

SMPS San Diego



President's Message

By Ciara Levine, CPSM
PCL Construction Services, Inc.

The first annual Pacific Regional conference was recently held in Sacramento and it was a success! Although, several of us weren't able to make it this year, the members who did attend have been nice enough to share their notes. I believe there were valuable take-away points I would like to share with you in my message.

"A couple days ago my neighbor and I connected as we were leaving our homes. My neighbor was walking across the street when suddenly a car was racing down the road. My neighbor, not knowing what the driver was going to do, dodged left and the car followed; he dodged right and the car did the same. It happened one more time and just when I expected the worst to happen, a squirrel stuck his head out of the window and said "it's not as easy as it looks, is it?" and drove away..."

Sounds about right for marketing an A/E/C firm in 2010. It's not as easy as it looks, and no one is quite sure what's going to

happen next with our economy. Among many of the outstanding program topics, this one was a significant subject attendees of the inaugural SMPS Pacific Regional Conference tackled.

What it boils down to, is that marketing, scenario planning and creative strategic thinking will play a large role in the success of each of our firms as business trends shift. The economic downturn we have been enduring will change the way we all do business—forever—and creative individuals will lead their teams to success. Whether it is more intensive "Scenario Planning," as presented by AMI – Advanced Management Institute, to assist in our strategic planning; or creative marketing approaches, as presented in sessions including "The Rise of the Right Brain" (Craig Galati, Lucchesi Galati) and "Whole Brain Marketing" (Carol Doscher, Graceworks), marketing will play a key role in how our businesses approach new opportunities and continue to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the pack.

As you can gather, there was a lot to learn at this 2 ½ day conference, and this is just the tip of the iceberg! Attendees of the SMPS Pacific Regional Conference felt there was very important information to share, so if you didn't make the conference

– you are in luck! SMPS San Diego will be hosting a "Regional Recap" event on May 5th to give you a better understanding of the key points discussed and the take-away messages to learn from. Look for more details in our future communications or visit www.smpssd.org.

Some of the sessions we are planning to summarize for our members in the "Regional Recap" event include:

Whole Brain Marketing – In this new economy, as available work fluctuates and competition rises, successful firms are finding new ways to capitalize on their talent, connect with their prospects, and satisfy their clients. To optimize these areas, you and your team should be applying Whole Brain Thinking to your marketing efforts. See what Carol Doscher from Graceworks taught participants in this interactive workshop, and learn how you and others prefer to process information, see the benefits of thinking in your own style, and learn how to craft a marketing message that speaks directly to your targeted audience's thinking preferences.

AMI Strategic Planning Session – This exclusive session answered which of the many possible futures your firm's senior leaders should plan for. The recap will

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share methods for using scenario planning to direct and create your firm's preferred future. The four future scenarios presented in the workshop were created specifically for senior leaders in the A/E/C industry by AML and parent company FMI Corporation, working in conjunction with a team of 50 industry leaders. Steve Isaacs and Sabine Hoover served as directors of the core research team.

BD Live – This session facilitated by Frank Lippert and Stephanie Craft consisted of a real client with a real potential project meeting with three different consultant business developers for the first time. You will find out what the client thought worked and what didn't work, as well as the consultants perspectives on the meeting and their thoughts on next steps. This session provided valuable advice for "marketers as coaches" in the business development process.

Become Your Firm's Marketing Leader – This session focused on how marketers can serve as leaders to both technical and other marketing staff. This was an ultimate "train the trainer" as MARKETLINK shared some of what they've done and seen successful firms do to create winning marketing and technical staff relationships. See a summary from 12 one-hour sessions that you as marketers can use to train, educate, and mentor both technical and marketing staff to help them further your company's marketing and BD programs.

I want to thank Randi Holley from AVR Studio for assisting me with this article.

Ciara



Marketing Tips

This isn't Your Grandmother's Value Proposition

*By Stacy Mathieson, CPSM, Senior Marketing Coordinator
Haley & Aldrich*

This past March, I was lucky enough to attend the SMPS Pacific Regional Conference in Sacramento. It was a quick trip – flying up early Thursday and flying back late Friday – but I learned a lot in the two days.

One of the speakers, Susan Murphy of Murphy Motivation and Training, gave a presentation called Navigating Your Way Off the Shortlist in which she covered presentation, communication and interview skills, as well as how to differentiate yourself. And one of the things that stuck with me was the concept of a value proposition.

A value proposition, according to good old Wikipedia, is an "analysis and quantified review of the benefits, costs and value that an organization can deliver to customers and other constituent groups

within and outside of the organization." And Susan made a very good point about this – a value proposition is not generic – it is a unique, once only proposition. In other words, one size does not fit all. To me, it is not your elevator speech. It is what differentiates you from your competitors. You can put together an internal, behind-the-scenes value proposition statement, but when it filters down to your proposals, it needs to be customized for that proposal, that client, that project.

In preparing a proposal for a client, you need to keep in mind that what one client values will be different than the next. A value proposition (and essentially your proposal) should contain the following components:

- ❖ Your capabilities – the services you provide and how you do it
- ❖ Your impact – the benefits or results your client will receive from the services you are providing
- ❖ Your proof – evidence that supports the benefits you are stating you can provide
- ❖ Your cost – the cost of your services and the resulting benefits

It seems simple enough, but as those who work on proposals know, it isn't. There are those in your firm who want to throw everything into a proposal hoping something will stick. But that can backfire - a client will feel inundated and won't want to read more than a few pages. If they can't quickly find the information that is important to them (i.e., capabilities, impact, proof and cost), they may move on to the next proposal.

Your value proposition should not be vague. Try to be as precise and to the point in a proposal as you can. If the technical part of your proposal needs to be long in order to describe your approach to the scope of work, that's okay. But make sure you highlight or call out the main points you are trying to get across. You can do this by summarizing your key points in a cover letter or executive summary, using call-out boxes that describe work you did for a similar project, or key attributes of your team members, or including graphics that demonstrate benefits the client will receive.

After doing research on value propositions, I find that it can be applied internally as well. When working on a proposal with your colleagues, you are also demonstrating your own :

- ❖ Capabilities – brainstorming on key messages, writing portions of the proposal, designing its look, coordinating with other team members
- ❖ Impact – getting the final product completed on time, keeping the team on track
- ❖ Proof – all the other proposals you've completed for them
- ❖ Cost – you can't really put a price on your incredible skills, but a paycheck will do nicely, thank you

Sources: *Susan Murphy of Murphy Motivation and Training, Wikipedia and Neil Rackham, a speaker and writer on sales & marketing.*



New Member Update

SMPS San Diego Welcomes Our New Members

By Suzanne Clemmer, DCI Engineers



Michele Baird

Business Development Manager
Acoustic Dimensions
1935 North Marshall Avenue, El Cajon, CA
92020
mbaird@acousticdimensions.com
P: 619.596.4800 F: 619.201.4242
www.acousticdimensions.com

Michele Baird is the Business Development Manager for the San Diego office of Acoustic Dimensions, an interdisciplinary team of designers specializing in acoustics and technical system consulting. The firm portfolio includes education, performing arts, worship, corporate, hospitality and sports, and entertainment venues. Michele joined Acoustic Dimensions in March 2008, after a 15-year career in Marketing with the Toro Company. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from San Diego State University, and in her spare time enjoys hiking and spending time with family and friends.



Lindsay Dunton

Marketing
Roesling Nakamura Terada, Inc.
363 Fifth Ave., Ste. 202, San Diego, CA 92101
dunton@rntarchitects.com
P: 619.233.1023
F: 619.233.001g
www.rntarchitects.com

Lindsay Dunton is the Marketing Coordinator for Roesling Nakamura Terada Architects, Inc., an award-winning design firm located in the Gaslamp District. Prior to joining the firm in February of 2009, she spent two and half years working for one of Atlanta's top Architecture firms. Lindsay earned her degree in Industrial Design from Auburn University in 2003. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband, hiking, cycling, or training for her next triathlon or half marathon. Lindsay is looking forward to creating new professional relationships as a member of SMPS.



Melissa Hodges

Corporate Proposal Manager
Richard Brady & Associates
3710 Ruffin Road, San Diego, CA 92123
mhodges@rbrady.net
P: 858.496.0500
F: 858.496.0505
www.richardbrady.com

Melissa Hodges is the Corporate Proposal Manager at Richard Brady & Associates. In her current role, she supports the firm's marketing and business development efforts, including strategic planning, proposal and presentation preparation, event coordination, and development of marketing collateral. Prior to joining the firm in 2005, Melissa spent three years as a marketing professional in the hospitality industry. Her educational experience includes a B.A. degree in English from Ohio State University, and an A.A. degree in Office Administration from Owens Community College in Toledo, Ohio. In her spare time, she enjoys freelance writing, reading, and participating in fitness and health activities.



Chuck Poindexter

Supervisor, Commercial & Residential New
Constructions Programs
San Diego Gas & Electric
8335 Century Park Court, San Diego, CA 92123
cpoindexter@semprautilities.com
P: 858.636.5735
www.sempra.com

Chuck Poindexter works as a Supervisor for Commercial and Residential New Construction Programs at San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). He is also a member of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) San Diego Chapter, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the ASHRAE San Diego Chapter Scholarship Foundation. He is in his fifth year as a member of the Board of Directors for the California Commissioning Collaborative representing SDG&E, and is a former member of the Design Review Board for the City of Escondido. Chuck graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education and earned a teaching credential in Secondary Education.



Chelsea Solognier

Office Manager
ELEN Consulting, Inc.
3456 Camino Del Rio North, Ste. 101
San Diego, CA 92108
csolognier@elenconsulting.com
619.550.1085 x.22 (phone)
www.elenconsulting.com

Chelsea Solognier recently joined the team at ELEN Consulting, Inc. as the Office Manager. ELEN Consulting, Inc. is an electrical engineering firm which values diversity and the unique differences of

its employees. ELEN Consulting's staff consists of engineers, designers, CAD operators, and administrative personnel. Chelsea brings with her many years of high-end service and marketing experience, as well as a new perspective and an innovative approach to the firm. When Chelsea is not working, she enjoys taking her chocolate Labrador to dog beach, spending time with family and friends, hiking Iron Mountain, and traveling to Aruba to visit her family.

Debbie Carelli
Marketing Director
Arch Pac
1351 Distribution Way, Suite 1
Vista, CA 92081
debbiecarelli@archpac.com
760.734.1600 x.105
F: 760.734.1611
www.archpac.com

Michael Nguyen
Student
San Diego State University
7360 Fulton Street
San Diego, CA 92111
my.co.nguyen@gmail.com
P: 408.896.1862

Lindsey Romine
Business Development
T.Y. Lin International
5030 Camino de la Siesta #204
San Diego, CA 92108
lindsey.romine@tylin.com
P: 619.692.1920
www.tylin.com

Kevin Gennerman
President
A/E Scantech Inc
7150 Engineer Road
San Diego, CA 92111
keving@aescantech.com
P: 858.495.0727
F: 858.495.9261
www.aescantech.com

Erika Powers
Contracts Administrator
RECON Environmental, Inc.
1927 Fifth Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101
epowers@recon-us.com
P: 619.308.9333

Krista Spencer
Marketing
Nova Engineering & Environmental
4373 Viewridge Ave, Suite B
San Diego, CA 92123
kspencer@usanova.com
P: 858.292.7575 x. 214
F: 858.292.7570
www.usanova.com

The Marketing Voice



I Love Failure

By David Lecours, CEO and Creative Director, LecoursDesign, Inc.

I recently led my flagship seminar *How To Become a Creative Superhero* for The Society for Marketing Professional Services, San Diego Chapter. A critical lesson in the seminar is that failure is essential to success. I know...this seems wacky. But we all fail, and great benefits are attached. Embracing failure as part of your creative process lands you on the path to marketing (and life) success.

If You're Not Failing, You're Not Living

Much of marketing is separating yourself from the pack. To do so, you've got to consistently communicate your uniqueness in new ways. Being different requires taking risks. I heard once that "great new ideas have lonely childhoods." True innovation can be messy, uncomfortable and unknown. It requires great courage. Even the world's best fail. "Talent and intelligence never inoculate anyone against failure," reminds J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series.

The Benefits of Failure

Failure teaches you things that you could learn no other way. As Bucky Fuller says, "You can never learn less; you can only learn more. The reason I know so much is because I have made so many mistakes." This philosophy is the heart of the Japanese business concept "kaizen" (continual improvement). Check out this great short film (8 min.) on Failure by Honda at: http://dreams.honda.com/#/video_fa. By pushing against, and breaking through boundaries, you develop a range of acceptable solutions. It's also liberating to have your biggest fear (failure) be realized, and know you are still alive to create brilliance. I believe your subconscious mind wants you to succeed. You can see this in mini-failures that are actually "happy accidents." This happened to me recently in a client presentation when the words out of my mouth were not what I intended (aka Freudian slip), but were actually considerably better. Be sure to recognize the gifts of failure when they show up in your creative process.

Build Failure Into Your Process

Like life itself, the creative process is beyond our total control. Accept not if, but when, failure shows up as a guest in your creative house, you will greet him and be better off. This simple acceptance opens you up to the creative magic that will flow. The goal is to embrace failure early and frequently. You can even make it fun. Consider offering a booby prize to the person that comes up with the most ridiculous idea in your next brainstorming session. Be sure to save your ideas that don't make the cut. They are simply solutions to the next creative problem. Plus, nobody has to see your "sketches." You only need to unveil your final work of art.

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Newsletter Committee / Contributors

Editor & Print Layout: Marylou Flanders, CPSM, *PBS&J*
Web Layout: Hansol An, *Burkett & Wong*
Contributors: Suzanne Clemmer, *DCI Engineers*
David Lecours, *Lecours Design, Inc.*
Ciara Levine, CPSM, *PCL Construction Services, Inc.*
Stacy Mathieson, *Haley & Aldrich*
Tarek Nabas, *JCJ Architecture*

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Failure is like spinach for Popeye: it doesn't kill us and only makes us stronger. The mind once stretched to a new idea never regains its original shape. Now take your newfound love of failure and incorporate it into your next creative marketing project.

For more expert advice on branding and creativity, follow David's blog at www.davidlecours.com.

David Lecours is Creative Director at LecoursDesign.com and author of The Marketing Voice blog at davidlecours.com.



CEO Corner

Changes in Stormwater Regulations Spur Growth in Specialized Services

By Richard Lucera, PE, CFM, CPESC
RBF Consulting

Recent changes to the Statewide General Construction Permit are due to take effect this July. For those of you not familiar with the "Construction General Permit," it regulates and provides standards for the discharge of stormwater from construction sites across California. Historically speaking, compliance with the Permit has involved effort for engineers during the design phase, as well as for the contractor during construction. However, these efforts were, for the most part, considered incidental to the overall project. As a result, performance of that aspect of the work by design professionals or contractors with specialized expertise in stormwater regulations was more the exception to the rule than the norm.

The previous permit, adopted in 1999, focused on the completion of tasks rather than directly on the water quality of runoff from the construction site. Those days are rapidly coming to an end. The stakes under the new Permit are simply too high not to engage the appropriate type of expertise during both the design and construction phases. Penalties for non-compliance with discharge standards will start at a mandatory \$3,000 per violation (after four violations in a 6-month period) and can escalate rapidly through administrative and civil enforcement mechanisms. Administrative penalties can be imposed by the State or Regional Board as high as \$10,000 per violation plus \$10 per gallon discharged from the site; Civil penalties as high as \$37,500 per day can be imposed in Federal Court through the Clean Water Act.

The New Changes to the General Permit Require Specialized Credentials

By September 2011, all professionals responsible for developing or field implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) will need to have successfully completed State Water Board sponsored or approved training. This will be in addition to the

minimum credentials required, which can be satisfied in a number of different ways. The General Construction Permit Training Program is currently under development and will be administered through the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA).

Informal "Hand-offs" of SWPPPs Will Be Eliminated, Likely Causing a Market Shift in Design Services and Field Implementation

Historically speaking, once a SWPPP was completed, the contractor was usually responsible for updating the plan throughout the course of construction. This procedure made sense from the standpoint that the contractor is on site and is constantly aware of the "on the ground" conditions of the project. However, it also required the contractor to be knowledgeable about all aspects of construction site stormwater pollution mitigation, which was difficult, especially for smaller companies.

The recent changes to the permit mandate that the professional who certifies the plan initially, also certify all amendments during construction. Therefore, anyone engaged in creating the SWPPP will also be making a commitment for on-going involvement during construction. Participation in the construction phase of the project will, for some projects, mean compliance with dramatically increased sampling, monitoring, and reporting requirements. As a result, there will be a sharply increased demand for engineers and field personnel to update and implement the SWPPP during construction, and to perform the analysis required to make adaptive improvements to the plan during construction in order to keep the site in compliance with permit requirements.

The contractor profile for performance of this type of work will shift as well. Unless a general contractor has the appropriately trained personnel and confidence in their own expertise to deploy and maintain effective Best Management Practices (BMPs), they will be relying on the market of specialty erosion and sediment control sub-contractors. This small but growing market of sub-contractors will need to possess expertise not only in the area of construction methods, but also in areas of regulatory compliance, engineering hydrology, and emerging erosion and sediment control technologies, e.g. advanced treatment. Furthermore, this sector will need to serve a market with a heightened need for responsiveness. The list of companies that can effectively serve all regulatory needs is small, but in anticipation of a rain event (or after a wildfire) the phones will no doubt be ringing off the hook.

It remains to be seen exactly how these new changes to the General Permit will shake out in the various market sectors. Some of the current players may opt to bow out; certainly a greater number of others will enter. Some who are currently involved will continue to sharpen their skills to the extent necessary to keep their clients compliant. Regardless, the days of firms casually "dabbling" in erosion and sediment control services are essentially over.





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Join SMPS San Diego for a fun-filled day of networking, socializing and friendly competition at the beautiful bayside links of Coronado Golf Course. Registration is limited, so sign up today to ensure you get a tee time.

Tournament registration includes green fees, golf cart rental, range balls, lunch, drink tickets, gift bags, snacks and beverages, dinner, raffle and awards, as well and opportunities to play with agency clients, including:

- » John Cahill, *City of Carlsbad*
- » David Allsbrook, *CCDC*
- » Ed Walton, *City of Coronado*
- » Iraj Asgharzadeh, *City of San Diego Water*
- » Mark Tegio, *County Water Authority*
- » Steve Watters, *Cal State San Marcos*
- » Jim Valetta, *UCSD*
- » Bob Kiesling, *Grossmont UHSD*
- ...and more to come.

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