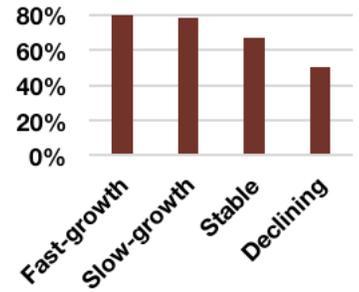


## TRENDLINES

### Dedicated IT staff



Zweig Group's 2018 *Information Technology Survey* shows that almost 80 percent of all growing firms have dedicated IT staff, compared to only 50 percent for declining-growth firms. This illustrates the need for dedicated IT personnel in a growing organization as they can reduce the time spent on IT issues and increase efficiency across the firm.

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



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## Doing things the way you should to be successful

“When you look at principals of firms in this business who are really happy and successful – who have growing, profitable companies – you’ll see certain common traits that emerge.”



Mark Zweig

### EDITORIAL

When you look at principals of firms in this business who are really happy and successful – who have growing, profitable companies – you’ll see certain common traits that emerge. Here are a few of them:

- **They think it is possible (and okay) to do well in this business.** It really all begins here. When I started teaching business stuff to fifth year architectural students I became painfully aware of a fact – most of them had been told they could not do well in this business, that it would basically require a vow of poverty from them. How terrible that is for young people to be programmed to think that real success wasn’t even possible! So much in life is a function of what you **THINK** is going to happen. You have to believe you can do really well or you never will!
- **They don’t give it away.** The tendency of most people in this business is to give their time and expertise away at too low of a price in order to stay busy. Yet, that could be one of the biggest mistakes you could ever make! There’s nothing quite like working like a dog for low pay. Better to have less work but when you do work you get paid well. The rest of your time you can spend on making your business better.
- **They have a really good handle on their finances.** This is so important and so much more than project cost reports! It is understanding the firm’s balance sheet, having good mechanisms in place to project future cash flows, and a whole lot more. You cannot succeed in business without really understanding your numbers and performance metrics for every aspect of the firm.

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### MORE COLUMNS

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# Conference call: Jon Lindberg

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## ON THE MOVE

### LJA ENGINEERING HOUSTON LAND DEVELOPMENT HAS PROMOTED THREE TO SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

**LJA Engineering Houston Land Development** division is making exciting changes. Growing the firm's success across Texas for its clients and for its 750 employee-owners, these leaders have demonstrated true dedication to delivering unique hands-on solutions for today's needs and the future's ever-changing challenges. LJA's ability to provide engineering excellence and broad-based expertise and resources with personalized attention and responsiveness is possible because of the solid foundation, reputation, and commitment of our senior leadership.

Alan McKee is being promoted to senior vice president of the Houston Land Development division. McKee's increased role will include leading Houston Land's business development and client relationship program while utilizing and expanding the Discovery™ process. He will work with LJA's GIS team to provide this powerful investigative system and other needed services to LJA's clients. Throughout his 30-year career in land development and active involvement in public policy, McKee has built a wealth of knowledge and intuitive skills that are a natural fit to enhance LJA's already established and comprehensive Discovery™ process.

James Brown is being promoted to senior vice president of the Houston Land Development division. In his increased role, Brown will assume leadership and management responsibilities for LJA's Katy office. He has provided engineering leadership at LJA for more than 25 years on major land development projects, large master

planned communities, Municipal Utility Districts, and subdivisions in and around the greater Houston area. He has a long-term dedication to clients, employees, and issues crucial to the stability and growth of communities in the region.

James Ross is being promoted to senior vice president of the Houston Land Development division. James is currently beginning the transition process to become division manager of Houston Land Development. Upon completion of the process in 2019, Ross will manage 15 separate specialty teams and services including civil design, hydrology and hydraulics, planning, residential platting, site development, landscape architecture, water/wastewater, and construction phase services. Along with overseeing this vital group of more than 300 personnel, James will continue to be involved in new and existing client management and development. He has served as a district engineer for various MUDs, TIRZs, and Special Districts providing key guidance to these organizations.

With more than 750 employees in 28 offices across Texas and Florida, LJA is organized around six comprehensive sectors: Land development, public infrastructure, energy services, environmental and coastal, rail services, and surveying. LJA has significant engineering, planning, surveying, landscape architecture, GIS, and construction management talent to serve the technical needs of public and private entities in community and site development, midstream infrastructure, public works, transportation, water resources, and hydrology and hydraulics.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

- **Their employees have good morale.** Nothing good is going to come from having unhappy employees! Happy employees treat each other better and even more importantly, treat your clients better. You just can't establish the real value of happy employees – but they are worth a lot to you.
- **They don't see marketing as an overhead cost to be minimized.** So many small operators or owners of truly stagnant A/E firms think all overhead is bad and since marketing is a part of overhead, their goal should be to keep it minimized. The successful firm owners don't look at it like that. They see brand-building marketing expenditures as "off balance sheet investments," i.e., ones that may not be reflected on your balance sheet yet have huge value to your bottom line.
- **They spend money on recruiting and training.** You want to be the best but spend no money on finding and developing the best people? That makes no sense at all. The successful companies are investing in both because they realize that this is an extremely tough market for us to hire people in right now.
- **They can make decisions quickly.** Not everything "goes to the BOD" for a final decision. Slow decision-making hampers more companies in this business than anything else. It seems like everything has to go in front of the board, and then the board is too big and meets too often as it is already. You don't need to join hands on every single decision. Determine who can make what decisions and let them run with it!

I could go on but am out of time. There will be more later! ▀

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



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THE **ZWEIG** LETTER

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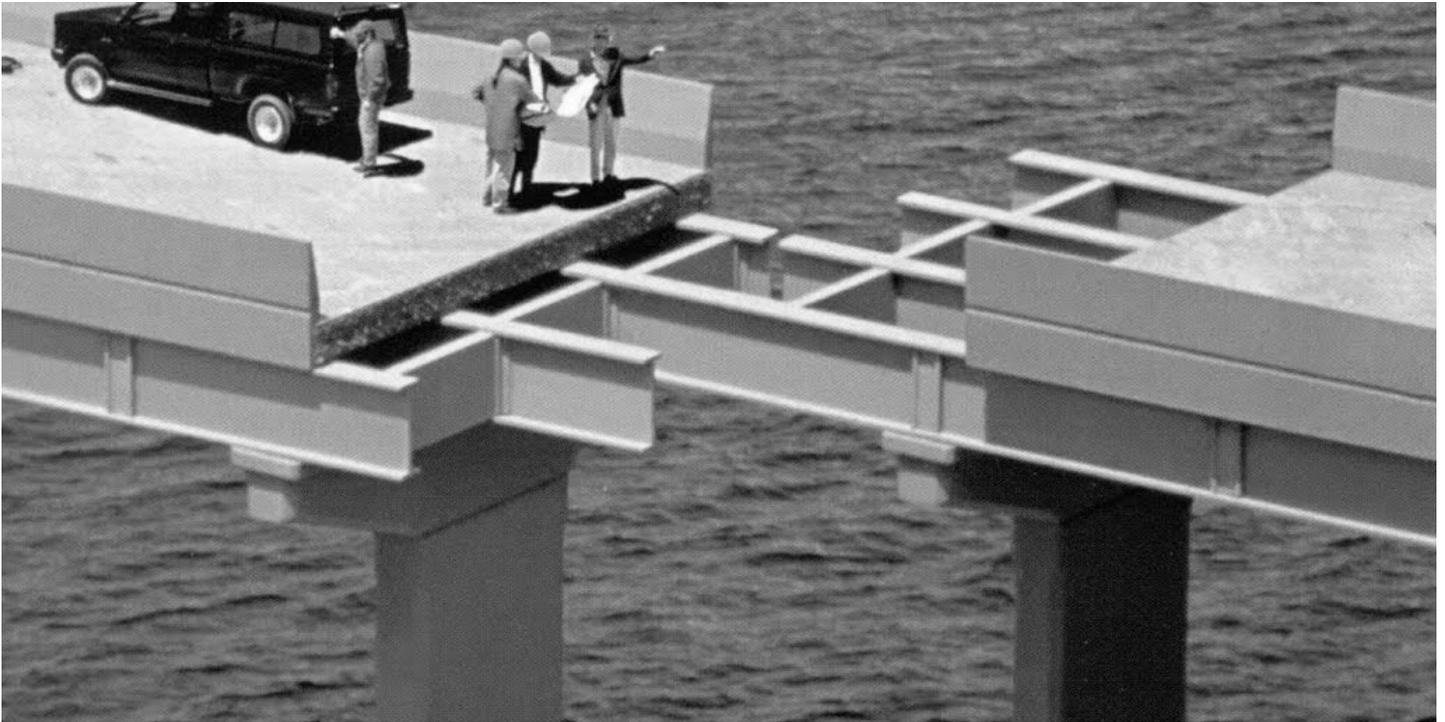
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Published continuously since 1992 by Zweig Group, Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA. ISSN 1068-1310.

Issued weekly (48 issues/year) \$250 for one-year print subscription; free electronic subscription at [thezweigletter.com/subscribe](http://thezweigletter.com/subscribe)

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## OPINION



# Does quality matter?

We all know it does, but it's also hard to define, hard to achieve, and if we fail in our pursuit of it, the consequences can be severe.



**Stephen  
Lucy**

### BEST PRACTICES

**T**he word “quality” seems to be constantly discussed in our industry, especially as a basis of differentiating from our competitors. We have the best quality, the highest quality, exceptional quality, and the list goes on and on. But what does that really mean? And is it really a differentiator of your firm?

Ours is not an industry that mass produces a single product and thus we cannot easily evaluate quality by monitoring reject rates or by streamlining our work flow through automation. Quality is easy to define when you are producing the same thing over and over again. Consider the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the ISO Excellence Award. Both recognize performance excellence, based on process improvements and technical standardizations that impact organizational success and achievement. That is a hard task to track when it comes to the built environment.

Each project has a unique set of requirements and every project is produced with a unique set of hands. There is no assembly line where everyone is doing the same task every day. Our supply chain varies because we use different people and companies for different services. From pressures to shortcut a process, fast-track a project, along with incompatible levels of experience,

implemented by people we rarely get to know or see, the opportunity for overlooking quality as a deliverable far exceeds any other.

“Creating and leading a firm that focuses on the quality of its deliverables from start to finish not only builds one’s culture but ensures growth and success.”

Although project teams expect quality in their deliverables, each member of that team aims to achieve that independently. Architects are creative and seek a unique legacy structure. Contractors are taught that you build it on schedule and budget at all costs. Engineers are detail driven but they are called upon to respond quickly to

See STEPHEN LUCY, page 4



## ON THE MOVE

### DPS GROUP EXPANDS VIRTUAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OFFERINGS WITH ADDITION OF ERIC ROSS: RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN THE FIELD BRINGS MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE LEADING VIRTUAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION AND BIM FOR A VARIETY OF COMPLEX PROJECTS

**DPS Group**, a privately-owned, global engineering, procurement, construction management, and validation firm serving high-tech process industries, has announced that Eric Ross has joined the firm as virtual design and construction manager for U.S. Operations in the firm's Albany, New York office. Ross will oversee virtual design and construction and building information modeling for all DPS projects within the United States.

Serving high-tech industries around the world, DPS designs and builds facilities that turn scientific innovations into life-saving and

life-enhancing products. The firm delivers full-service engineering across a range of disciplines, including project management, procurement, design, construction management, health and safety management, commissioning, qualification, and facility start-up. In 2015, DPS opened its Albany office with a focus on the advanced technology, micro-electronics, semi-conductor, and life-sciences industries. Ross's team will work collaboratively with DPS project teams to improve efficiencies and drive best-in-class quality performance for DPS clients. Current projects include Global Foundries, Aim Photonics, and NextGen.

Ross brings more than 20 years of design and construction experience in advanced technology facilities, life science, and related process industries, and has worked on a variety of project types ranging from pharmaceutical,

biotech, ultra-pure water, chemical, process lateral services, tool install, and bulk gas projects. He has managed capital projects for clients such as Bristol Meyers Squibb, Intel, IBM, and Amgen. Ross received a professional certification of management for building information modeling from the Associated General Contractors of America. Fewer than 800 professionals in the U.S. have earned this certification.

DPS Group is a global engineering, consulting, and project management company, serving high-tech industries around the world. DPS delivers services for clients across the complete engineering and construction value chain including feasibility studies, concepts, consulting, architecture, engineering, procurement, construction management, commissioning, qualification, and validation, in addition to contingent staffing solutions.

STEPHEN LUCY, from page 3

unforeseen technical issues. And the owner may have unrealistic expectations for results.

If that is not enough, we set our professional fees for a project that might last years based on a brief description of someone's vision and as a percentage of construction cost, a cost per square foot, a cost per anticipated drawing count or some other completely irrational basis. For these, we have only ourselves to blame.

"If you do not have quality, you do not have repeat clients. If you do not have quality, you get complacent employees. If you do not have quality, there is constant rework and you will not have profit. With so much at stake, the ultimate answer to our question is that quality absolutely matters!"

How do we not think we have quality issues given these variables? And how do you not despair, update your resume, and seek employment in a more rational industry?

At a root level, quality becomes doing what you say you will do. By not doing quality work, you are deceiving yourself, your staff and your clients, and you are putting your firm at great jeopardy. We probably know firms within our own network that do not offer quality, and it takes tremendous effort to get out of the downward momentum. Overall quality issues can drive a firm to success or failure.

We can learn from other industries and begin to implement more holistic approaches to quality assurance and quality control. For example, ISO 9000 standards are based on seven quality management principles for organizational improvements. These principles are:

**1) Customer focus.** The more you know about your client, the easier it is to meet their requirements for a successful project.

**2) Leadership.** Quality begins at the top and must always be ingrained in the actions of firm leadership. If we as leaders do not clearly exhibit and embrace quality, why should anyone else in the firm?

**3) Engagement of people.** All staff must be involved in the creation and maintenance of a quality focused culture.

**4) Process approach.** You need a consistent process and consistent monitoring of that process. This includes all aspects of your company from design to accounting to human resources.

**5) Improvement.** Set metrics by which to evaluate the system and adjust your processes as needed. Nothing is 100 percent perfect so there will be areas of needed improvement.

**6) Evidence based decision making.** Make decisions based on the hard facts of what has worked best for your firm. Knowledge management is essential for this task to succeed.

**7) Relationship management.** Be proactive in management of internal and external relationships and hold people accountable for their actions.

Creating and leading a firm that focuses on the quality of its deliverables from start to finish not only builds one's culture but ensures growth and success. Finding a way to standardize that effort is paramount, and we need to know how to communicate and manage our staff through these standardized processes. If you can provide the context as to why your firm does certain things routinely in the same manner, then your team will understand, and, hopefully, embrace your quality processes.

When quality is viewed from a business perspective, the lack of it can impact morale, finances, deadlines, and results. If you do not have quality, you do not have repeat clients. If you do not have quality, you get complacent employees. If you do not have quality, there is constant rework and you will not have profit. With so much at stake, the ultimate answer to our question is that quality absolutely matters! ▀

STEPHEN LUCY is CEO of JQ with offices in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock and San Antonio, Texas. Contact him at [slucy@jqeng.com](mailto:slucy@jqeng.com).



## ZWEIG GROUP 2019 EVENT SCHEDULE

<b>MAR</b>	13-15 27	New Orleans, LA Kansas City, MO	<b>Successful Successor Roundtable Excellence in Project Management</b>
<b>APR</b>	10-12 24-25	TBD Dallas, TX	<b>CEO Roundtable Retreat The Principals Academy</b>
<b>MAY</b>	22-23	Philadelphia, PA	<b>Leadership Skills for AEC Professionals</b>
<b>JUN</b>	5-6 20 21	Seattle, WA Chicago, IL Chicago, IL	<b>The Principals Academy Real Marketing &amp; Branding for AEC Firms AEC Business Development Training</b>
<b>JUL</b>	17-18	Minneapolis, MN	<b>The Principals Academy</b>
<b>SEP</b>	18-20	Las Vegas, NV	<b>Hot Firm &amp; A/E Industry Awards Conference</b>
<b>OCT</b>	10 11 23-24	Houston, TX Houston, TX New York, NY	<b>Real Marketing &amp; Branding for AEC Firms AEC Business Development Training The Principals Academy</b>
<b>NOV</b>	13-14	Irvine, CA	<b>Leadership Skills for AEC Professionals</b>

For more information

[www.zweiggroup.com/seminars/](http://www.zweiggroup.com/seminars/)



## PROFILE

# Jon Lindberg

President  
Gale Associates Inc.




## Conference call: Jon Lindberg

President of Gale Associates Inc. (Best Firm #18 Multi-discipline for 2018), a 115-person consulting firm based in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent

“Gale has been involved with a number of design-build procurements, primarily for our federal agency clients,” Lindberg says. “Our success can be attributed to a couple of key factors: knowing your partner (builder) and a strong risk management process. If the contract terms and conditions are not favorable, we walk.”

### A CONVERSATION WITH JON LINDBERG.

**The Zweig Letter: 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?**

**Jon Lindberg:** Gale is 100 percent organic. I constantly receive calls and inquiries regarding our interest in buying, selling, or merging. Growing organically is akin to sustainability. We don’t hire staff specifically for a large project, just to release them when the project is done. Systematically hiring and training capable and driven staff for depth and opportunity equals longevity and loyalty. If a firm does not provide staff with a profession and a future – why should they stay? It has been working for Gale for 54-plus years and gives those with loyalty and drive an opportunity to be a leader and owner.

**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?**

**JL:** Gale is currently in its fourth ownership transition in 54-plus years. Although today’s environment appears to be dominated by M&A, Gale has remained an organically-grown firm and will continue to give motivated staff the opportunity to be an owner. Ownership transitions take years and they are constantly morphing. If today’s managing partners/principals have not been transitioning staff from the day they are employed, the choices will come down to sell externally or establish an ESOP! At Gale, we’ll continue the internal transition and ownership route.

**TZL: There are AEC leaders who say profit centers create corrosive internal competition for firm resources. What’s your opinion on profit centers?**

**JL:** In today’s quickly-changing economic landscape, businesses have to understand their market share and their revenue producers. We use profit centers to gauge performance and investment. As our leadership team is unified, when the

profit centers succeed, the firm succeeds. We are structured to share staff resources, and we share profits both corporately and individually. So far, it works for us.

**TZL: 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?**

**JL:** Monthly and annual financials are shared with partners, discipline managers, and regional/office managers. Project financials are transparent and available daily to project managers, project engineers, and other staff, depending on roles. This allows staff resources and scheduling to be cross reviewed and balanced throughout our six offices.

**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?**

**JL:** Gale has been involved with a number of design-build procurements, primarily for our federal agency clients. Our success can be attributed to a couple of key factors: knowing your partner (builder) and a strong risk management process. If the contract terms and conditions are not favorable, we walk. We will be responsible for our design liability, but not construction liability. Knowing and trusting the "B" (builder/contractor) is a critical factor. We want the contractor to have the mindset to "do the right thing," not just the less expensive way to save money or make money. Finally, having an experienced and savvy team leader (the "A" team) running it for Gale is important. The "A" team understands the risks inherent with design-build procurement/delivery and proactively manages that risk.

**TZL: The talent war in the AEC 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?**

**JL:** To retain, we communicate and provide career paths for growth and opportunity, which we constantly revisit. We are in the middle of re-aligning our strategic plan and goals to bring us through the next five years. This is coinciding with ongoing leadership transitions. The committee (comprised of about 25 percent of staff) is a cross-section of Gale, with all disciplines, operations, and offices represented. We encourage staff to be involved in all aspects of our business: human resources, marketing, and technical organizations. We realize we can't keep everyone but we will provide support and opportunity to help them decide to stay at Gale.

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

**JL:** We are constantly looking for discipline leaders, project managers, and engineers/architects of all experience levels in all of our offices. As a professional services consulting and design firm, the search for experienced staff is constant and never ending. Our policy now includes heavier recruiting for entry-level engineers and architects. Once hired, they go through strong technical and non-technical training programs to get them up to speed quicker (two years rather than three to four years). This has provided us with good depth as we add one to two entry level staff for each discipline and each office every year – whether workloads demand it or not.

**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?**

**JL:** Our formula is simple. All staff are encouraged to sell. We typically do not have dedicated business development professionals. All staff (not just technical) are encouraged to seek out opportunities and potential new clients. In our firm, "power comes to those that bring in work." Everyone can contribute.

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

**JL:** Gale offers five distinct and somewhat differing technical disciplines. Each discipline is fairly independent of the other; however, they have similar public/private sector client bases. Cross-selling our technical disciplines has recently become a greater priority at Gale. Partnering with other firms for a "piece of the pie," rather than holding out for the whole pie, is also increasing and strengthening our revenue stream.

**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?**

**JL:** Project manager workload is a constant concern. This position is the "workhorse" of any professional services corporation. It's been this way for as long as I've been in this business. Project managers are responsible for everything: getting clients,

See CONFERENCE CALL, page 8



**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1964

**HEADQUARTERS:** Weymouth, MA

**OFFICES:** 6 offices in 6 states:

- Massachusetts
- Florida
- Maryland
- Connecticut
- Virginia
- New Hampshire

**NO. OF EMPLOYEES:** 115

**SERVICES:**

- Building enclosure design and consulting
- Building enclosure commissioning
- Athletic facilities planning and design
- Airport engineering and planning
- Civil engineering
- Structural engineering

**SUSTAINABILITY – WALK**

**THE TALK:** Since its inception, Gale's Civil Engineering Group has emphasized sustainability and resource conservation in site development and transportation projects. It's commitment to sustainability is also reflected in the construction of its corporate headquarters where they installed an "EcoSmart" roof and insulation that has a 40 year reuse warranty and meets green building codes. Its Sustainability Task Force works to improve the sustainability of its business culture through programmed communication, education and change.



Gale employees at a staff clambake.

CONFERENCE CALL, from page 7

managing clients and staff, getting paid, making a profit, getting the clients to come back, and growing and mentoring staff. The list goes on. We attempt to spread the project manager assignments and provide the appropriate staff back up to avoid the “crash and burn” scenario. So far, it appears to be working. We also support a healthy vacation allowance, flex time, and bonus sharing based on profitability, which also helps!

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

**JL:** At Gale, everyone has a voice. All ideas are considered and staff is encouraged to contribute to business and discipline development. Our staff, particularly our younger staff, are often the ones that recognize opportunity. Cross selling and understanding client needs in relationship to what Gale brings to the table results in growth. Growth is key to opportunity. Opportunity is key to staff retention and the future of the employee and firm.

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

**JL:** If I had the crystal ball for this answer, I would give up my day job. Given today’s political environment, I don’t feel anyone can be infinitely positive regarding the potential fallout from tariffs, immigration, and foreign policy. What I can be somewhat confident in is healthcare and our aging population. Gale’s market is strong with higher education, healthcare, and institutional clients. We plan on sticking with and expanding this base. Downturns in the economy typically affect private industry more than public, so we will continue to service state, municipal, and federal agency clients.

**TZL: Measuring the effectiveness of marketing is difficult to do using hard metrics for ROI. How do you evaluate the success/failure of your firm’s marketing efforts when results could take months, or even years, to materialize? Do you track any metrics to guide your marketing plan?**

**JL:** We have found it difficult to measure our success with marketing. Marketing costs and expenses are tracked to our profit centers so we can extrapolate our return on marketing and business development efforts. When entering a

new geographic region with an existing discipline, we give it three years to show a return, even a marginal one, prior to making a decision. Based on my experience, investments in marketing and business development are critical to the health of the firm, in good times and, more importantly, in not so good times.

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

**JL:** The biggest lesson for me has been allowing marginal, underperforming staff that are not excited to be part of Gale to remain. Marginal employees drag others down and do not put a proactive effort into their assignments, which can be a liability to the corporation. Poor attention to detail can be costly through “re-design,” design liability or staff morale. When workload is strong, it’s easy to allow this to continue. The lesson is – don’t let it. Address poor and marginal performance immediately.

**TZL: Do you use historical performance data or metrics to establish project billable hours and how does the type of contract play into determining the project budget?**

**JL:** While we track all project financials to maintain historical data for fees and profit, we do not establish fees based on this information alone. Each opportunity is unique. While we have learning lessons on many projects and clients, no two are identical. So, the response is – no, we don’t use historical data alone to determine new opportunity fees. However, the information is useful when we consider client needs and expectations.

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

**JL:** My gut instinct says that the current boom our profession and industries are experiencing will start to soften by early 2019. We anticipate certain markets will remain strong, such as healthcare and military. However, those that are tied more to speculation, like residential and endowment growth, may soften. But, I can say that my crystal ball is not always accurate. Gale will remain diversified with our services and clients to help insulate the firm from the fluctuations of the economy. Not unlike the balanced portfolio the investment experts tell us to maintain. ▀



## Yes, accountability

Leading through accountability takes a willingness to do a better job at recognizing challenges and accepting feedback toward positive change.



**Donald  
Miller**

**GUEST  
SPEAKER**

**H**ave you ever worked with someone who can't perform their basic job functions? Have you ever asked yourself, "Who's holding them accountable and why aren't they getting involved?"

In this industry, we work with unfair deadlines, demanding clients, poorly trained staff, unclear expectations, low budgets, and a lot of other stuff that's seemingly out of our control. Or is it? One thing we have tangible control over is how we individually react to stressors, and how we affect those around us with our ability to take ownership of problems. Much of our reaction is guided by our own personal happiness. Mom always said, "Donnie, never let anyone steal your joy." Well, now in my 40s, I have taken this to mean, "Find joy in developing others as they develop me." If you have ever experienced the jubilation of leading someone to a fruitful understanding, you know what I'm talking about. Those who instruct, guide, and coach others toward a healthy perspective find satisfaction in so doing.

The key to all this is to keep from "falling below

the line" when things go wrong. Don't point fingers at others and don't come up with excuses. Rather, take an active role in problem solving.

"Leading through accountability takes a willingness to do a better job at recognizing challenges and accepting feedback toward positive change."

We have all been there when something happened and the first words out of our mouths were, "It is his/her fault," or statements like, "I can't control that," or "It's not my job," or "You never told me the priority," or my favorite: "What would you

See DONALD MILLER, page 10



## BUSINESS NEWS

**FAULKNER DESIGN GROUP RECEIVES MERIT AT 2018 AURORA AWARDS** Faulkner Design Group, a leading national interior architecture and design firm, recently garnered six accolades at the 2018 Gold Nugget Awards. The highly esteemed Aurora Awards have been recognizing the top innovators in design, planning, and development for nearly 40 years. This year's competitive field boasted more than 400 entries from the southeast region of the nation.

FDG's local Dallas project, One Uptown, brought home a Grand Aurora Award in the Best Multifamily Housing Community-5 Stories or More category, in addition to a Silver Aurora Award in the Best Mixed Use Project category. One Uptown is the creation of a visionary builder and a local team of architects, designers, and builders personally connected with the lifestyle of Uptown Dallas. With one common vision, they carefully crafted a stunning, one-of-a-kind icon that complements the lux lifestyles of its residents with its curved facade, floor-to-ceiling glass, and glass bottom pool directly above the porte-cochère.

Another local Dallas project, Broadstone LTD, captured awards in two categories: Grand in Best Interior Merchandising of an Apartment,

and Silver in Residential Community of the Year. Broadstone LTD is located in Trinity Groves, a Dallas neighborhood currently undergoing extensive revitalization to leave behind decades of neglect and blight in an industrial area. When planning Broadstone LTD, designers sought to incorporate the history, art, and overall urban feel of this authentic Dallas neighborhood.

Austin-based project The Michael at Presidio was awarded a Grand Aurora Award for the Best Multifamily Housing Community-Up to 4 Stories category. The Michael at Presidio is at the crossroads of casual living and true Austin charm. Located in the booming North Austin neighborhood, this garden-apartment community is situated on sprawling acres of oak trees, canals, and green space. With pedestrian trails and a resort-style amenities center, residents have recreation and leisure at their fingertips.

Plano-based project Broadstone Evoke was awarded a Silver Aurora Award in the Best Multifamily Housing Community-5 Stories or More category. The main objective of Broadstone Evoke was to offer a luxurious, upscale lifestyle that was mindful of residents' everyday experience, and still approachable

for young professionals and families relocating to the area. Developers and designers alike sought to create a vacation-like atmosphere through the high-end amenities and lush in-unit accommodations.

Award recipients were announced at the Aurora Awards Gala in August at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Conference Center in Orlando, Florida.

FDG, is a fully integrated interior architecture and design firm specializing in multifamily housing and senior living environments, completing more 650,000 units in more than 2,000 communities across 37 states, from Hawaii to New York, and even Canada, working with the largest developers, contractors, real estate investment groups, and management firms in the country for 26 years. These communities are surpassing the industry standard for creativity and quality, earning a reputation as the most highly sought after properties on the market. FDG offers comprehensive design services during the architectural development and construction planning phases of projects, leading the industry with cutting-edge virtual tools and technology, approaching each design solution as a fingerprint in which no two are alike.

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rather me focus on? Tell me what to do.” Do any of these instill confidence in either party? Absolutely not. Leading through accountability takes a willingness to do a better job at recognizing challenges and accepting feedback toward positive change.

“Creating a culture of accountability will certainly influence the bottom line. Since we have started our best leadership practices, accountability training, and other employee-owned initiatives, we have seen a significant increase in revenue and employee engagement.”

And trust me, not owning up to your part in making things better or worse is a slippery slope that leads to poor decisions. I have found that being upfront, kind, and patient is the key to accountable leadership. Communication should also be clear and deliberate. For example, if a key goal of the firm is to decrease employee attrition by 5 percent, then you may want to walk your department heads through the “why” of the quality assurance/quality control process, and how it could increase employee engagement and ultimately win their buy-in. We each have a role to play within the realm of accountability, we just sometimes lose our “why” and create excuses for short-term losses.

There is a clear difference between doing work and working toward achieving a larger goal or result. When we at Cuhaci & Peterson figured this out, we assembled something called OKRs (objectives and key results), goals that are inherently measurable and, more importantly, achievable in a reasonable period of time. These firm-wide OKRs really helped each staff member focus on their contribution to something larger, like higher profitability and increased employee engagement. Focus people on results, empower them to decide and think for themselves, give them the tools and training they will need, and partner with clients who will take the journey with you. This makes it almost impossible to fail. Like they say, your clients are only as satisfied as your employees.

We at C&P have spent nearly 40 years growing from three people to more than 265 throughout the country serving a wide array of diverse clients. The decades have taught us how to see the need to evolve and change within the industry. Many are still under the mindset that a command-and-control culture is still effective. I say try to win the hearts and minds of your staff while calling out their errors.

Creating a culture of accountability will certainly influence the bottom line. Since we have started our best leadership practices, accountability training, and other employee-owned initiatives, we have seen a significant increase in revenue and employee engagement. We still have a long way to go, but are fully committed to following through with our effort to become successful through self-accountability. ▀

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## Business development

The process must be deliberate and multifaceted, but don't forget the human touch. Be yourself and enjoy finding clients that reflect your values.



**Jonathan  
Savage**

**GUEST  
SPEAKER**

Recently, I had a conversation with a very busy, newly promoted division manager who asked my advice on how to “market” our company’s services to his clients at an upcoming Chamber of Commerce event.

It gave me the opportunity to think carefully about my response, because I don’t get asked this question on a daily basis. This question also forced me to re-focus on our overall business development “culture,” how we portray and brand ourselves internally and externally, and how we execute this strategy at all levels of our management structure.

I came up with the following points that may serve as foundation principles for others:

- **Teamwork/culture of support and cross marketing.** Our BD team habitually holds regular internal team meetings and supports internal “wayfinding” processes for project experience and proposal advice; these functions are great internal cross-marketing tools. Internal BD “hot topics” are also regularly discussed and encouraged (design-build, GIS, new technologies, etc.).
- **Consistent internal communications/messages.** Clearly defined chains of command, reporting struc-

tures, and targeted campaigns are coordinated with the corporate communications staff for consistency and “truth checking” of needs and support requirements. At our company, we ensure that every manager, PM, and BD person has prepared an “elevator speech,” that we are cognizant of everyone else’s core discipline, duties and responsibilities, and that we reinforce these roles (and BD prospects) throughout our corporate footprint.

- **Consistent external communications/messages.** Our BD and senior management teams closely coordinate alliances with design-build contractors, architects, and other engineering firms. These “strategic teaming partnerships” are critical to the firm’s annual revenue growth, and coordination of effort is important to avoid duplication of effort and increase our win percentages.
- **Accountability and results reporting.** Engineers, PMs, and executive staff are involved in the

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## ON THE MOVE

**WGI ANNOUNCES TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER AND INDUSTRY VETERAN GREGORY SAUTER, PE JOINS FIRM AS PRESIDENT** David Wantman, PE, announced that he will be sharing the leadership of **WGI** with newly hired president, Gregory Sauter, PE, and that he will step fully into the role of CEO – a carefully crafted strategic initiative more than a year in the making.

“I will be bifurcating my title from president and CEO to just CEO,” says Wantman, who assumed leadership of the firm from his father, Joel, who founded the company in 1972. “Greg has a tremendous reputation in our profession as part of the leadership team with one of the largest firms in the world as it rocketed from a few thousand employees to over 100,000 professionals and the *ENR* 500 top ranking.

“We are at a unique time in our industry and Greg also has exceptional experience in advancing cutting-edge technologies that are transforming how we envision, design, and deliver infrastructure. That provides **WGI** with a special opportunity to follow the example and experience of someone fully qualified to assist with the many challenges that **WGI** will face as we execute our 2025 vision of 1,000 associates and \$200 million in revenue.”

Sauter’s qualifications and experience are both broad and deep. He is best characterized as someone operating, “at the intersection of culture, technology, and performance; driving success for organizations via cultural transformation, leveraging advanced

technologies, with a commitment to ethics, integrity, and authentic leadership.”  
“I am very excited to be joining a dynamic and rapidly growing firm like **WGI** with such a strong culture and team which punches way above their weight. I am particularly enthusiastic about David’s clear strategic vision for the future and the opportunity to leverage both my industry and technology experience as part of that vision. Digitization is changing our industry and we are excited to be at the forefront of that change,” says Sauter.

During Sauter’s 15 years with the largest design firm in the world, his commitment to ethics, people, leadership, corporate social responsibility, excellence, sustainability, and safety garnered national and international awards including Ethisphere’s 100 most ethical companies list, the Gold American Business Awards, multiple International Business Awards, and Newsweek’s Top 500 Greenest Companies. Sauter is also the co-founder of Smart City Works, the world’s first business actuator, helping to accelerate early stage companies focused on civil infrastructure and advance technologies in mature organizations.

“It is more than just Greg’s leadership and commitment to transformative technology that attracted **WGI**,” Wantman adds. “His reputation as a civic leader, teacher, humanitarian, entrepreneur, and global thinker dovetails with the vision I and the **WGI** Leadership Team have for our associates, our corporate culture, and our future.”

The last several years, Sauter’s time has been well spent, beginning with his involvement in

Engineers Without Borders as past president and board chairman; as an adjunct professor at Columbia University in New York City teaching global entrepreneurship and innovation in civil engineering; as board director of OmniEarth, working with companies that recognize the Earth is a vibrant and interactive system, and therefore these modern global businesses need to understand, manage, and predict the world around them with quantitative geoanalytics; president and CEO at Crossroads Advisory, a consultancy committed to advancing leadership through executive and organizational transformation, ethics, integrity, and authentic leadership; and as founder of Smart City Works, a business accelerator working to improve livability and resilience in cities through focus on the built environment, dramatically changing the way civil infrastructure is designed, built, and operated.

Greg Sauter will divide his time between New Jersey and **WGI**’s South Florida headquarters, and **WGI**’s 13 offices in Florida, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas.

As a multidisciplinary consulting firm, **WGI** has 14 offices in six states, serving an active client base in more than 30 states, specializing in the following disciplines: land development/municipal engineering, transportation engineering, parking solutions, geospatial services, subsurface utility engineering, structures, water resources, landscape architecture, environmental sciences, architecture, land planning, and creative services.

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development, review, and buy-in to business plans and annual revenue projections for our firm, based on corporate “strategic plan” goals. Regional VPs and office directors encourage these “roll-up” projections and follow up with results on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. These projections are coordinated with the executive staff and incorporated into annual operations budgets.

Our BD staff members set their own expectations every year, through the development of annual business development plans. BD plans are updated, revised, and results are tabulated every quarter and on an annual basis. Our CRM lead and proposal databases are updated on an “as-needed” basis and are part of the annual review process for BD staff.

- **Persistence/bird-dogging/reminders/timely follow-ups.** We rely heavily on CRM to keep us all focused on our go/no-go processes and account management objectives. Suffice it to say, any company needs a centralized proposal and client management system to ensure a high-quality approach to and for clients and their objectives. CRM also plays a substantial role in following up on our numerous, annual proposal submittals and ensuring that timely follow-ups occur.

**And my advice to our busy division manager? Be yourself, find common interests, and don’t be intimidated by the**

“Be yourself, find common interests, and don’t be intimidated by the ‘groups’ in the room of other Chamber folks ... Breaking the ice with a new contact, and discussing your ‘elevator speech’ is the best, most effective way to meet folks and find those new clients that reflect your personal and corporate values.”

“groups” in the room of other Chamber folks. People are just people; we naturally gravitate to those we know. Breaking the ice with a new contact, and discussing your “elevator speech” is the best, most effective way to meet folks and find those new clients that reflect your personal and corporate values. You’ll be surprised how quickly you will be part of the “group discussions” in the room, and meeting people consistently. It’s really that easy!

**Now, get out there and get some business! ▀**

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