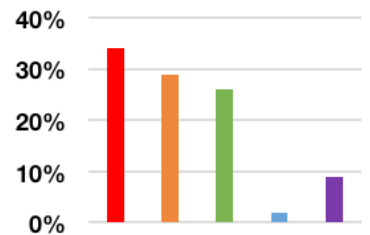


TRENDLINES

Sharing financial data for projects



According to Zweig Group's 2017 *Recruitment & Retention Survey*, over a quarter of responding firms share financial data for projects (revenue, profits, fees, chargeability), with the **entire firm**. More firms, 34 percent, share data only with those **employees who worked on the project**, and 29 percent only share with the **principal in charge and the team's Project Manager**. Only two percent share data with **just the principal in charge**, while almost 10 percent **use some other method** to communicate revenue and project profits with the firm.



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Social media

“Even though the odds are against it, you may be someone who doesn’t participate in social media and therefore think it doesn’t affect you. Think again!”



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

I was thinking about social media and what a phenomenon it is and how it is now such a big part of our culture. Even though the odds are against it, you may be someone who doesn’t participate in social media and therefore think it doesn’t affect you. Think again! It has a huge impact on communications, work environment, productivity, and marketing. I don’t think any of us realize how big of an impact it has made on our entire way of life.

Here are my thoughts:

- 1) Social media is a huge distraction in the office.** Some people are so addicted to it they never put their phone down. They have to see who “liked” their Facebook post, who “hearted” their Instagram post, and who retweeted their latest tweet on Twitter as soon as it happens. This means they may not be paying attention and might miss critical information that affects how they do their job. I don’t have the answer as to how to deal with this, but there’s a statistic out there that shows you what we’re up against – one out of every eight minutes spent online was spent on Facebook. That means a lot of time is wasted.
- 2) Social media polarizes people.** I am certain it is a big reason for the divide in our society today. It seems like there are two camps on everything. They are polar opposites. And each is completely condemning the other camp as if they don’t deserve to live because of their position on the POTUS, or gun control, or gay marriage, or global warming, or legalizing marijuana, or whatever. And the silly arguments people get into – no one changes their mind about something because of something someone says on social media! All it does is further the divide.

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BUSINESS NEWS

FRANKLIN PARTNERS AND WRIGHT HEEREMA ARCHITECTS ANNOUNCE ACQUISITION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER OFFICEMAX HEADQUARTERS

Franklin Partners and Wright Heerema Architects announced the redevelopment of the former OfficeMax headquarters at 263 Shuman Boulevard in Naperville, Illinois. Franklin Partners, in a joint venture with Bixby Bridge Capital, acquired the property last week.

The 350,000-square-foot office building will be reinvented as a socially-activated, multi-tenant building after a long life as a corporate headquarters location, dating back to its initial development in 1987 for AT&T. The main entrance and atrium will be redesigned with a grand staircase and stadium seating leading down to a bright, airy lower level featuring baristas, a market-style deli, full fitness center, co-working lounges, and other amenities more typical of a Chicago high-rise than the surrounding suburban offices. The redevelopment plans are in progress, with construction scheduled to begin later this year and completion set for early 2019. No tenants currently occupy the building, which is centrally located off Interstate 88 with prominent visibility.

“There’s an unmet need to deliver an amenity-rich workplace experience in the heart of Chicago’s western suburbs,” observes Ray Warner, partner, Franklin Partners. “We are redeveloping this high-quality Class A office building that’s been under-utilized for many years to deliver a unique, millennial workforce-friendly destination.”

“Contrary to popular belief, there are plenty of

suburban millennials – and they are beginning to demand the same types of workplace amenities as their more urban counterparts,” observes Roger Heerema, principal of Wright Heerema Architects. “From the baristas and wellness amenities to a foodie-friendly marketplace, we’re bringing Fulton Market to Naperville.”

The Colliers International team of Francis Prock and David Florent, both principals in the firm’s office advisory group, will serve as exclusive leasing agents for the renovated offices.

Franklin Partners and Wright Heerema have redeveloped properties together for more than 15 years in Chicago, its suburbs, and in Western Michigan. Bringing amenities typically found in popular city centers to smaller cities and suburbs, the two firms have transformed the workplace experience for commercial tenants, their employees, and the surrounding communities.

Wright Heerema Architects is an architectural firm that provides integrated master planning, programming, architecture, and interior design services.

Founded in 1995, Franklin Partners has developed more than 20,000,000 square feet of commercial real estate. Franklin Partners’ experience allows the company to be adaptable in an ever-changing real estate market while maintaining a reputation of delivering innovative solutions for under-utilized assets. Franklin Partners’ portfolio spans Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri, where the firm acquires, redevelops, builds, and owns real estate with a focus in industrial and office.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

3) What your people put on social media could come back to hurt your firm. Because society is so polarized it means that anything anyone puts out there that isn’t a picture of their kid, cat, or what they ate for dinner, has the potential to alienate someone. I saw a great example of that the other day on Facebook where someone posted a video about houses built from recycled plastic blocks. It set off an argument when another person said we shouldn’t have so many plastic containers in the first place and re-using them like this takes the heat off of manufacturers to do something else. It seems like **EVERYTHING** could set off an argument. Even a cat pic could do so if the cat was outside. Or a dog pic because it had a shock collar on it. Or a food pic because someone else thought it was unhealthy. And I haven’t even gotten into politics, religion, sports, and child-rearing philosophy. All of these things – even things you couldn’t imagine anyone would ever object to – could cause someone who is a client or potential client to not want to work with someone in your firm.

4) If you are ignoring social media as a marketing tool, you’re crazy. There’s still plenty that can be done with it for free. It is immediate. Your communications can go viral. There’s just so many positive aspects of it as a marketing tool. But to use it effectively takes some smarts. You can’t just post pics of endless employee birthday celebrations. There has to be something more substantive than that to communicate your specialized knowledge and unique understanding. Data. Success stories. Failure stories. Interesting project photos. Interviews. Links to blog posts.

Ignoring social media today doesn’t make any sense. You’re too smart for that! ▀

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THE ZWEIG LETTER

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The wrong language

Social media isn't nuclear physics, but you have to have the right voice for the right channel, otherwise you're speaking Spanish in China.



**Christina
Zweig
Niehues**

**MARKETING
MATTERS**

Would you walk up to someone at a cocktail party and say, “Attending a seminar on project management,” and then walk away? Probably not, but it’s a fairly common and acceptable statement for most AEC firms to post on social media with a picture. I’ve seen some pretty grievous breaches of marketing etiquette lately, and the only thing I’m certain of is that none of them were on purpose.

Marketing in the digital world can be tough. Every platform has its own set of rules and customs. It’s important to make sure you follow the norms of the platform you are speaking on, and most importantly, make sure you are speaking the same language as your clients. For example, if you are in China, you might not want to speak Spanish. Get the gist?

“Marketing in the digital world can be tough. Every platform has its own set of rules and customs.”

I did a humorous post on this last year for [social media](#), and now it’s time for an update. Here are a few guidelines:

- Your website and any social media platforms owned

and operated by your firm are essentially a business storefront. Operate them as such. Set up your channels with the appropriate information. A picture that is representative of your firm or logo, address, contact information (including phone number), hours, and website (for other channels), all need to be clear and available. If someone does try to get in contact with you, don’t make them hunt around to figure out how to best reach you.

- Remember the Five Ws (Who, What, When, Where, and Why). Most social media posts need to have at least two of these, preferably more. Advertisements need to have three or more! A picture may be worth a thousand words, but you still have to have some of the Ws.
- “Stop trying to make ‘fetch’ happen.” If you’ve ever seen *Mean Girls*, you know exactly what I’m talking about. A character in the movie, Gretchen, keeps

See CHRISTINA ZWEIF NIEHUES, page 4



ON THE MOVE

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL CONTINUES GROWTH PLAN FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OPERATIONS WITH NEW OFFICE EXECUTIVES IN SANTA ANA AND SAN DIEGO: BOB SCHLESINGER AND TRUDI LIM PROMOTED TO OFFICE EXECUTIVES IN SANTA ANA AND SAN DIEGO, RESPECTIVELY

Michael Baker International, a global leader in engineering, planning, and consulting services, announced two promotions in Southern California to help strengthen the firm's West Region. Bob Schlesinger, senior vice president, has been promoted to office executive for the firm's Santa Ana, California, office, and Trudi Lim, vice president, has been promoted to office executive in the firm's San Diego, California, office.

"The infrastructure challenges facing California present opportunities to expand all of our practice areas. We will continue to provide our clients with solutions to assist in overcoming their most complex challenges," said Michael Conaboy, P.E., senior vice president and regional director for Michael Baker International's West Region. "Michael Baker International has made a strategic goal to support growth opportunities in the West Region. Bob and Trudi have been invaluable assets to the firm and our efforts in the region, and I am confident that their expertise and deep professional networks will lead to success in their new roles as we expand our presence in Southern California."

Schlesinger brings proven experience and

demonstrated leadership to his new role as office executive in Santa Ana, California, where he is responsible for leading the full range of Michael Baker International's expertise to the region in support of driving growth and enhancing client care for the firm's Santa Ana, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Camarillo, and Seattle, Washington offices. Most recently, Schlesinger served as the office executive for Michael Baker International's San Diego operations. He joined Michael Baker International after 29 years of active duty service in the United States Navy Civil Engineer Corps, where his final tour was as the commanding officer.

Schlesinger has experience leading engineering and facilities management organizations and directing complex design and construction programs. With a proven record of achieving high productivity and efficiency, his experience includes program management, resource management, contracting, client relations, and staff development. He is a registered professional engineer in the states of Washington and Rhode Island, and is a LEED accredited professional.

In her new position as office executive in San Diego, California, Lim is responsible for the growth and operational excellence of Michael Baker International's San Diego, California, and Carlsbad, California, offices. She has been with Michael Baker International for 14 years and brings experience in the design

and management of civil engineering projects for both the public and private sectors. Previously for Michael Baker International, Lim served as the San Diego Land Development department manager, where her responsibilities included the supervision of project managers, engineers, design and drafting personnel, and project coordination staff. Her expertise also includes entitlement processes, preparing civil engineering studies and improvement plans and construction coordination. Lim is a registered professional engineer in California and is a LEED accredited professional.

Michael Baker International is a leading provider of engineering and consulting services, including design, planning, architectural, environmental, construction, and program management. The company provides its comprehensive range of services and solutions to support United States federal, state, and municipal governments, foreign allied governments, and a wide range of commercial clients. Michael Baker International is committed to delivering a standard of excellence that fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration and technological advancement to help solve challenges for clients and the company's more than 3,000 employees in nearly 100 locations across the United States.

CHRISTINA ZWEIG NIEHUES, from page 3

trying to use the word "fetch" as an adjective in hopes that it will catch on as the next best thing. This same sentiment applies to hashtags. It's great if you make up your own that will eventually become searchable, but for marketing purposes, you need to be using hashtags that other people are using. The whole point of hashtags is that they are categorical, searchable things. You click on them to see everything that has also used this same hashtag. Hashtags also convey meaning, so make sure the ones you use mean what you think they mean. Acronyms can be dangerous, especially on Instagram and Twitter. On that note, hashtag away on Twitter and Instagram, but use them sparingly on LinkedIn and Facebook.

"It's important to make sure you follow the norms of the platform you are speaking on, and most importantly, make sure you are speaking the same language as your clients. For example, if you are in China, you might not want to speak Spanish."

- A few more specifics: In other industries, companies are now running entire businesses just off Facebook. It's completely possible. Facebook has excellent SEO. If you don't have a good website, but have a relatively active Facebook page, it

may be the very first thing someone sees when they Google your firm. Be very aware of the quality of images and types of things you are posting on this channel. It's not just a place to dump fun stuff for the heck of it.

- A random picture of a project with just a caption (the what) is not an effective stand-alone advertisement, and is super out of place on Twitter. Put more than one of those in an album on Facebook titled "Recent Projects," and you have an effective and totally appropriate marketing tool.
- Don't share what you ate for lunch on Facebook. It's just not right! But it's totally cool on Instagram, especially if you tag the restaurant location and use relevant hashtags (see below).
- LinkedIn and Facebook are great places to announce a new hire. On Twitter it will just get lost in the fray.
- Wrote a cool article? Share it on all social media channels except Instagram. Instagram is for good artful pictures only. Want to share some news? If it's on Instagram, you better have a good picture to go along with your text.

This may seem like a lot of silly rules, but they are important if you want to be seen as relevant and in touch with the rest of your community. If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email anytime and I'll be happy to help. ➤

CHRISTINA ZWEIG NIEHUES is Zweig Group's director of marketing. Contact her at christinaz@zweiggroup.com.

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The Principals Academy is two full days of **education, inspiration and networking** in signature locations across North America, providing attendees a rich experience that brings learning and personal growth to life – and brings life to learning and professional growth.

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PROFILE



Apex team performing sediment work in Oregon.

Conference call: Dave Fabianski

CEO of Apex Companies, LLC (Hot Firm #41 for 2017), a 700-person environmental engineering firm based in Rockville, Maryland.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent



Dave Fabianski, CEO, Apex Companies, LLC

“There is nothing that drives value creation for an organization more than organic growth,” Fabianski says. “Internal growth strengthens the core business, creates new opportunities for employees, facilitates investment in new services and solutions, and organic growth comes without the culture fit challenges and turbulence of acquisitions. Organic growth is also difficult.”

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVE FABIANSKI.

The Zweig Letter: There are A/E leaders who say profit centers create corrosive internal competition for firm resources. What’s your opinion on profit centers?

Dave Fabianski: When properly structured, profit centers can serve as vital growth engines for the company and if they’re managed properly, the internal competition can be constructive versus

corrosive. That said, success depends on an effective organizational design (including having the right people in the right roles), and clarity in purpose, goals, and incentives. There are challenges with profit centers, but done right they can help facilitate organic growth and margin improvement that otherwise may not be realized.

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?

DB: It’s important for staff to know how the business is performing and what the outlook is for the future. Keep in mind, the distribution of sensitive financial information needs to be controlled. There are some key performance indicators that need to be looked at weekly or bi-weekly to make timely management decisions, while other



information is best shared monthly or quarterly. I've been in small, mid-sized, and large public companies and what I've found consistent in each is that most staff members are interested in financials that are presented in the context of what it means for them (i.e., job security, growth opportunities, investments, and bonuses).

“Success depends on an effective organizational design (including having the right people in the right roles), and clarity in purpose, goals and incentives.”

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?

DF: We do our best to maintain a work environment that is enjoyable, stimulating, secure, and fulfilling. I know that sounds “pie in the sky” but if these things are missing, we risk losing our best people and future leaders. We also need to ensure that high-potential employees are identified early, set on a development (growth) path, and then given the opportunity to take on bigger roles and greater challenges. They can't be stuck in a role that has no upward mobility or they'll be gone. Finally, if we want to keep the best and brightest then they need to be working for, and with, others who are the same. “A” players want to work with other “A” players so objective and effective performance and talent management is critical.

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

DF: Qualified and capable project managers. PMs are your day-to-day face to the customer and they are in the critical path from project inception to close-out. Project execution, safety, customer satisfaction, financial performance, etc. are all greatly influenced by the PM. As we grow, we need more of these folks and they aren't easy to find.

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?

DF: The value of your company is based on how well positioned it is to deliver sustainable performance and value creation in the years ahead. Succession planning needs to start years before transition planning.

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?

DF: We understand that to maintain sustainable growth we need a combination of direct “go to market” BD professionals and strong seller-doers across the business. Different opportunities require different approaches. Sometimes the last person the customer wants to talk to is a sales person. On the other hand, technical staff are often not comfortable selling. We need both to be successful.

“PMs are your day-to-day face to the customer and they are in the critical path from project inception to close-out.”

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?

DF: You have to know your PMs and understand what motivates them and also what their capacity is. There isn't a single recipe for managing burnout. But regardless of the individual, they need to feel recognized and rewarded for their achievements and they need the support of their reporting chain and corporate. Eliminate unnecessary reports and layers.

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

DF: We're more focused on execution and innovation than entrepreneur-

See CONFERENCE CALL, page 8



YEAR FOUNDED: 1988

HEADQUARTERS: Rockville, MD

OFFICES: 60 offices in 22 states

NO. OF EMPLOYEES: 700

THEIR PASSION: Transforming insight into action.

THEIR SERVICES: Serving both public agencies and private sector clients, Apex provides turnkey environmental services for:

- Water
- Land
- Facilities
- Air
- Transaction and litigation support
- Information management

THEIR COMPANY CULTURE:

- A stimulating work environment
- Innovative technologies
- Learning from industry thought leaders
- A collaborative culture
- A healthy work/life balance

PUTTING SAFETY FIRST: Apex's WorkSafe training begins on day one and continues with extensive learning designed to ensure continuous improvement. They proactively share hazard recognition, risk assessments, and controls; report near misses; and convey lessons learned. WorkSafe enables their teams to quickly identify unsafe conditions and behaviors so they can quickly intervene to correct as needed.

BUSINESS NEWS

TOP ATLANTA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE FIRM TEAMS UP TO CREATE MASTER PLAN FOR NEW CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE OF ATLANTA HOSPITAL

Studies show that children in hospitals use up to 22 percent less pain medication when they have access to nature and views of the outdoors. This research served as the foundation and inspiration for landscape architecture and planning firm HGOR, which worked closely with **HKS, Inc.**, to masterfully plan and design a new campus for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at the northeastern corner of North Druid Hills Road and I-85.

Set to deliver in 2025, the new campus will

span more than 70-acres in Brookhaven, Georgia. This new state-of-the-art facility uses Georgia's natural palette to assist the needs of Children's patients, families, and staff, and will include gathering spaces, planted areas, water features, miles of walking paths and a variety of gardens providing spaces to recharge, socialize, eat, and relax. In addition to the interactive elements, HGOR conceptualized a functioning landscape, which helps to filter storm water, improve the surrounding landscape and increase biodiversity throughout the campus.

"After understanding the effects of the

natural environment on the healing process, our goal was to place the hospital in a landscape, not on a landscape, to create a holistic, healing environment which preserves more than 20-acres of the site as a park-like campus," said HGOR principal Bob Hughes. "Atlanta is known as a 'City in a Forest,' and we are thrilled to extend that environment onto what will become a landmark pediatric healthcare campus."

HGOR is a company that is focused on designing great places for people, places which provide a stewardship ethic for future generations.

CONFERENCE CALL, from page 7

ship. New ideas and opportunities to pursue are welcome, as long as we don't get out over our skis. True entrepreneurship doesn't always come with acceptable time horizons and manageable risks. The spirit that comes with entrepreneurship is great but I'd rather see us think more in terms of innovation.

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

DF: The general consensus of leaders and investors in this space is that the rise of infrastructure will create new channels of growth and expansion. We also have continued demand for water services and the rebound in energy (oil and gas) is showing no signs of weakness.

"We do our best to maintain a work environment that is enjoyable, stimulating, secure and fulfilling. I know that sounds 'pie in the sky' but if these things are missing, we risk losing our best people and future leaders."

TZL: The last few years have been good for the A/E industry. Is there a downturn in the forecast, and if so, when and to what severity?

DF: I'm not big on predictions. I'll leave that to the analysts and bankers. Our job is to be well positioned regardless of economic cycles and be ready to pivot if, where, and when necessary.

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

DF: I failed to make a change in my management team back about 10 years ago (with a different company) despite my gut telling me that a change was necessary. I didn't do it because I allowed empathy for the person to keep me from making what was a necessary (and, in hindsight, an obvious) business decision. This individual continued to fall short and it eventually led to the departure of some key talent and the loss of two large customers. My failure to make

"We're more focused on execution and innovation than entrepreneurship. New ideas and opportunities to pursue are welcome, as long as we don't get out over our skis."

the difficult personnel decision was a huge lesson learned and one I hope to never repeat.

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?

DF: There is nothing that drives value creation for an organization more than organic growth. Internal growth strengthens the core business, creates new opportunities for employees, facilitates investment in new services and solutions, and organic growth comes without the culture fit challenges and turbulence of acquisitions. Organic growth is also difficult. It pushes people out of their comfort zones and it's new territory for those who have never been asked to do it. That is why when you engage in organic growth initiatives you need to do two basic things. First, keep it simple, focus on two or three growth areas at the most. Apply your focus and energy to that and do it the best you can. If one fails, so be it – add another. Don't start with four or five or you'll probably fail at all of them. My focus is to simplify the journey of organic growth.

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?

DF: If your historical data is good, it's one of the best sources of business intelligence you can find. That data allows you to create metrics and forecasts that are proven and time tested. Then you will continuously test and refine those metrics over time. Contract type translates into contract risks. I think the rest speaks for itself as fixed-price or lump sum work is going to be budgeted differently than a rate and hourly based contract.

TZL: What's your prediction for 2018?

DF: There is a saying that there are two types of predictions – lucky and wrong. So I'll pass. ▀

OPINION



Bucket list: Do you have one?

It's time to build a list that matters to you, and as you do, don't let anything stand in your way, including skeptical friends and colleagues.



**Stephen
Lucy**

BEST PRACTICES

With so many day-to-day responsibilities, it's easy to postpone your dreams, both professionally and personally. I am guilty of that. I had become so set in my ways that my bucket list was more virtual than real. I would identify that next great adventure without truly venturing outside my norms.

So, it came as a shock to my family and peers when I announced that I had booked a snowshoe trek in Yellowstone earlier this winter. The natural assumption was that I was not long for this world or was suffering a midlife crisis. The reality was that I finally decided I wanted to accomplish my dreams.

Your bucket list should encompass your personal as well as professional dreams. On the business side, that may include ownership transition, acquisitions, or new offices. On the personal side, it may involve travel or hobbies. Whatever is on your list, you need to stop simply creating a list and do something about it.

“Your bucket list should encompass your personal as well as professional dreams. On the business side, that may include ownership transition, acquisitions, or new offices.”

■ **You must decide to change.** It is easy to get comfortable with a routine. So, it is up to you to shake it up a bit. Nervous about taking those first steps? Look at other events in your life and recognize what hurdles you have already overcome. It really boils down to this: How much risk are you willing to take?

See STEPHEN LUCY, page 10



ON THE MOVE

BURNS & MCDONNELL ADDS PROJECT MANAGER FOR ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS INTEGRATION Rajeev Sinha joined Burns & McDonnell in its Business & Technology Solutions Group.

Sinha, a project manager, works with clients on enterprise systems integration, part of a comprehensive suite of services offered by Burns & McDonnell to deliver efficiency, consistency, and increased productivity for a wide range of users.

“Rajeev’s experience in delivering data management and enterprise architecture design will provide our clients with an ability to meet their most challenging operational problems, and streamline their business outcomes, while enhancing our comprehensive solution offerings,” says Chris Underwood, general manager of Business & Technology Solutions at Burns & McDonnell. “Our in-depth

understanding of our clients’ business coupled with a robust systems integration offering is a key differentiator and we’re excited to add Rajeev to our team.”

Sinha comes to Burns & McDonnell with more than 15 years of experience, having worked early in his career as a developer at Oracle – engineering key functionalities in the company’s suite of enterprise applications – before moving into functional consulting roles. Since 2006 he’s been integrating enterprise software systems for clients in oil and gas, manufacturing and other industrial sectors. He recently led a project that streamlined \$1 billion of annual capital budget approval, enabling the process to be completed in six weeks rather than three months. This saved the manufacturer money, enabled plant improvement projects sooner and offered better ongoing visibility into capital spending.

He has worked on various projects related to strategic planning, setting IT investment road maps, and implementing business process improvements focused on maximizing IT investments in project-driven organizations.

At Burns & McDonnell, he adds his experience to a team already skilled in technology consulting and other software solutions. Enterprise systems integration allows clients to accelerate deployment of capital, drive organizational efficiency and optimize process systems, facilities, and operations.

“I enjoy the challenge,” says Sinha, who works nationwide from the Houston office of Burns & McDonnell. “This is a great opportunity to make a difference, to apply my best practices knowledge across multiple industries and to optimize IT/OT investments for clients by delivering integrated system solutions.”

STEPHEN LUCY, from page 9

For the Yellowstone trip, I was concerned about the challenges as the description built up the physical requirements, and there were numerous health-related questions on the application. So, I set up a training program and my fears never materialized. As you visualize what you want to happen and empower yourself to make that happen, you build the confidence needed to complete your plans.

- **Understand what you need to do.** Perhaps your list includes a number of “must do’s” not “just do’s.” Understand why those items are important to you. Put a schedule together that ensures that you will pursue and complete those items first. Once you decide you are moving forward, then build the plan necessary to be successful. Planning is a basic part of our jobs, so you should be able to plan the implementation of your list.

“There is a ripple effect as you start to fulfill your bucket list. Others will engage, and there is a social power that comes with this engagement in both your business and personal life.”

- **Check off what you want to do with others.** It’s okay to be inclusive, but don’t let others deter you if they fall short of meeting that commitment. Friends might jump at the opportunity to share in your bucket list, but don’t despair if they pull out at the last minute. Pushing through on your own is just part of the commitment to yourself.

The same is true of your business bucket list. Your partners may not agree or want to jump into something new but weigh the risks and keep moving forward. If you look at the most successful business role models, they looked beyond the naysayers and just did it.

- **Share your list but be prepared for the reaction.** Admittedly, those who know you may wonder, “Why now?” And ask, “What happened?” If you are that predictable and routine in your life, be prepared for these reactions. Wanting to do something different than the norm does not mean that you

“Your family and peers will start to ask what is going to be next? I will let you know what is next for me from atop Mt. Washington next January as I complete my next adventure.”

are changing who you are or what you stand for. It simply means you want to do something different and challenging. If you clearly understand your motivations, you can share that with others and get them involved in your support network.

- **Implement, implement!** Once you have determined your list, implement it. Do not give up on yourself. By pursuing and completing your goals, you show others that they can empower themselves and do the same thing. You become a more complete leader by example. You are setting the tone for others so that, if they feel they have boundaries, they might see those limitations as self-imposed.

All of us have examples of people who worked all their lives with the caveat that they would get to some adventure or pursuit later, but they never made it to that finish line. Do you want to be that person who died at their desk and never even tried to accomplish their one ultimate goal?

- **Know that your bucket list may change.** Odds are your bucket list will change over time. I know mine continues to evolve. As long as you are breathing, you are never too young or too old to add to or check something off your list. Don’t let age be a defining thing for what you want to do. Don’t let financial responsibilities impose restrictions. And don’t look back with regret.

There is a ripple effect as you start to fulfill your bucket list. Others will engage, and there is a social power that comes with this engagement in both your business and personal life. Your family and peers will start to ask what is going to be next? I will let you know what is next for me from atop Mt. Washington next January as I complete my next adventure. ▀

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Cracking the code

Gaining access to executives is not easy, but there's plenty of opportunities to show value, establish credibility, and, in the end, make the sale.



Steve
Bistriz

GUEST
SPEAKER

The most effective way to gain access to CXOs is through a recommendation from someone in the executive's company. Many executives said they would grant a meeting to a salesperson, if that recommendation came from a credible source within their own organization. This highlights the importance of building company-wide relationships that ultimately open doors to the executive suite.

From my research, 84 percent of executives said they would usually or always meet a salesperson if recommended by someone internally, indicating that establishing relationships at lower levels of the organization is critical before trying to access a senior executive's calendar. One CEO explained he would grant a meeting, "when I see or hear something that might be applicable in my world, or at the request of some of my cohorts around here." These "cohorts" are part of the executive's influence network, those people who may be a friend of someone in the executive's inner circle, an outside consultant, or a lower-level employee within the organization who has credibility with the inner circle executive.

In some companies, getting calendar time with a senior executive may only take place if you contact the executive assistant or the executive's secretary. You simply can't get on the executive's calendar by contacting them directly. In that case, you may have to either use a sponsor or treat the gatekeeper as a resource to help you schedule a meeting with the executive.

The techniques that can be used to access those executives include the following:

- When there's an organizational change in your company, suggest having a meeting to explain the new structure.

See STEVE BISTRITZ, page 12



BUSINESS NEWS

CLUNE CONSTRUCTION COMPLETES CONSTRUCTION OF EATALY'S FIRST WEST COAST LOCATION IN LOS ANGELES

Clune Construction Company has completed construction on Eataly L.A., a vibrant Italian marketplace designed by **Studios Architecture**, at the newly renovated Westfield Century City shopping mall in Los Angeles. This new location is Eataly's first West Coast store.

"Our team is excited to have played such a key role in creating Eataly's first-ever West Coast location," said Clune Construction Executive Managing Director, West Region President Bob Dahlstrom. "The project was very detailed and required precise coordination of many

local construction trades, imported materials and client vendors directly from Italy. We would like to thank everyone who worked on the project and made it a success."

Eataly L.A., a LEED certified project, features an expansive, three-story, 67,000-square-foot space with four restaurants, multiple kitchens, nine take-away food counters, a cooking school, retail space, and two chilled wine storage rooms.

The space also featured two interconnected spiral staircases to link three floors within the marketplace. Clune worked with an out-of-state manufacturer in Minnesota to fabricate the stairs, shipped them to Los Angeles in

large pieces and then carefully installed them into the space with the use of a crane.

The in-house greywater system was designed to recycle water, significantly reducing the amount of drinkable water the store uses for flushing toilets and watering plants by up to 33 percent!.

Founded by Oscar Farinetti, Eataly is an artisanal Italian marketplace that features counters, restaurants, and a cooking school. The unique environment invites guests to "Eat, Shop, and Learn" about high-quality Italian food and drink as they taste dishes, find ingredients, and take classes.

STEVE BISTRITZ, from page 11

- Suggest a meeting with an equivalent level executive from your organization (like-rank selling).
- Accept redirections to meet other executives or people of lower rank, but always ask for an introduction to be made and request a follow-up meeting to review the outcomes.
- Schedule a meeting with an executive to communicate past value delivered or to confirm your ongoing value.
- Contact the executive when there's any significant event in the customer's market unrelated to the current sales campaign. Executives like to know that you're thinking about them, even if there's nothing for you to sell.

"In some companies, getting calendar time with a senior executive may only take place if you contact the executive assistant or the executive's secretary. You simply can't get on the executive's calendar by contacting them directly."

The stakes are high if you cannot access the relevant executive for the sales opportunity – the relevant executive defined as the executive who stands to gain the most or lose the most as a result of the application or project associated with the sales opportunity. Some of the latest data from companies whose sales cycles are nine months or more indicates that it can cost more than \$200,000 to pursue an opportunity, whether you win or not. That's a significant sum to bet on selling to low-level managers. If you can't get past the gatekeepers and meet the relevant executive, it may be prudent to walk away and not only save the cost of a sale you can't win, but enable yourself to pursue an opportunity you have a much better chance of winning.

There's one other word of caution that bears mentioning at this point. Don't attempt to circumvent the gatekeeper unless you have a high degree of confidence that you can obtain the meeting with the executive. Once around a roadblock, a salesperson will be quickly tested. CXOs told me that salespeople who get past their roadblocks on a cold-call receive five minutes to show they can add value.

Here are some tips that you can use to demonstrate your value:

- Raise relevant questions and share business perspectives that are new to the executive.
- Suggest something provocative and compelling – this gives the executive a hunch that you might have something to which it's worth listening.
- If you're an incumbent salesperson, point out potential limitations of your solutions in light of changing demands, with ideas to make improvements, thus enhancing your credibility. If, after meeting with the executive, she sends you down to a lower-level executive within her organization, don't push back, but make certain you do the following:
 - Ask the executive for an introduction to the person, because this is far better than you having to call them cold. You can also leverage the fact that their boss sent you to talk to them.
 - Ask them what they hope you will achieve with their subordinate, and what additional people are suited to have the discussion with you. Turn it into a networking opportunity.
 - Ask to reconnect with the executive to review how what you hear from their subordinates compares to the level of readiness in other companies you've solved the same problem for. Executives typically like to know how their company benchmarks, so use the occasion to demonstrate your value as someone with insight beyond their silo walls. The lesson to be learned: Being sent down to lower-level executives can gain you credibility with them and, in return, it can gain you credibility with the executive who sent you down to them!

The bottom line is that executives are looking to build relationships with salespeople who deliver significant business value and are responsive and accountable to them. Those types of salespeople are demonstrating both capability and integrity, and when that's done, the salesperson is able to establish credibility with the executive. ■

DR. STEVE BISTRITZ is the founder of SellXL and has more than 40 years of high-tech sales, sales management, and training management experience. He just released the second edition of his best-selling sales book, *Selling to the C-Suite*. Visit his website at sellxl.com.