BUILD BUSINESS 2020
SNEAK PEEK

HOW TO EARN THE ROLE
OF TRUSTED ADVISER

HE WILL, HE WILL
ROCK YOU
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JW Marriott Austin | August 12-14, 2020

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DRUMMER FOR P!NK
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Kim Coles
FORMER ACTRESS ON IN LIVING COLOR
KEYNOTE SPEAKER
How To Earn the Role of Trusted Adviser

Build Business 2020 Sneak Peek

He Will, He Will Rock You

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EARN CPSM CEUs

Look for the feature article with the SMPS CPSM logo.

To earn one CEU toward Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM) recertification, go to the CPSM group library on MySMPS and access the “Recertification Materials” folder. Questions about the article will be available in the “Marketer CEU Articles and Questions” folder. Questions? Contact SMPS at 703.684.2271.


Story Behind the Picture
Situated atop the ARoS Museum, “Your Rainbow Panorama” is a permanent art installation by Studio Olafur Eliasson. It offers a colorful, prismatic, and uninterrupted 360-degree view of historic Aarhus, Denmark. Here, the photograph leads the eye through the curve of color and light, sharing a sense of the participant’s experience.
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Whether you’re just getting started or at the pinnacle of your career, SMPS provides the resources and connections to help you make a difference. Through our programs, research, and network of more than 7,100 members, together, we are leading the transformation of professional services firms to compete successfully in the modern marketplace.

smps.org
Business Transformed Through Uncertainty

“If there’s one thing that’s certain in business, it’s uncertainty. —Stephen Covey

It goes without saying that these are unprecedented times. On behalf of the SMPS board of directors and headquarters staff, I want you to know SMPS is committed to supporting you, your chapters, and your firms. Despite the uncertainty, we’re all in this together. And together we’re always stronger.

SMPS is developing content specifically to help you lead, pivot, and focus in the current environment and beyond. We want to help firms recognize your value. Because when we come out on the other end of this crisis, marketing and business development professionals like you will lead firms in moving back to full steam and rebuilding the pipeline.

Look for the Society to roll out new resources during this time of transition that will focus on:

- **Members** - We are truly grateful for all our members—you’re the reason that SMPS exists. I personally understand what you’re going through, as I’m going through the same things in my company. Leadership from the Society board and staff is here to help you with strategies to successfully maneuver through today’s challenges. Using SMPS resources, members can continue to learn, earn CEUs, and prepare for certification.

- **Chapters** - One of the Society’s biggest assets is our chapters—chapters are our best advocates to spread the SMPS message to members. SMPS is committed to helping chapters serve our members and position them and their firms for success. As a first step, chapters can take advantage of our new online A/E/Courses at no charge (use promo code HQcares2020 through May 31, 2020) to offer free training in place of in-person meetings.

- **Member Firms** - We’re helping firms navigate the new business climate. With construction anticipated to slow down for the near term, we want to provide you with resources to help your firm be prepared once business returns to its new normal—whatever that may look like. Join the Business Continuity conversation thread in MySMPS to share and collect ideas.

We’ve always done good things through teamwork, and together, we will get through this. Call an SMPS friend today and talk through it. It helps! And if you want to give me a call, please do this as well.

Build Business, to be held on August 12–14 in Austin, TX, is still planned to occur. Wouldn’t it be amazing if we could all toast to the fact that everyone made it through the crisis and is healthy and business is growing? After all the social distancing, Build Business will be a chance for you to reconnect with your peers and meet new people to grow your network.

This conference preview issue of Marketer gives you a glimpse at what you’ll find in store this summer. The committee is planning the best content in the spirit of hope for this time when we can be together. We want to inspire you and your firm to think big and break out of your comfort zone. We want to help you own it as we all regroup and move forward.

Thank you again for your membership and resiliency. Thanks for trusting your SMPS network and leaders for support and guidance.

SMPSly,

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Melissa M. Lutz, FSMPS, CPSM, is a principal at Champlin Architecture. As the head of all marketing and communications, Melissa is responsible for the firm’s brand and image. Additionally, she manages and develops targeted business development and marketing strategies, and serves on the firm’s board of directors.

A member of SMPS since 1992, Melissa was named a Fellow in 2010. She has held many leadership positions within the organization at the chapter, regional, and Society levels, including past president of SMPS Greater Cincinnati and the SMPS Foundation. A prolific writer and presenter, Melissa was one of the researchers and authors for the foundation’s book, *A/E/C Business Development: The Decade Ahead*.

Contact Melissa at 513.708.1505 or melissa.lutz@thinkchamplin.com.

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SMPSly,
Join other senior marketing and business development professionals to collaborate, network, and exchange ideas at this exclusive conference.

smps.org/thepinnacleexperience
Helping To Build Business

As most Society members know, Build Business is the much-anticipated SMPS annual conference that changes location each year. This year we’re in Austin, TX, August 12–14, and registration is trending toward 1,000 attendees once again.

As of press time, SMPS is monitoring credible media and official government statements about the coronavirus (COVID-19). But as we get closer to the big event, we’ll keep members updated through the Build Business website.

So, being cautiously optimistic, it’s time to look ahead to Build Business. This issue of Marketer is dedicated to showing you highlights of what you can expect in Austin.

Kicking off our Build Business 2020 Sneak Peek, we interview one of two celebrity keynote speakers, Mark Schulman, drummer for P!NK. He offers insight into his high-energy, edutaining presentation, “Hacking the Rock Star Attitude.” (We’ll talk to the other keynote speaker, Kim Coles, in the June issue).

The popular MAX: Market.Act. eXchange™ is back on the main stage this year. MAX speaker Stacy Lambatos shares her personal journey in “Finding Authenticity.”

We also take a look at two compelling conference breakout sessions. Joy Woo, CPSM, LEED AP, explores “The AECs of Diversity: A = All inclusive, E = Equity, and C = Culture” (take the diversity survey at surveymonkey.com/r/8Z9M3MZ or on Joy’s LinkedIn page). And Jody Glidden examines “The Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the A/E/C Industries.”

But Build Business is more than just great education sessions that CPSMs can count on for CEUs. The conference also honors outstanding SMPS members and chapters during two awards ceremonies; offers outstanding networking and partnering opportunities with colleagues, sponsors, and exhibitors; and gives you a chance to think outside the box so you can return home full of great ideas and inspiration.

I’m looking forward to Build Business!

Christine

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Send a 150-word pitch to marketer@smsp.org. And, if you’d like to share feedback on the articles you read, feel free to reach out. We’d love to hear from you.
Fiscal Year 2018–19 Financial Report

The operations of SMPS include membership activities; fee-for-services; chapter and leadership support; and reimbursable programs such as conferences, online learning, and our magazine. SMPS ended the 2019 fiscal year with total revenue of $4.6 million and $4.6 million in expenses.

REVENUE BY SOURCE

- 30% Events
- 52% Membership Dues
- 5% Program Service Fees
- 6% Online Fees
- 6% Publications
- 1% Administrative Fees

TOTAL REVENUE $4.6M

EXPENSES BY TYPE

- 28% Events and Conferences
- 20% Membership and Chapter Services
- 15% Knowledge and Professional Development Training
- 7% Recognition
- 5% Administration

TOTAL EXPENSES $4.6M

For informational purposes only. Numbers rounded. Unaudited.
Featured Photographer
RAMSEY BAKHOUM, ASMP, is both a photographer and architect (Perkins and Will), giving his imagery a unique perspective rooted in design. Inspired by his European travels, Bakhoum followed his passion to found Parallax, creating photography for use by the design press. His work has been exhibited by the Boston Society of Architects and has assisted local architects in the successful pursuit of American Institute of Architects honor awards. He is a member of SMPS Boston. View his portfolio at parallaxagency.com. Contact him at 617.792.1356 or ramsey@parallaxagency.com.

Story Behind the Picture | Throughout Marketer, we feature the photographic work of an SMPS member. Photographs for each article are chosen with intention to highlight a concept in the article or to provide aesthetic value. We have added an icon to some of the photo credits to delve a bit into the story behind the picture. Look for this photographic insight on pages 1, 17, and 21.
“The Big Reveal” of the SMPS rebrand by CEO Michael V. Geary, CAE, and CMO Josh Miles took place during Build Business 2018.

The impactful video, which brilliantly introduced the new SMPS logo and vision statement, “Business Transformed Through Marketing Leadership,” is still etched in my mind. I cheered along with the roomful of conference attendees. My first impression was, “They nailed it!” Since then, I’ve thought a lot about the meaning of transformational leadership and been on the lookout for practical applications that will add up to big changes for the A/E/C industries.

As marketers on the path to creating foundational change, we place a high value on curiosity. Understanding your firm’s clients, markets, and sociopolitical and economic environments can lead to new insights to help your firm advance. How do you find knowledge that adds value? This can only be done through exploration and research.

Marketing Research, Domain 1 in the SMPS Six Domains of Practice, informs and underlies the other domains. The team that developed the 2018 SMPS rebrand conducted research early in their process to guide decision-making. “In 2016, we engaged a research firm to identify perspectives, opinions, needs, and desires of our members.” As part of the rebrand, the SMPS team also developed a powerful definition of A/E/C marketing to foster transformation: “The process of creating firm awareness; building and differentiating the brand; driving business development activities; and identifying, anticipating, and satisfying client objectives to achieve profitable business goals.”

This well-crafted definition sets the stage for the next evolutionary level in our industries—one in which forward-thinking A/E/C businesses shift their perspective of marketing from a proposal-focused role to a collaborative effort with leadership and business development. This shift empowers marketers to inform and educate prospects as they’re guided through the pipeline. It also engages clients throughout their life cycle.

Why are curiosity and research so important in the context of this progressive definition of marketing? Because insightful research informs strategic decisions, tactical choices, and content development throughout the entire marketing process. With the availability of professionally collected data from online sources, such as Data USA and GovTribe, marketers can easily conduct secondary research from their laptops.

Whether you enjoy geeking out with statistics and market trends or you find research daunting, keep in mind this insight from SMPS MARKENDIUM: The Essentials, Domain 1: “While at the high end, marketing research activities can consist of sophisticated programs carried out by market research specialists, all marketers can learn to conduct basic research that will help set more realistic marketing goals and develop more focused marketing plans.”

Let’s break down the SMPS definition of marketing and look at practical applications of research by stage.

Creating Firm Awareness
As an A/E/C marketer, you may lead or contribute to the development of social media campaigns that drive traffic to your firm’s website and build awareness of your firm’s culture and brand. You carefully select and respond to call-for-award entries, craft thought leadership articles, and execute well-planned special events.

Information gathered and analyzed at this stage includes:
- Market segmentation: Which client types are the best fit for your firm and why?
- Benchmarking: Among each of your market segments, what is the current level of awareness of your firm?
Leading with curiosity, while

Building and Differentiating the Brand
Depending on the brand’s life cycle, in this stage, you may play a role in identifying and/or nurturing your firm’s core brand identity. This could entail developing brand visuals, messaging, communications, and promotional methods. Ideally, brand management is rooted in your firm’s strategic plan, vision, and mission statement.

Information gathered and analyzed at this stage includes:

- Competitive positioning: How does your firm deliver its services in ways that set you apart from your competitors? How does your firm’s culture differ from your competitors? How does the client experience differ? What are your firm’s brand associations? What are your competitors’ brand associations?

Driving Business Development
You may lead or contribute to your firm’s trade show strategy, promotion, and execution; manage your firm’s CRM; or develop thought leadership in response to client needs and objectives. You help your firm stay ahead of RFPs/RFQs by positioning your firm before projects are publicly announced and connecting to potential teaming partners. And, of course, you play a significant role in the execution of RFPs/RFQs.

Information gathered and analyzed at this stage includes:

- Market assessment: What does your firm see as the estimated potential value of the opportunities within your target markets?
- What are your firm’s strategic advantages and how will you capitalize on them to gain market share?
- What opportunities are on the horizon within your market segments? What is the probability of landing each opportunity? What are your clients’ hot buttons and objectives?
- What information gathered during the business development process should be included in specific proposals?

Satisfying Client Objectives To Achieve Profitable Business Goals
In this stage, you may lead or contribute to communication with your firm’s leadership and technical staff to confirm client objectives are being met or exceeded. You conduct client-satisfaction surveys at critical project stages to confirm client experience matches the brand promise. You define and use metrics and reporting to keep marketing efforts on track to meet business goals or conduct client and market research to anticipate trends.

Information gathered and analyzed at this stage includes:

- What is your firm’s client satisfaction level?
- What is your client retention rate?
- What key issues matter most to clients?
- What economic, social, political, legal, environmental, and technological trends may affect your firms’ clients and how?

Throughout all marketing stages, it’s important to select a custom combination of primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative, and internal and external research sources. These should be based on your firm’s unique context. You know your firm best and understand the gaps that need to be filled to advance its business development and marketing initiatives.

Armed with effective research, your firm can gear marketing efforts to deliver value at each stage of the prospect pipeline and client life cycle. Circling back to the SMPS team’s intention for the 2018 rebrand, “To be clear, this is not about a new logo. This is to position SMPS at the center of business growth for their firms.”

References

Additional Resources
- Federal contracts and grants: www.govtribe.com
- U.S. demographic and economic statistics: www.census.gov/data.html
- U.S. public data: datausa.io
- Global business data: www.statista.com
- Research and analytics firm: go.forrester.com


CLARE KELLY, CPSM, is principal consultant of FUSE Marketing in Denver, CO. Kelly works with A/E/C firms who want to maximize marketing value. She guides firm owners in determining connected strategies and tactics to foster growth. Contact her at 303.296.4286 or clare@fuseigniteforbiz.com.
How To Earn the Role of Trusted Adviser

By Michael T. Buell, FSMPS, Assoc. DBIA
Point being, these terms of self-proclamation should really be basic expectations, not unimaginative ways to try to differentiate yourself. On the contrary, if your clients actually call you all these things in the public realm, then you should share those earned characteristics as testimonials any way you can.

This is the foundation for branding for all of us—what your clients think. Who do you think determines your firm’s brand in your marketplace? It’s not senior leadership, marketing/business development, or an outside PR firm ... it’s your marketplace! What client organizations say or think of when they see your logo, your communications, or your face ... is your brand!

Hence, the most powerful tool for understanding what your clients really think of you is to simply ask them. Make sure you’re having face-to-face client feedback meetings between, during, and after projects on a regular basis. Don’t leave these meetings before you get genuine and detailed responses to: “Where would you rank us among other firms, and why?”; “How would you differentiate us versus other firms?”; and “How can we improve?” No matter what they say, this feedback is real, and it’s pure gold. You won’t get the depth of insight you need over email, so get with them in person.

From Informer to Trusted Adviser

We’ve talked about the characteristics we’d like our firms (and ourselves) to be associated with. Now let’s step it up to roles we would like to earn. The one in particular that many of us should strive to be considered is that of a trusted adviser. Whether you’re a technical professional, a business development professional, a seller-doer, or a marketing professional, you really should want all the clients you engage to come to you when they need something. Rarely does a day go by that someone doesn’t reach out to me for advice, support, or a good laugh. Very few things make me happier or more satisfied professionally than when I know I’m helping somebody out.

With clients, that same desire most definitely applies. There’s no better proof that you’re doing things the right way than when clients contact you for assistance or information. This should tell you that they trust you will be timely, honest, and trustworthy. Isn’t that what you want your clients to think of you?

I’m sure you’ll agree that clients hire people they trust and continue to work with those they both like and trust. Having an engaging personality is powerful. Having a presence when you walk in a room is powerful. Having confidence in your abilities to enlighten or inspire others is powerful. Putting in the effort to be a constant informer, however, is the most critical element to earning the role of trusted adviser.

Yes, the role of informer is the consistent precursor to the role of trusted adviser. Nothing shows a client you value them more than always being ready to act or respond. You want your clients to believe unconditionally that you’re there for them. Proactively, you should constantly be looking for information to share on industry trends, upcoming events that relate to their interests, or fresh lessons learned that could benefit their next project or development. These efforts are the cornerstone for building trust and rapport.

Reciprocity is the powerful residual of this type of relationship. This reciprocity is not a tit-for-tat or quid pro quo, if you will, but a client’s genuine comfort level for sharing insight regarding their concerns, obstacles, ideas, plans, or personal interests. Unequivocally, you want your clients to be comfortable sharing their perspectives with you on a regular basis. That’s what a strong client relationship feels like.

In the A/E/C and other professional services industries, marketers and business developers use a plethora of terms to describe their firms and their work. Many of them get so overused they become obsolete or even meaningless. With colleagues or peers, we hear how everybody is collaborative, responsive, professional, creative, team-oriented, client-focused, or open-minded. My favorite, however, is when I hear design firms share how “design-oriented” they are. Are there really other focuses of design firms?
Help, Don’t Sell

The challenge that too many still have, however, is the lack of ability to stop coming across as agenda-driven or “salesy.” The moment a client feels that you think you’re entitled to information, insight, or a project opportunity, you’re on the way out. The key is to genuinely care about them first and foremost. I’d hate to call it an art or a developed skill, but it remains that plenty of poorly trained business development and technical professionals simply can’t get the “I just want a new project” out of their heads.

Believe me, if it weren’t for my client relationship development classes to graduate architecture students over the last seven years, they would have entered the workforce with the idea that projects will fall at their feet. In the same sense, young business developers tend to feel that cold calls and face time will guarantee a certain amount of project wins. I’ve learned over the years that it doesn’t. What does impact your number of project opportunities and pursuit hit rates more than anything is a consistent focus on helping, not selling to, your clients. “HELP DON’T SELL!” signs should be displayed throughout your office.

If you want to stay ahead of your competition, you must realize that intelligence gathering, due diligence, or discovery (whatever you call it) never stops. Every day has to be filled with the desire to gain as much insight as you can regarding your marketplaces. Sitting at your desk and waiting for RFPs is futile … unless you work for a firm that thinks a 15% hit rate is OK.

As we’ve discussed at length, you get the absolute best information from your clients. But that only happens when, you guessed it, you focus on them and their needs. And that starts with the first contact and never ever stops.

I recently read a saying, “It’s not about being at the right place at the right time … it’s about being at the right place all the time!” If you can be at the right place with valuable information, genuine support, or personal interest for your clients all the time, then you’ll have the relationships you desire and possess the most important role of trusted adviser.

MICHAEL T. BUell, FSMPS, Assoc. DBIA, is a national facilitator/strategist for HNTB Corporation and resides in Columbus, OH. Over the last almost 28 years, Buell has prided himself in helping colleagues, peers, and workshop attendees enjoy stronger client relationships, more abundant project opportunities, and a higher pursuit hit rate. Contact him at 614.306.0479 or mtbuell@hntb.com.
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Marketer: How did you get your musical start? Do you remember the first time you performed for someone else?

As the story goes, I saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan when I was barely three, and I remember being totally transfixed in front of the TV. I saw Ringo roll the sticks back and forth and all the screaming girls and that was it, I was in! From that point on, all I cared about was drums.

By the time I was 9 years old, my parents couldn’t deny my passion, and they bought me my first set. I played in a band and had my first professional gig when I was 12 years old on the night of my bar mitzvah. I was more excited to be playing a gig than about my bar mitzvah. I’ll never forget it; I got paid $50. I remember thinking, “I can get paid for playing drums, are you kidding me?”

Marketer: What inspired you to make the leap from rock star to keynote speaker and author?

It happened really organically. I held my first drum/music clinic in 1991 and discovered that I have a gift to be able to communicate and involve drumming. I started to realize that people were resonating with my coaching and stories more than simply the playing. Then I realized, wow, I could move this out of the microcosm of the music business and share my experiences and use them as a metaphor for top performance in the collegiate and corporate format.

During this year’s Build Business, August 12–14, in Austin, TX, attendees will enjoy a rock-star keynote presentation when Mark Schulman takes the stage. Schulman is a celebrity drummer for P!NK and author of Conquering Life’s Stage Fright: Three Steps to Top Performance.

Schulman will impart his wisdom and secrets behind his rock-star mindset during his keynote presentation, Hacking the Rock Star Attitude. Whether you’re an A/E/C marketer promoting your firm or a business developer working to bring on a new client, attitude and performance are the keys to success.

In his presentation, Schulman will share three core principles to help you find your passion and purpose to break the boundaries of possibility. You’ll walk away with a blueprint for how to incorporate a rock-and-roll philosophy, techniques, and swagger to drive performance and energize your work environment.

Marketer recently spoke to Schulman, who shares some of his rock-star mindset hacks.
point where I realized I could have a lot of relevance. I could provide an enormous service and an energetic or “edutaining” presentation for the corporate market.

I love speaking and I play drums, so I won’t do a speaking gig if I can’t play drums inside the gig. It’s one of the things that people look forward to, and it makes me unique. And it seems to be working. I seem to have hit on the correct hybrid of really high energy, rock-and-roll, and usable content that people can immediately incorporate into their personal and professional lives.

Marketer: What is the rock-star mindset, and how can A/E/C marketers and business developers (even introverts) use it to help improve their client relationships and interactions?

Hacking the Rock Star Attitude is based on a triad: Attitude x Behavior = Consequence. What it means is that we can’t always control what happens to us, but we always have the power to control, change, or what I call shift our attitude about what happens to us. Because your attitude is where you’re looking from and that determines what you see.

So, whether you’re having a bad moment, hour, day, or quarter, you know that you have the power to shift your attitude to drive more desirable behavior to produce more desirable consequences.

The most effective way to utilize this formula in your work environment is to reverse engineer the process. Ask yourself, “What kind of consequences or outcomes am I looking for?” Based on that answer, you would reverse engineer this to determine what specific behavior or behaviors you would need to foster these consequences or outcomes. Then you back track again and determine what kind of attitude would you need to foster to generate that behavior? You can produce outcomes or consequences that you never thought imaginable!

Marketer: How does this triad affect relationships?

You have the ability any moment to shift your attitude. Think about how that’s going to affect the people with whom you’re communicating. Think about the power it gives you to control who you are, what you say, what happens with your behavior, and then the consequences you can generate. Then, if that’s not enough, think about your ability to affect the attitudes of others.

Let’s take a customer as an example. Every single decision any customer makes begins with their attitude about themselves, you, and your brand. It all
begins with attitude. So, if you understand that, by having the power over your attitude and the power to affect and influence others’ attitudes, that’s going to drive more desirable behavior. And that will produce consequences that affect the bottom line.

**Marketer:** Can you share more about the importance of attitude in succeeding in work and life?

I’m not the greatest drummer in the world. I might be the greatest drummer for P!NK, but there’s always somebody who’s better, faster, stronger. We all uniquely have our attitudes, and our attitudes are something that we can create and have control over. And that has so much to do with what we allow, create, and promote in our lives.

But I believe it’s 50% nature and 50% nurture. We are who we are. You can’t have everything you want, but you can certainly cultivate a lot of what you want. I cultivate what I tend to be good at: teaching, drumming, philosophy, and communication.

There’s been a much larger movement in the last 10 years about cultivating our strengths rather than improving our weaknesses. It’s important to improve your weaknesses in certain contexts, but realize what your strengths are and really play to them.

In the work environment, look for colleagues’ and clients’ strong suits, and then cultivate and nurture that. You have a much better chance of success, rather than finding what they need to improve upon. If we allow our natural talents to come out, hopefully, someone else in a position of influence who loves us will be smart enough to see and cultivate that.

**Marketer:** What can attendees walk away with after seeing you at Build Business to help them in their roles at work?

Everything is a performance. When you look at everything in your life as a performance, then you will perform. Every conversation you have with your wife, your mate, or your kids is still a performance. So, view it that way, and have fun with it.

If you’re nervous, who are you focusing on? You’re focusing on yourself. Who should you be focusing on? Everybody else. If you’re giving a presentation or pitch or talking to a client, you’re there to be of service to them. If I’m doing anything but thinking about them—like thinking about myself—what does that make me? That makes me a selfish knucklehead. And I start laughing at that. As long as you’re there for them, it will all work out.

> **Attitude x Behavior = Consequence**
This is the only way to look at it. If you walk in with the motive of, “How much money can I make?” that’s the wrong approach. My approach is, “How can I be of service to you? What can I do to enhance your life?” Make it about them. Make it about their goals and what’s important to them. Make it about the experience or service you’re providing. Because if I enhance your life, my life’s going to be enhanced too. It’s easy.

Marketer: How does teamwork play a role in hacking the rock-star attitude?

Teamwork is vital, both with customers and clients, and, of course, with your associates. That’s why the band metaphor is so important. With the P!NK tour, we had 225 people on the road—we were a traveling corporation of creative people, technical people, engineers, and logicians. The riggers, as an example, started work at 5 a.m. to do the engineering to hang the lights, PA, and staging. Then they’re the last to leave at 2 a.m. They are my heroes! My job is easy compared to theirs.

I believe that every single person and every job is so critical. Every person has to tap into their rock-star attitude, because we couldn’t survive this tour without everybody being completely on top of their game. Everyone has to treat their job like, “I’m a rock star, that’s what I do.” No one has a low self-image, it’s all important—right down to sweeping the floor. Because if someone slips and falls, that becomes the most important job. Everybody has their rock-and-roll position inside the tour.

No band can have the magnitude of their success without all of the members. It truly is the combined energy, talent, and influence of everybody. And the boss, P!NK, that’s the way she views it. She goes into the cafeteria and eats with everybody. She doesn’t think of herself as above everybody. Because we’re all in this thing together.

Marketer: What would you like the attendees to learn and feel after hearing your keynote?

Hacking the Rock Star Attitude is all about tapping into the secrets, stories, and methodologies of what’s created by great rock stars and how people can apply that back to their lives. I tell stories about how people have created attitude shifts, either consciously or unconsciously, to produce this incredible behavior and unpredictable consequences and outcomes. And anybody can do it.

Everybody can feel like they’re tapping into their own inner rock star. And that sounds corny but, I’m telling you, it really works. You get in this groove and you start to realize we’re all a band. And it’s not about what we play but how we play it.

The experience of my presentation is all about how we do it together. I could just leave all the information with you and you would think, “That’s great information.” But if while I’m presenting, I’m playing drums to demonstrate and bringing people onstage and doing interactive rhythmic exercises with the audience—then you have a show. Then you have an experience and walk away thinking, “Wow.”

Because life is about experiences. And, the truth is, we all love unforgettable experiences and stories. People don’t learn from just hearing and writing down concepts. They learn because you have this incredible story behind the concept, like how P!NK almost died when she was about to fly through the air.

I want people on the edge of their seats. That’s the part of my presentation that gets super cool and unique. I guarantee you’ll never have experienced anything like this in life, I promise you.

Marketer: Any last words of wisdom?

One of basic foundations of the rock-star mandate is to have as much fun as you can. Studies have shown that if you’re having fun, you’re going to perform at a higher level. In my business, which might seem a little easier than your members’ jobs in many ways, we don’t work music, we play music.

What if you looked at what you do as playing or performing instead of working? Maybe it’s a little bit of a stretch, but you can look at it as a performance.

That’s what rock-and-rollers understand. The most balanced and happiest performers understand that. We don’t get onstage to be miserable. Even if bands are presenting a dark performance, they’re still loving it. Music is a great metaphor for top performers.

Editor’s Note: Additional interview questions with Mark Schulman can be found at buildbusiness.org.
Finding Authenticity

By Stacy Lambatos

In school, we learn math, science, and history, yet rarely lessons on “being” and presence. We grow up and shape our expectations of our lives through the culture we live in, our families, and our friends. Many of us are unconsciously filled with fear and insecurity that we carry into our daily lives.

The way I have come to understand my life is that living it falls somewhere between two polarities: a life of status quo, survival, childhood conditioning, and cultural programming; or a life of deep presence and awareness.

At varying stages, I’ve lived close to both edges; however, I’ve come around to spending more time at the latter. Both have their challenges and advantages. I can say with confidence the path of presence has resulted in more clarity, richer experiences, stronger relationships, and more fulfilling days.

For most of us, living a life of presence requires us to wake up. We need to be alert and inquisitive when we reach for our phones, when we judge, when we get angry, when we can’t forgive, when we eat junk food, when we sacrifice our own needs. Presence requires us to pause, to look beyond the initial emotion, device, or addiction, and question our behavior. And eventually, we begin to change.

As much as I wish pain wasn’t a popular catalyst for change, it’s the one thing—when felt enough and for long enough—that has the power to propel us into a deeper self-awareness.

We often use relationships, jobs, social activities, and false belief systems to distract ourselves. How many times have you used busy, tired, or stressed as an excuse to avoid what’s really going on? Eventually, these coping mechanisms have an expiration date where the desire for more meaning and something deeper become impossible to ignore.

Through my ongoing journey, I’ve learned to trade weekend emails, 6 a.m. calls, unhealthy relationships,
and postponed vacations with more meaningful experiences. I’ve also rewritten limiting beliefs that I’ve held for 30+ years—this has been the hardest transition I’ve made in my life.

This path has led me to meet teachers who have helped shape my outlook on life, explore altered states of consciousness, and shed nearly everything I previously associated my identity with. I’ve left tribes and friends that were unsupportive of who I was becoming. It’s not one moment, day, or person that has brought me to today. It’s the culmination of many experiences and the trust to embrace the path I have chosen.

While this path is leading me to more joy and peace, it’s still a daily practice and continuous discovery. There were, and still are, moments of deep questioning. I’m still trying to find my voice that I’ve buried most of my career. I have to remind myself to replace judgment with love on a daily basis. My mind still races when I know it’s time to slow down. I still have trouble asking people for help. And the thought of rejection makes my heart quiver.

Today, my definition of success lies in the peace I feel when I put all of this on paper and can still find joy, right in this moment. Eckhart Tolle says everyone on the planet has the same life purpose: to live in the now and to stay present. Right now is where life unfolds, where we receive information, and appreciate the love and beauty around us. Our lives are full of busy; we often miss what could be the most important moments.

I wasn’t built to follow the crowd, nor were you. Choosing your unique path can often be isolating and hard … but we don’t have to do it alone. In the stillness, we become more aware and in tune to the resources, experiences, and teachers waiting for us to engage.

This is living, not surviving.

There’s not a single answer to living your authentic and unique path. At Build Business, I’ll talk about the tools, stories, and teachers I’ve engaged with to help shape my business and life. This isn’t about convincing you to quit your job or make radical changes; my purpose is to wake up your intuition and create more intention in living each day.

Here’s some of what I’ve learned to be true for my life:

- Love is the answer
- The only way through is in
- Trust the process and timing of life
- Intuition is our biggest guide
- We need each other
- The medicine of our time is stillness
- Discovery—there is no one path, one person, one solution
- Come as you are—I’ve made this my life’s work

In the moments of stillness between reading this and coming together in August, I encourage you to look at your own life. Where are the areas you can loosen your grip? Where can you find acceptance? Where can you replace judgment with love? When can you find the space to just be, without expectation, worry, or fear? Can you allow yourself to simply come as you are?

STACY LAMBATOS is the founder of CAYA Studios. CAYA brings together the most talented teachers and experiences in health, wellness, and mindfulness. Its goal is to inspire us to become more present, aware, thoughtful, and kind to ourselves and one another. Contact Lambatos at 310.433.9872 or slambatos@cayastudios.com.
The AECs of Diversity

All Inclusive, Equity, and Culture

By Joy Woo, CPSM, LEED AP

Why does diversity matter? What does the term mean to you and to your organization? To consider these questions, it helps to think in terms of the AECs of Diversity: A = All Inclusive, E = Equity, and C = Culture. We can make a positive difference in our workplace, our profession, and beyond by committing to these three important practices to sustain diversity.

Diversity is critical for the continued growth and maturity of the A/E/C industries. Diversity isn’t just an initiative or program that the human resources department leads. It’s important for all of us to appreciate the benefits of diversity and help overcome the barriers to achieving it.

We must embrace diversity as a matter of social fairness and understand its potential for expanding our world views, as well as providing many competitive benefits in business. These include:

- Better Ideas
  - Promote creativity and innovation
  - Create a safe space for fresh new ideas and dialogues
  - Learn and use the unique insights of others

- Improved Employee/Client Relations
  - Bridge the talent gap
  - Be viewed as an employer of choice

- Increased Business Results
  - Boost productivity and confidence
  - Build strong relationships with all team members and customers
  - Establish an environment of unity, respect, and tolerance
  - Break negative stereotypes and encourage social mobility for underrepresented groups
  - Increase brand trust
  - Gain higher market share and competitive edge
  - Deliver outcomes and earning profits

As noted by Simon Buehring, owner and founder of Knowledge Train, “Successful project teams should be cognitively and demographically diverse. When everyone feels included, engaged, valued, and their opinions matter, they will perform to their full potential, no matter who they are.” In the construction industry, specifically, diversity and inclusion has been shown to provide measurable results. For example:

- A McKinsey study found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 21% more likely to have financial returns above national industry means. Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 33% more likely to have financial returns above national industry medians.
Diversity reduces employee turnover. Around 65% of employees who experienced exclusive behaviors (i.e., excluded from contributing to the company’s mission or decision-making, and/or subject to a hostile work environment) said they would leave, or seriously consider leaving, if they found a different job. The industry average turnover is almost 25%.

When employees think their company is committed to diversity and they feel included, their ability to innovate increases 83%. Innovation leads to better results.

While building teams to deliver transformative programs around the world, I’ve found that engaging a team of diverse members (across gender, orientation, age, expertise, ethnicity, and background) has resulted in more innovative solutions that better meet the needs of our clients and communities. The Harvard Business Review found that a team having at least one member who shares a client’s ethnicity is far more likely to understand that client.4 Our clients, communities, and end users expect A/E/C teams that work with them to look like them and have shared values.

In A/E/C, many organizations have addressed diversity. The American Institute of Architects has an equity, diversity, and inclusion mission. The Urban Land Institute has diversity initiatives. The American Planning Association has an equity diversity inclusion committee. The American Society of Civil Engineers has a diversity and inclusion statement. And the Associated General Contractors of America has a diversity and inclusion commitment.

In 2003, SMPS issued its first diversity statement that came out of a task force created for this purpose. With all the changes to A/E/C and our world today, SMPS is once again exploring diversity and inclusion at the Society level.

After almost 30 years in A/E/C, I’ve seen our industries evolve, but we can still do more. Many benefits of diversity are listed above, so how representative are the A/E/C industries? How are we all addressing diversity, even down to the firm level? And what are the most effective tools to address it?

To help answer these questions, please take a diversity survey available now at surveymonkey.com/r/8Z9M3MZ or through my LinkedIn profile. The results of the survey and answers to these questions will be shared in my session at Build Business 2020.

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The Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the A/E/C Industries

By Jody Glidden

Digital transformation is revolutionizing a wide range of sectors, including the A/E/C industries, which have been relatively more resistant to change. Research by Accenture reveals that artificial intelligence (AI) could double annual economic growth rates by 2035 by changing the nature of work and creating a new relationship between man and machine. This rapid growth and productivity is tempting construction firms to implement their own digital-first practices to replace manual processes.

While some leaders will shy away from investing in new technology, advancements in AI and machine learning have proven to be low-risk, high-reward business solutions. Here are a few different ways AI can help your business grow, maintain existing client relations, build new client relations, and increase your company’s competitive edge.

Automate the Relationship Mapping Process

While many firms deploy digital marketing and social media to improve their brand awareness, the bulk of qualified business leads actually still comes from personal recommendations. In fact, according to Harvard Business Review, 84% of buyers claim that a personal referral got their new firm through the door. Additionally, business development professionals report they’re 4.2 times more likely to score a meeting if they have a personal connection to a lead.

Relationship mapping is a tool that helps companies win new clients, as well as protect and grow revenue among existing customers. Traditionally, relationship mapping meant evaluating your current network. Then you would manually build out a physical chart of all key stakeholders arranged by relationship type, relationship strength, internal alliances, influencers, and conflicts.

However, with the help of an AI-powered sales intelligence software, relationship mapping can become automated, therefore eliminating the need to manually update a physical key stakeholder map. This technology provides insights that are kept up to date automatically and delivered via email and mobile, to be easily referenced by sales and business development teams.

Free Up More Time for Priorities

Business professionals can lose up to 5.5 hours per week on manual data entry—time that could be spent on higher-value activities. Advances in AI and data automation have now made it easier than ever to leverage technology to automate administrative tasks for sales, business development, and marketing professionals. This can save your team hours a day, allowing them to spend more time building their client relationships and focusing on closing more deals. This effortless access to key relationship intel makes it much quicker for sales and business development professionals to provide personalized experiences to prospects and customers.

Make Meeting Preparation a Breeze

If you want to stand out from the competition, your firm must show up for client meetings fully educated, not only about the client’s needs, but also their background and their industry. This means being fully briefed on the latest news surrounding the company and having a deep understanding of their competitors and the broader industry landscape. Manually pulling together a comprehensive overview of the company, the people in the room, and industry news can take up hours of valuable time. AI-backed technology can do the research for you and deliver a custom email report before every client or lead meeting so you’re instantly prepared for success. The technology uses algorithms to pull in the relevant intel that’s publicly available in email signatures, social media profiles, company websites, and industry news.

Measure Customer Engagement in Real Time

Today’s A/E/C decision-makers expect a higher level of service now than in the past. They’re more demanding of timing, going over budget and permitting obstacles. In fact, 75% of them
say it’s never been easier to take their business elsewhere. In this kind of environment, a focus on client happiness and satisfaction is paramount for firms that want to grow and keep their business. Measuring client satisfaction involves a deep understanding of their emotion, tone, and context during conversations with them. To successfully do this, your business should implement a way for every customer-facing professional to track how often key accounts are being engaged and by whom. While measuring manually can be extremely laborious, AI tools—like relationship intelligence—can help you understand and assess how customer relationships are trending. They can also provide insight into how your customers and followers feel about your brand and the services you sell. The technology will also proactively notify you of accounts to ensure you’re not jeopardizing customer retention.

Keep Your Data Clean
Companies across all industries will experience some level of data decay; however, the amount of data decay that affects a company can vary on the country in which a client is located and the turnover rate of the industries served. According to recent research by Salesforce, 91% of companies report having incomplete CRM data. When your company’s data is “dirty” or otherwise inaccurate, it has a drastically negatively impact on your firm’s potential and reputation. If your data remains unorganized, your client could end up receiving the same email three times due to the fact they are listed in your system under three different records. This could potentially result in a loss of business over time.

To ensure your firm’s data stays clean, you should prioritize implementing CRM automation. This technology leverages AI and machine learning algorithms to analyze data across different validation sources—social media, email signatures, and the web—to track contact changes. Once updates are found, the software notifies both users and administrators of data inconsistencies. Not only does this help drive better productivity and data accuracy on accounts and contacts in your CRM, but it can lead to more insights into business development opportunities.

For any business, enhanced customer experiences are the key to long-term growth. And now, thanks to AI, firms can implement practices and tools in place of manual processes to help overall business growth, nurture client relations, and increase your company’s competitive edge. Have you considered how AI can help your business?

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2019 Marketing Communications Awards

In this issue, we feature the Special Event – Print Category winner from the 2019 SMPS Marketing Communications Awards (MCA) program. APTIM, from The Woodlands, TX, won the Award of Excellence for its entry, MARCOM—The X-Factor of the APTIM Growth Engine.

**GOALS:** After divesting from another company and launching APTIM, the firm needed to build a MARCOM organization, from scratch, to support a billion-dollar engineering and construction company. MARCOM’s goal was to share the infrastructure of the organization, while providing a guide for where to turn and what competencies had been developed to serve internal customers.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** The firm’s 4,000+ professional employees were the target for this piece. Originally shared with the top 100 firm leaders at the MARCOM trade-show booth at the annual leadership meeting, the book was then included as a special insert in the firm’s quarterly magazine. Additionally, copies were provided at brand launch meetings held at 80 offices.

**RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND IMPLEMENTATION:** A brainstorming session focused on creating an engaging and attention-grabbing delivery method. Coming out of that session, the team landed on the comic-book format. Because the theme of the launch event (leadership conference) was “The X Factor,” the comic book was developed loosely around an X-Men concept. The book was both designed and produced by an in-house production facility over a three-month period.

**MESSAGING:** MARCOM is a critical component of the growth engine of the enterprise. The call to action on the last page of the comic book was straightforward: How will you engage MARCOM as your X-Factor?

**RESULTS:** The response from the leadership conference was overwhelming. The broader distribution through the magazine and larger dissemination through the brand-launch events allowed internal customers to learn much more about the resources available to them. The number of MARCOM project requests increased by 26% during a five-month period, leading to hiring seven additional permanent employees. This creative, low-cost project drove team enthusiasm while accelerating acceptance of the entirely new MARCOM team—plus, it was fun.
To see the 2019 winners, visit the online gallery at smps.org/mcagallery.

Merit Award, Special Event – Print Category
ISG, Mankato, MN

Finalists for the 2020 SMPS MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS will be announced in May at smps.org/mca.
Concise, compelling writing conveys an ability to think clearly and strategically, which most A/E/C clients value in their project partners.

Anyone engaged in the planning and production of A/E/C marketing proposals knows what an enormous undertaking it can be.

This often-grueling process involves the creation and synthesis of assets into a cohesive document that adheres to strict guidelines. Typically overseen by an overburdened marketer, the proposal process usually takes place on an accelerated timeline, with a lot of cooks in the kitchen.

Though proposals comprise only one component of successful project pitches, they help a firm (or multifirm team) earn a coveted spot on a shortlist or at an interview table. In short, they’re really important.

Yet, despite the significant resources devoted to generating these documents, they often get produced with a skewed focus on the visual elements. This is understandable: The graphic design, presentation, and packaging of proposals can enhance their overall effectiveness and impact.

But the words matter, too. Here’s why:

1. The words form the foundation.
   Even as RFP requirements, formats, and processes continue to evolve, words still function as the core component of proposals. They provide the infrastructure on which the entire document rises or falls.

   Words alone won’t win an assignment (nor will any other proposal element), but they can position a team favorably for future stages of a pursuit. Conversely, poor writing can help reviewers thin the herd of potential contenders.

2. Strong writing demonstrates strong thinking.
   Concise, compelling writing conveys an ability to think clearly and strategically, which most A/E/C clients value in their project partners.

   In short, your proposal provides an owner or selection committee with its first glimpse of what it would be like to work with your team on a day-to-day basis.

3. Design and copy are symbiotic elements.
   Seek inspiration from high-impact print and digital advertising, which effectively blends words and images to communicate core messages about a product, brand, or cause.

   Though proposals are much denser and more complex than ad campaigns, they benefit from a mindset that views writing and design as complementary communication components.
4. Stories captivate people. Storytelling continues to be touted as a marketing maxim because it works. Despite recent studies that reveal people are reading less than ever, individuals are more likely to read proposal responses that are framed as stories. This involves weaving facts, statistics, and assertions into narratives that illustrate how teams solved problems, overcame obstacles, or learned lessons.

Admittedly, storytelling’s not always feasible within the constraints of an RFP. Still, examine the entire proposal draft with an eye toward identifying opportunities to recast responses as mini stories.

5. The words will inform and influence future marketing. Because proposal management and coordination is so demanding, it can be easy to view the process as a one-and-done exercise.

But well-crafted content can often be repurposed and reused. If you win the project, the words will live on in future marketing materials—from website descriptions to award submittals. And even if the pursuit doesn’t ultimately succeed, the responses will influence future proposal efforts.

6. Compelling writing is a true differentiator. Having reviewed and contributed to numerous A/E/C proposals throughout my career, I’ve observed that most of them lack a distinctive voice, a cohesive point of view, and a disciplined approach to content.

Proposal writing—unlike graphic design—often depends on contributed content from many different sources, each with a unique writing style and point of view. Translating those divergent perspectives into a cohesive, engaging narrative isn’t easy. But it’s vital to ensuring the final document positions your team as strongly and convincingly as possible.

How To Raise Your Writing Game

You and your marketing team can improve the quality and consistency of proposals by enlisting these tactics:

- Be direct in responding to all questions posed and information requested
- Use short, simple sentences with strong nouns and active verbs
- Limit jargon and trendy buzzwords
- Edit ruthlessly
- Avoid obvious pandering to reviewers
- Write (and design) for both skimmers and readers
- Honor word counts, as succinctly as possible. No reviewer is likely to be disappointed by having fewer words to read.
- Recruit at least two fresh sets of eyes to review the completed draft. One person will examine all content for accuracy, consistency, flow, and impact. And a second person will proofread the document for typos, grammar, spacing issues, and other design inconsistencies.

Here’s a final recommendation for marketing directors, HR directors, and firm principals: Hire marketing professionals with solid writing skills and invest in them through ongoing training and development. Even if much of the heavy writing takes place by others within your firm, marketers should still play a vital role in editing and refining drafts to ensure they’re succinct, consistent, and memorable.

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As marketers, you know that it’s not only what you do, but how you promote it, that builds more business. And while your firm may have a strong portfolio that demonstrates your track record with project types, you must generate a variety of high-level, content-focused activities to get noticed.

Most companies trumpet the unique challenges of completed projects, but firms need to be forward-thinking about key trends changing the A/E/C industries. These days, leading firms sell big ideas. Instead of talking about their latest multifamily residential building, they talk about the future of housing. Instead of touting their most recent hospital, they talk about the patient experience.

There’s good reasoning behind this approach. Professional services firms don’t sell products or even services. Instead, they sell a promise that they can meet their clients’ goals, overcome their challenges, and achieve their aspirations (what they want, not what they must have). That’s why thought leadership is so critical for A/E/C firms, because it gives you the opportunity to use your vision, expertise, and knowledge in ways that put your firm ahead of the proverbial pack.

If you’re not engaged in any kind of thought leadership—or even if you are—here are four quick tips that will get you moving on the right track.

1. Define your terms.

   Thought leaders are professional experts who are ready to answer the biggest questions and highlight important A/E/C trends and/or their clients’ businesses. If your firm works in different sectors, you can promote multiple topics simultaneously, each targeted to a particular audience. These could include new systems or practices that help colleagues work more efficiently, or cutting-edge research that has wide impact across many disciplines and project types.

   Even though A/E/C professionals work in teams, thought leadership is driven by individual experts. And, while thought leadership boosts the reputation of those individuals, their collective knowledge contributes to and enhances your firm’s reputation as a whole.

2. Generate compelling content.

   Marketers play a critical role in the development of thought leadership, because they’re the bridge between those who have the expertise, and your clients and potential clients who seek it. It’s up to you to help your technical staff develop compelling topics that engage clients without being too broad or too technical, align with key markets and service areas, and achieve desired outcomes. You’ll also need to inspire the technical staff to participate—some will jump at the chance to write or speak, others won’t.

   On the other hand, if your firm is like most, you probably have a great deal of content at your fingertips, such as materials produced for client reviews, in-house presentations about a project or topic, or a lecture given by a staff member at a conference or school. Maybe someone presented...
an interesting idea at a meeting—why not promote it? And if you’re coming up short, you can ask your colleagues for quick bullet points about a topic of interest or an opinion about a current trend or news story.

Keep in mind that the thought leader will need to know the answers to basic questions as they develop a topic. Who is the targeted audience? How do their unique insights compare to previous writings about the topic? What (if any) research supports the thesis? And what will the audience learn? Last, consider incorporating strong graphics, typography, and interactive charts to hit the points home.

3. Create a strategy for distribution.
After developing thought leadership topics that will resonate with potential clients, shape them into content pieces, such as articles or blog posts. Then, identify the right communication channels for distributing them.

Not all channels are equal; make sure you know which will be most visible to your various client groups. For example, a bylined article for a hospitality trade publication can put you in touch with decision-makers who select design teams for new hotels, while speaking at an industry conference might open doors to hospital administrators. Also consider writing blog posts with SEO-rich keywords, developing a monthly newsletter about infrastructure, or, for ambitious thought leaders, writing a book or a chapter of a book about resiliency. Finally, use social media to distribute your content, especially after it has been published or posted, and urge your thought leaders to post it on their personal accounts as well.

It’s important to coordinate your timing and topics, and always strive to be relevant. For example, pitch or post your content about educational trends in August, when people are looking for back-to-school stories. Send out your year-in-review and/or forecast commentaries in early November.

4. Get started.
It can be tough, but it’s not impossible to rally your team around thought leadership. However, don’t try to tackle everything at once. It’s best if you roll out the program by breaking down the process into incremental steps. Start by thinking about what kinds of problems you’re helping your clients to solve, then coach your experts to articulate ways that they’ve excelled in addressing those problems. Remember to use simple language, because your clients and potential clients may not understand design or technical jargon.

And last but not least, quantify your outreach with some metrics, such as numbers of impressions or circulation statistics. Metrics can help you reach a goal, but they’re not the endgame. You also want to be consistent with your messaging, getting into the right types of publications, and covering the topics that will reach—and impress—your core audiences.

Don’t forget that clients want to interact and engage with your firm and its top experts. By launching a thought leadership program, you’ll give them plenty of reasons to reach out to you.

Marketers play a critical role in the development of thought leadership, because they’re the bridge between the thought leaders, who have the expertise, and your clients and potential clients, who seek it.

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Over the past several years, I've been researching why some organizations and leaders reach the ultimate level of distinction. The question fascinates me: Why do some professionals become so good at what they do and attain iconic performance, while others are mired in deciphering RFPs and slashing prices to obtain agreements?

Here's a primary aspect I discovered from the research: Iconic organizations have—and iconic leaders develop—cultures of uplifting reciprocal respect.

You may be a bit surprised to learn that perhaps the single most important word in that sentence is reciprocal.

The word reciprocal dates back to the 1560s and comes from the Latin word reciprocus, which essentially means "returning in the same way." In other words, reciprocal respect means that I will respect you in the same manner—and at the same level—as you display your respect for me.

At a job I landed right out of college, my new boss told me about some of the people who had previously worked under him. He proudly related the professional success that they went on to achieve. This was the first major-market radio station for which I had ever worked. I was inspired by his list of legendary broadcasters—and their achievements were my goals.

Not long after working there, I realized that I was employed by a manager who frequently yelled. Regardless of the severity of your error, he would explode with loud, outrageous, and demeaning profanity.

Throughout school, I had worked for bosses who set high standards and held you to them. Some certainly were a bit prickly and difficult. This, however, was my first experience working for someone who displayed zero respect for his team.

After working there for a while, I marched into his office and told him, “I quit.”

“I get it,” he said, “You aren’t under contract here and another station offered you a better deal. What will it take to keep you?”

“That’s not it at all,” I replied. “I can’t work like this. I can’t be productive when I’m treated the way you’re treating me.”

“Yeah, right. How much?” He assumed it was a ploy to get a raise. That’s how little respect he had for me.

Later, I found out that all of the impressive broadcasters he touted on my first day had quit because of his disrespect. Without exception, they found employment where they were treated with dignity. Then, their careers blossomed. Rather than being their launchpad, that station with the screaming boss had been a prison they had finally escaped.

Colleagues and clients of firms like yours are constantly—both consciously and subconsciously—evaluating the level of respect displayed toward them. Respect isn’t something you achieve through demands. It must be earned.
Modeling Leadership and Respect

Iconic leaders understand it’s their responsibility to lead by example.

The iconic leader doesn’t give respect only after respect is shown. They must show respect first.

- You can’t grow plants without seed and sunshine coming first.
- You can’t grow people without investing respect in them first.

Three ways you can initiate reciprocal respect to enhance your culture include:

1. Don’t nitpick.

Have you ever dealt with an employee that argues about everything? If you said, “The sky is blue,” they would disagree. They seem ready to correct something—anything. Does anyone ever want to be around these people?

If you always judge, criticize, and dismiss others, they eventually will come to see you as a bully. We may believe we’re offering constructive criticism, but I challenge you. The next time you want to criticize or argue with others, ask yourself:

- Is it really constructive? Does it serve to help them, or to make me appear as the authority?
- Do they desire the criticism? If they haven’t invited your critique, then—from their viewpoint—all you’re doing is grumbling.

2. Follow up.

After we’ve identified a problem, we’re constantly told by everyone—from our vendors to our kids—that they will get right on it. In many cases, we know that their comment is precisely where their effort ends.

Follow-up is not only great client service; it’s a display of respect for the concerns they’re experiencing. And, it demonstrates the attitude you desire throughout your organization. Every employee, leader, and organization can follow that model of respect.

3. Don’t withhold praise.

I know some people who act as if there’s a limited supply of praise they’re granted to disseminate in a lifetime. They seem to hang onto it for fear that they’ll exhaust their allocation. Or they might have other excuses like, “If I always praise my employees, they’ll ask for a raise,” or, “If I keep telling them how good they are, they’ll get a big head.”

Maybe they believe these inane ideas. Or maybe they aren’t receiving praise themselves, so they refuse to provide it to others. Either way, it’s never good to withhold validation from deserving clients or employees.

Remember: You Go First

Creating and sustaining an iconic culture can’t be accomplished in a vacuum. You’ll need a team of customers and employees who advocate for you in today’s connected marketplace. Extend to others the respect you desire for yourself and your organization as the first step in creating reciprocal respect.
GET CONNECTED

Build Business:
The SMPS Annual Conference†
This is the leading business development, marketing, and management conference for the A/E/C industries.
• 2020: August 12–14, Austin, TX
• 2021: August 4–6, Portland, OR
buildbusiness.org

Chapter Membership*
Local and regional contacts and educational opportunities abound within your chapter. Find a directory of chapters online.
smps.org/chapters

Marketer QuickLook
Our weekly e-newsletter features SMPS announcements, upcoming events, and industry- and professional-related news.
smps.org/marketer-quicklook

Member Directory *
The directory on MySMPS.org allows you to search for members and their firms.
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MySMPS Online Community*
MySMPS.org is the virtual gathering place. Build your network, access resources, join groups, participate in discussions, join the Business Continuity community, and more. Get the app in the App Store or Google Play.
smps.org/pivotandfocus

Social Networking
Find SMPS pages on LinkedIn and Facebook. Follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

GET AHEAD

A/E/Courses
These new virtual courses are for those starting out or needing a refresher and offer CEUs. See special member offer good through May 31.
smps.org/a-e-courses

Career Center†
Fill a marketing or business development position or plan a career.
smpscareercenter.org

Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM) Program†
Based on the six Domains of Practice, the CPSM program measures a candidate’s experience and ability to apply knowledge.
smps.org/learning/certification

Compensation and Metrics Survey†
Members entering at least 40% of the data receive free access to run reports.
smps.org/careers/salary-survey

Learning Labs*
This free series features skill-building topics every other month for 1 CEU.
smps.org/freelearninglabs

Marketer*
This award-winning bimonthly journal—regularly cited as the top benefit of membership—provides original, knowledge-based content written by industry experts. Access archived issues on MySMPS.org.
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Marketing Resource Center*
Use this web-based resource on MySMPS to search articles, research, websites, blogs, books, and programs.
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Publications†
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SMPS Foundation
The SMPS Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization established by the Society to promote research and education.
smpsfoundation.org

GET INVOLVED

Awards and Recognition
• Marketing Communications Awards†
• Weld Coxe Marketing Achievement Award*
• Fellows Recognition Program*
• Chapter Awards *
smps.org/members/recognition

Leadership*
Volunteer service at the chapter or Society level can enhance your talents and leadership skills. To get involved, contact Tina Myers, CAE, at 703.684.2263.
smps.org/members/recognition

Visit smps.org or call the Membership Team at 703.684.2277 to find out more about these resources and other benefits of SMPS membership.

*Members only †Discount for members
Kathleen Porter

How did you decide to have a career in the A/E/C industries?
I fell into my A/E/C career. After six months, I knew that the built environment was the place for me. No two days, projects, clients, and pursuits are the same. We’re not just consultants, we sell ideas and we solve problems.

How would you describe your role/job?
I have a hybrid of duties that includes working with teams to strategize an approach to a pursuit or presentation, representing the firm at client and community events, and the constant pursuit of work.

What’s your favorite part of your job?
Two aspects of my job are the most rewarding. The first is the ability to collaborate and work as a team, inside and outside the firm. We constantly learn and improve when we work together. Second, I derive much of my professional fuel from the competitive nature of our industries. I love a win!

What have been the challenges and rewards of your career?
Between the deadlines and the constant connectivity, I find it very hard to unplug. I don’t blame anyone but myself, because I genuinely love the work. I like working hard and I appreciate our accomplishments. 2020 is the year I will find better balance in my life!

What has been your most meaningful project?
Our firm was recently awarded a publicly funded education project that was years in the making. Working alongside a design principal, we conducted extensive research, observed our competitors, learned from our consultants, strategized, perfected our message, and waited patiently for the stars to align. The moment we earned that project, I felt as though I had won the lottery.

How has membership in SMPS helped you to advance your firm and your career?
I originally became involved with SMPS to better understand A/E/C marketing. SMPS offers tremendous resources, including conferences, workshops, webinars, white papers, and Marketer. But it’s the personal connections I’ve made by attending local chapter events that have had the greatest impact on my career. I’ve built a strong network that I utilize every day. This includes engineering and construction partners, as well as competitors. At SMPS, though, there really aren’t competitors. Recognizing that we’re all in this together, we support one another to drive the industries forward.

What has contributed to your success?
I see my success as an indicator of my value to the firm. One contribution I’m always thinking about is making the best and highest use of someone’s time. If there’s a task I can take from a firm principal to free them up to do the things that only they can do, I jump at the chance. Then, I just get things done.

What advice would you give to someone about to enter the marketing or business development field?
“Curiosity will take you far!” and “Start with yes, then figure out how you’ll get it done.”

What’s the best advice you’ve received regarding your career or working in the A/E/C industries?
I’ve received so much good career advice over the years: “Speak up and advocate for what you think is right.” … “Know when to keep your mouth closed.” … “Encourage and teach junior staff, they’re our future.”

And probably the most important advice in my business development role was, “Don’t be away from your family more than three evenings a week, you’ll never get that time back.”
## CALENDAR

**APRIL 2020**

**6**

SMPS Marketing Communications Awards (MCA) Call for Entries: Extended Deadline  
Learn more: smps.org/mca

**7**

SMPS Monthly Webinar: Defining Your Firm’s Value Path, 2–3:30 p.m. ET  
Learn more: onlinelearning.smps.org/live-and-on-demand-webinars

**15**

Call for Applications Deadline to Become a Society Leader  
Learn more: smps.org/2020-smps-call-for-applications

**29**

Application deadline for the SMPS Honorary Fellows Program  
Learn more: smps.org/fellowsprogram

**MAY 2020**

**31**

A/E/Courses Complimentary Promotion Deadline (code HQcares2020)  
Learn more: smps.org/a-e-courses/

**JUNE 2020**

**10**

Entry deadline for Autodesk AEC Excellence Awards  
Learn more: aecexcellence.com

**15**

Build Business 2020 Standard Rate Deadline  
Learn more: buildbusiness.org

**23**

SMPS Monthly Webinar: Get Your Firm Ready for Generation Z, 2–3:30 p.m. ET  
Learn more: onlinelearning.smps.org/live-and-on-demand-webinars

**30**

The Pinnacle Experience 2020 Early-Bird Registration Deadline, New Orleans, LA  
Learn more: smps.org/thepinnacleexperience

**JULY 2020**

**1**

The Pinnacle Experience 2020 Standard Rate Registration, New Orleans, LA  
Learn more: smps.org/thepinnacleexperience  
SMPS Job Board 20% Off Job Postings Packages Discount (code SMPSBB20)  
Learn more: smpscareercenter.org

**AUGUST 2020**

**12–14**

Build Business 2020, Austin, TX  
Learn more: buildbusiness.org

**13**

R.I.S.E. Luncheon - Recognition | Inspiration | Success | Excellence, Austin, TX (Build Business awards luncheon)  
Learn more: buildbusiness.org  
The Evening of Excellence, Austin, TX (Build Business awards dinner)  
Learn more: buildbusiness.org

**31**

SMPS Job Board 20% Off Job Postings Packages Discount Ends (code SMPSBB20)  
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*Calendar items subject to change.*
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