal competition for firm resources.

**What's your opinion on profit centers?**

**KH:** I agree that profit centers create a corrosive situation. We operate as one company. We're all focused on the customer and project types. While each group (i.e., public, utilities, surveyors, or municipal development), has its own financial targets, at the end of the day we have one overhead rate and are one company. Profit centers go against the dynamic of a team culture. We win/lose together. Profit centers are countercultural and would never make us better.

**TZL:** Zweig Group research shows there has been a shift in business development strategies. More and more, technical staff, not marketing staff, are responsible for BD. What's the BD formula in your firm?

**KH:** We separate marketing from business development. Business development focuses on sales, signing contracts, following leads, and relationship development. Marketing focuses on getting the word out about what we're doing. They are different roles. Let people do what they are good at doing.

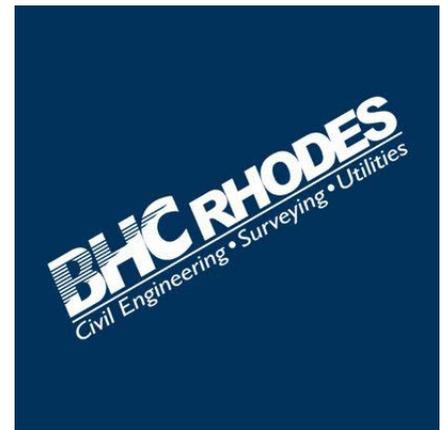
“It takes time for roles to open up so you have to constantly engage and provide leadership training for people at all levels in the company.”

**TZL:** Diversifying the portfolio is never a bad thing. What are the most recent steps you've taken to broaden your revenue streams?

**KH:** You never know what's going to happen. We have four market segments. We are consistently looking to diversify our customer base and sectors. We're always on top of that. That said – stick with what you're good at and build on it.

**TZL:** The list of responsibilities for project managers is seemingly endless. How do you keep your PMs from burning out? And if they crash, how do you get them back out on the road, so to speak?

See CONFERENCE CALL, page 8



**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1992

**HEADQUARTERS:** Overland Park, KS

**OFFICES:** 3 offices in Kansas

**NO. OF EMPLOYEES:** 130

**THEIR PLEDGE:** “Welcome to ‘no problem.’ Engineering services with unmatched customer service.”

**THEIR SERVICES:**

- Development
- Utilities
- Public works
- Surveying

**THEIR COMMUNITY:** Since the founding of BHC RHODES, the company and its employees have been hard at work to make the community, and world, a better place. They participate at various levels in charitable sponsorship and in contributing to higher education. Their focus is on supporting those organizations that are helping people learn how to help themselves in addition to offering temporary relief.

**THEIR CULTURE:** A progressive work environment that offers challenges and opportunities for professional growth. Continuing education and professional development are strongly supported.

## BUSINESS NEWS

**TERRACON ANNOUNCES HEALTHCARE SECTOR MARKET LAUNCH** Terracon announced the formal launch of its healthcare sector. Decades of experience in healthcare facilities has led Terracon to organize its services around the needs of thousands of healthcare clients nationwide.

"Healthcare is a local business. Terracon is rooted in the communities where we live and work, but we also have a national footprint that positions us to assist our clients wherever and whenever they need us," said Laura Reinbold, P.E., Terracon national director of healthcare. "Our clients serve the most vulnerable populations, and they can rely on us to be an experienced, nimble partner."

In 2017, Terracon completed more than 3,000 healthcare projects, generating \$23 million in

revenue. Projects included improvements and compliance for existing facilities, as well as consulting for new facilities.

With its network of offices, accredited laboratories, and exploration fleets, Terracon acts quickly to meet client needs for each stage of a facility's life cycle, including:

- Acquisition and development – environmental site assessments, natural and cultural resources, site investigation, property condition assessments, and report of expected geotechnical conditions
- New construction and dependable structures – geotechnical consulting, special inspections and investigations, construction consulting, structural and materials assessments, concrete/soils, steel/masonry, and foundation observation
- Optimized building performance – building

enclosure, including commissioning, energy audits, and system diagnostics; and facility condition assessments

- Safe environments – Asbestos and other hazardous material assessment, industrial hygiene, regulatory compliance, and remediation
- Portfolio management – single point of contact for challenges across networks of buildings; and a multi-facility approach to asset management, facilities consulting, operations and maintenance, and compliance monitoring

Terracon is an employee-owned engineering consulting firm with more than 4,000 employees providing environmental, facilities, geotechnical, and materials services from more than 140 offices with services available in all 50 states.

CONFERENCE CALL, from page 7

**KH:** You have to set up your PMs for success. Give them a moderate workload and run interference for them when you need to. Give them the resources they need and monitor their number of projects and clients. It's easier to manage multiple projects with one client versus multiple projects with multiple clients. Everyone above the PM needs to make sure they're paying attention and listening to what's happening with the PMs.

**TZL:** What is the role of entrepreneurship in your firm?

**KH:** We're constantly working to win new projects. For each of our market leaders, it's like running their own business. These people need to have fire, understand market dynamics and figure out how to beat the competition. We always want people who are looking to innovate.

"We're constantly working to win new projects. For each of our market leaders, it's like running their own business. These people need to have fire, understand market dynamics and figure out how to beat the competition."

**TZL:** In the next couple of years, what A/E segments will heat up, and which ones will cool down?

**KH:** I think the private sector will remain strong. Public infrastructure may cool down – but it's more of a state-by-state thing. For example, infrastructure in Texas will be hot, but in Kansas it will be cool.

"I find that you need to give people the information that will be helpful in their roles. They don't need to have everything all the time. During the recession, people wanted to know everything. We gave it to them straight. It was ugly."

**TZL:** They say failure is a great teacher. What's the biggest lesson you've had to learn the hard way?

**KH:** I think it was Bill Gates that said, "Success is a lousy teacher." Apply a lessons learned mentality throughout the company. It's okay to tell people they made a mistake and then share the information. Don't hide mistakes and don't be slow to respond. Be ready to make uncomfortable decisions.

**TZL:** While M&A is always an option, there's something to be said about organic growth. What are your thoughts on why and how to grow a firm?

**KH:** We've primarily been an organic growth firm. We've grown a great deal over the last three to four years, but are now in a limited growth mode because of not being able to find and hire new staff. We're using this time to refine leadership, clean up our client base, and focus on better onboarding. It's good to have a little breather to grow internally in our systems processes, so we'll be ready for action when the time comes.

**TZL:** What's your prediction for 2018?

**KH:** Very optimistic. We have a strong backlog. There's concern about some uncertainties such as trade wars and interest rates, so we have our antennae up. You have to. ▀



### TALK TO US

Are you interested in having your firm featured in our Business News section? Let us know. If interested, please send your press release to [sparkman@zweiggroup.com](mailto:sparkman@zweiggroup.com).

## OPINION



# Who needs commissioning?

If your building is too cold or too hot, or if employees become sluggish in the afternoon, take a look at the building's operating systems.



**Jim  
Stocke**

### GUEST SPEAKER

**D**o you work in an older office building where the air is either too hot, too cold, or even stuffy? Perhaps you work at a brand-new place where you experience the same thing or perhaps a whole different set of problems with the building systems such as lighting controls and exhaust systems. Chances are that the older office building needs retrocommissioning and the new one needs commissioning. There is even recommissioning for structures that are five to eight years old. What is all this about, and who needs it?

Commissioning is a process that involves reviewing a building design (by a third-party commissioning agent) that has been produced by architects, engineers, and the owner. The commissioning process verifies that the building design achieves its owner's requirements and goals, that the building is designed to operate the way it is supposed to, and that it will operate as efficiently as possible. This process can also extend into the construction of the building. After a facility has been designed and the building process begins, commissioning confirms that

“Commissioning is a process that involves reviewing a building design that has been produced by architects, engineers, and the owner.”

equipment and systems are installed according to the intended design. It also validates that the equipment and systems are operating as expected.

See JIM STOCKE, page 10



**BENEFITS OF COMMISSIONING:**

- Increased energy efficiency
- Lower operating costs
- Healthier and more comfortable environment for occupants
- Increased productivity and happiness for occupants

**ISSUES THAT MAY INDICATE IT'S TIME TO RECOMMISSION:**

- Feeling cold drafts
- Seeing frost on the walls
- Equipment operating more than needed
- Equipment has dampers propped open or held shut
- Complaints from occupants regarding areas of the building are too hot and others are too cold
- Building occupants seem overly tired and sluggish or unproductive in the middle of the day
- Air in the building is smelly and stale
- Lights in some areas seem too bright or too dim causing eye strain or headaches for some
- Unusually high utility costs

**ISSUES THAT MAY INDICATE IT'S TIME TO RETROCOMMISSION:**

- Feeling cold drafts
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- Building occupants seem overly tired and sluggish or unproductive in the middle of the day
- Air in the building is smelly and stale
- Lights in some areas seem too bright or too dim, causing eye strain or headaches for some
- Unusually high utility costs
- Building equipment is more than 10-15 years old
- HVAC systems are pneumatic
- Building equipment has outlived its life expectancy according to ASHRAE standards

JIM STOCKE, from page 9

By hiring a commissioning agent or firm to inspect a building, it can increase savings because of their experience and success with finding and implementing efficiencies. When a structure is properly commissioned, the money spent for this service pays for itself in cost reductions down the road. The commissioning agent provides a safety net to the owner by guaranteeing that all building design needs and requirements are met. Agents are on site throughout the construction phase to inspect the installation of all building systems, test each building system, ensure owners receive all pertinent documentation for the building, and oversee that the training for the maintenance staff is delivered.

“The commissioning process verifies that the building design achieves its owner’s requirements and goals, that the building is designed to operate the way it is supposed to, and that it will operate as efficiently as possible.”

Commissioning can be performed during construction and up to 10-12 months after the building is occupied to certify that any issues with the building are resolved. A final commissioning report is then presented when its agent has concluded the complete process.

Recommissioning is a methodical process of testing an existing facility’s systems and equipment (five to eight years old) to make sure they are still functioning according to the original design intent or to adjust any deviation from the original design. Schedules are inspected, and the building equipment is tested to make sure everything is still operating properly and to code. There may be savings opportunities associated with the inspection if things have gone astray. Recommissioning will show how to keep the existing control system of the building operating efficiently and will also indicate if any equipment upgrades are necessary to potentially increase energy savings.

Retrocommissioning identifies areas for

performance improvement in existing facilities’ equipment and systems and adjusts this performance to improve efficiency. Retrocommissioning is applied to older buildings that were never commissioned. Usually the building equipment and control systems operate on old pneumatic control systems that are very unreliable and inefficient. Some of these buildings could be using old Direct Digital Controls systems that have never been upgraded. These older pneumatic systems usually operate from time clocks, and in some cases, the time clocks no longer function, resulting in a system that is completely outdated, unreliable, and most likely costing additional money.

When retrocommissioning is properly done, the owner will receive a detailed outline on the building’s equipment and controls which describes how their output compares to new expected norms and technology. Other building issues may be highlighted as well. Typically, establishments that have not been retrocommissioned have a higher operating cost per square foot than buildings of the same stature that have been upgraded. There is significant savings associated with retrocommissioning, and it will provide a quick pay back! The expense for the cost of this service can be easily made up by the money saved by the implemented changes. More importantly, the buildings that have been retrocommissioned, and have had the equipment and controls upgraded, will also provide better indoor air quality and less occupant complaints.

In all cases, the answer to the question, “Who needs commissioning?” is this: All building owners who don’t already have a plan like this in place! It is important to understand the value of it, and the savings it can generate, and the avoidance of unexpected big maintenance issues in the future. Whether you need commissioning of a new building, recommissioning of an existing one, or retrocommissioning of an older one, these services will provide peace of mind for every owner. Hiring a commissioning agent who understands buildings and their intricate systems should be part of each owner’s overall plan in building design. ▀

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## Securing cyber security

Find an expert with a proven track record, someone with real-world applications of industry knowledge who is a team player, not a lone wolf.



Eric  
Cole

GUEST  
SPEAKER

**T**oday's business landscape requires organizations to be increasingly dependent on the strength of their cyber security teams, and understanding how to hire a legitimate expert in the field is critical. But cyber security is an industry that continues to evolve, and it is a challenge for businesses to identify unique, valuable skills for their cyber security professionals.

The following guidelines should help you discern the gold from the dross:

**1) Demonstrate an actual expertise.** Security experts hail from many backgrounds. They may have taken traditional routes, being groomed in IT departments after collecting CISSP or CISM certifications. They may have obtained a degree in computer science or some other technology field.

Alternatively, many cyber security experts also have more of a business background. They may have acquired an MBA before launching their security careers. Some have more expertise as C-level executives than as IT professionals.

Regardless of their path, successful experts should reflect a proven track record of dealing with security

issues. Look for candidates with real-world applications of industry knowledge. No matter what career path an expert takes, he should be able to demonstrate he's actually an expert!

**2) Tailored approaches versus cookie cutter solutions.** Cyber security experts must exhibit mastery of their domain and understand how to quickly and efficiently respond to critical issues. But, each organization's pain points are unique and require customized solutions.

If a security expert is not willing to approach your company's security requirements with a tailored technique and a process that focuses on your individual needs, he is not providing the highest level of value.

See ERIC COLE, page 12



## BUSINESS NEWS

**MADISON REALTY CAPITAL PROVIDES \$72.0 MILLION LOAN FOR 550 WEST 29TH STREET, A LUXURY CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT LOCATED ALONG CHELSEA'S HIGH LINE** Madison Realty Capital closed a \$72.0 million first mortgage loan collateralized by Highline Development Group's nearly completed luxury condominium development located in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. Currently in the final stages of interior construction with completion expected midyear, 550 West 29th Street offers 19 luxury residential units and 5,022 square feet of premium retail/gallery space at grade.

The project team for 550 West 29th Street consists of **Tamarkin Architecture P.C.** as design architect, Ryder Construction as construction manager, CORE Real Estate as residential sales broker, and Manhattes Group as retail and gallery leasing agent.

The property is located on 29th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues, adjacent to the High Line and steps from some of Manhattan's most prominent art galleries. The 19 residences range from 1,900 square foot, three-bedroom, three-bathroom units to 4,000 square foot, four-bedroom, four and a half bathroom units. Residents will access the residential lobby through a 30-foot wide glass entryway and reach their individual units via two elevators providing direct key access. The ground floor retail/gallery space offers 75 feet of street frontage and ceiling heights exceeding 13 feet.

Amenities at the building will include a 24-

hour doorman, 16-space bicycle storage station, fitness center, sauna, laundry room, and storage units for each residence. Units will feature generous ceiling heights, large walk-in closets, LG washer/dryers, Sub-Zero refrigerators, gas fireplaces, steam and regular showers, Miele dishwashers, and stainless steel gas cooktop ovens. Select units will have private terraces ranging from 120 to 1,835 square feet, with outdoor gas grills and northern and western views of Manhattan.

**RNA SELECTS SIMPLY THE BEST PR AS AGENCY OF RECORD TO HERALD COMPANY'S GROWTH & EVOLVING FOCUS** Rex Nichols Architects announced that they have retained Simply the Best PR as their agency of record to publicize the firm's growth and style evolution. RNA's history is based on designing luxury homes in the Fort Lauderdale area that has earned 11 AIA awards. RNA also has evolved its style focus from classical to Bauhaus modern to the contemporary design the team focuses on today.

According to founder Rex Nichols, "We have expanded our business into designing and developing multifamily residential properties, restaurants, hotel, clubs, retails and condos throughout South Florida. Through this ongoing process, we have evolved into a company which creates opportunities for real estate development."

Alex Penna oversees researching and implementing the contemporary design process by combining the minimalist style and tropical design with the deconstruction

architectural language derived from the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Penna has worked on sustainable design projects all over the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East and has participated in such projects as Battersea Power Station, the largest sustainable development in London valued at \$12 billion, Victoria Transport Interchange 2 and One Hyde Park, also in London.

RNA has recently been pre-qualified to design two waterfront towers at a new development in Dubai. They are the leading design team for a joint-venture project with Robert Swedroe Architects.

Additional current projects include:

- Glass House under permit with Jeff Hendricks Homes on Las Olas Isles
- Six townhouses on Ocean Front in Pompano Beach
- Two homes in Fort Lauderdale on Intracoastal
- Las Olas Isles home
- S House Real Estate Development Property
- Waterfront Towers in Dubai
- Resort Beach Club in Palm Beach County

"Simply the Best PR will launch a series of PR and social media campaigns targeting the design, builder and upscale consumer media focused on highlighting the award-winning, sustainable designs by RNA," states Kim Morgan, president of STB PR.

ERIC COLE, from page 11

**3) Identify the problem – then solve it!** There is a big difference between identifying a problem and solving it.

True cyber security experts are required to continually identify incidents, potential threats, and risks weaving their way through a network infrastructure. But, that's only half the battle. Working to fix identified holes in an organization's security strategy requires a level of focused analysis and evaluation. Your cyber security experts must exhibit superior skills to solve complex and intricate problems.

If your cyber security expert is only identifying problems in your organization and not helping you resolve them, your company may need to solve a new problem – finding a more efficient security professional.

**4) Team players versus lone wolves.** Cyber security experts may be the industry's rock stars, but they shouldn't perform as the solo act.

The role of a cyber security professional is to work cooperatively with a company's top executives to create a strategy that is relevant and comprehensible throughout the enterprise. A proficient security expert values client communications that strengthen a corporate strategy.

**Bottom line, a top cyber security expert should be able to take the confusing topics on internet security and make**

**“A top cyber security expert should be able to take the confusing topics on internet security and make them clear. With extensive experience, training, and aptitude, they will successfully help your company navigate the technical landscape.”**

**them clear. With extensive experience, training, and aptitude, they will successfully help your company navigate the technical landscape, identify the key areas of focus, and explain them in common terms. They should understand that one size does not fit all and a cookie cutter approach to security does not scale in this current age of complexity. They should be able to quickly narrow down the solution space to create a cost effective result for your organization. ▀**

DR. ERIC COLE is CEO of Secure Anchor, former CTO of McAfee and Lockheed Martin, member of the Commission on Cyber Security for President Obama, the security advisor for Bill Gates and his family, and author of a new book, *Online Danger: How to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones From the Evil Side of the Internet*. For more information, please visit [www.onlinedanger.com](http://www.onlinedanger.com) and connect with Dr. Cole on Twitter, @drericcole.