

# MARKETING NOW

Insight and intelligence for architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms

RIGHT | NOW

## Now, marketing is for everyone

From the corner office to the newest employee, spreading the word about your firm is critical.

In the good old days— before the recession— most A/E firms had dedicated marketing departments, a group of employees who worked on the ways to spread the message about the firm by creating flyers, posters, e-mails, and other ways to reach out to clients.

“How you present yourself in the marketplace sets the stage for business development. It’s critical that you make sure the right people are out there in the marketplace representing your firm while you’re juggling the many other needs of the business.”

These days, with leaner staffs all around, employees at all levels, from the corner office to the recent graduate, have taken on the role of marketing. Sure, CEOs or chairmen are taking on mostly business development roles at mid-sized or large companies, but there’s no doubt everyone is more involved than ever.

“You can’t just say, ‘This is how we’ve always done things’ when the world around you is changing. That doesn’t lead to success,” says Tom Smith, president of the Society of Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) and founder, president, and marketing leader at **BonTerra Consulting**

(Costa Mesa, CA), a 55-person environmental planning and management consulting firm.



Tom Smith, President of SMPS and Marketing Leader at BonTerra Consulting

Smith was the moderator of a panel discussion in Boston called Principals of Marketing. A similar forum was also held in Columbus, Ohio. He thinks firm leaders have come to appreciate the work of their marketing departments, especially in lean times.

“How you present yourself in the marketplace sets the stage for business development,” Smith says.

“It’s critical that you make sure the right people are out there in the marketplace representing your firm while you’re juggling the many other needs of the business.”

### Be all you can be



Ron Schultz, Chairman, Burgess & Niple

Ron Schultz, chairman at **Burgess & Niple** (Columbus, OH), a 550-person engineering and architecture firm, says too many firms make the mistake of trying to be everything to everyone when times get tight. That’s the wrong approach, he says.

“You need to pay even more strict attention to what you know you do well,” Schultz says.

“You need to know what your business See “Marketing for everyone” on page 2

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**Editor’s note:** Starting with the July issue, *Marketing Now* is switching to an all-electronic platform. You’ll still get the same great news and information about marketing in the A/E world, but won’t have to feel bad about wasting paper. Every month you will receive a full-color PDF issue, plus supplemental materials, that will provide you an even more complete picture of the industry. **For more information, see ad on page 10.**

## WHAT’S | WORKING

From cake to dogs on the loose. **Pages 6-7**



In the palm of your hand



Just desserts



On the loose



Follow the leaders

## Marketing for everyone

From page 1

model is, know who you are as a firm, and adhere even more strictly to the principles that made you successful in the first place.

"There's a great temptation during those periods that appear dicey to stray pretty quickly. It's true that if the clientele you serve has no money, you may have to adjust, but you have to genuinely evaluate that against your business model. It can't be something where you have a scattered approach. If we start diverging too far, there's very little likelihood we'll succeed," Schultz says.



### Reach the writer

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Ed Bond, CEO at **Bond Brothers, Inc.** (Everett, MA), a 300-person general contracting and construction management firm in business for over 100 years, sees agility as a key attribute in surviving during a recession or other challenging time period.

"Even though we have business plans, sometimes it's more important to just go back to the basics and work with the core clients who helped to make you successful," he says. "Reaching out to new clients or looking into new niche markets is probably more risky, especially because of the fierce competition for every job."

### Don't forget your core

Burgess & Niple has taken more care in selecting clients and projects to make it through the economic downturn, Schultz says. The firm works on military installations, transportation, water/wastewater, environmental, and private land development projects.

"Reaching out to new clients or looking into new niche markets is probably more risky."

"When opportunities in any given market sector seem to be fewer, the tendency is to want to cast a much wider net," he says. "I'm not sure that pays off in the short term, and it almost never pays off in the long term.

"You have to know it can't just be about finding new work. You have to understand how that work fits into your long-term practice," Schultz says.

Staying in touch with clients and talking to them about other types of work when design and construction work isn't on the table is a good way to make it through lean times, Bond says. Bond Brothers has worked with its core clients on budgeting and estimating, helping them with Building Information Modeling techniques, and forming alliances and joint ventures. The firm is strong in the education, health care, and energy markets.

Bond Brothers has built its reputation as a more conservative firm, but is able to land new work based on the business acumen it has built over more than a century. The marketing department stands at five full-timers, but all seven owners and executives are involved in business development.

"They have a say in the clients we go to work with, and those we don't," Bond says, noting the firm once turned down real estate development work when it looked deeper into the potential client. "Knowing them at the street level and what can impact your firm can be invaluable. There are still opportunities out there. You just have to know how to find them and evaluate how they fit into the knitting of your firm." 

## Correction

Because of a production error, the May 2010 issue of *Marketing Now* included incorrect information about two of the winners in the 2010 Marketing Excellence Awards. **Gannett Fleming** (Harrisburg, PA), a 1,900-person international planning, design, and construction management firm, was the first-place winner in the Custom Magazine category, and **S&ME, Inc.** (Raleigh, NC), a 1,000-person engineering firm, finished third in the Special Event category. The winning entries are published below.

### CUSTOM MAGAZINE



1ST PLACE

Gannett Fleming

### SPECIAL EVENT



3RD PLACE

S&ME

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# Tick-tock: The proposal time clock counts down...

Maximize the longevity of proposal coordinators by reminding them of the value they bring to the firm and the impact they have on future revenue.

We have all seen it: proposal coordinators burnt out on missed deadlines, late nights, and a lack of appreciation. While solid processes may provide a foundation for success, you also need a winning recipe of complementary personalities.

Most proposal coordinators juggle checking daily public web sites for project opportunities, tracking down proposal documents, routing through the office for a confirmation on whether to proceed with a go/no-go decision, setting up meetings to prepare sales themes, working with the designated technical leads on establishing the proposal schedule, coordinating with subconsultants, chasing résumés and proposal text, and then compiling the information into a proposal based on the established template.

Often, when a coordinator cracks, they yell loudly, "No more proposals!" We have a young proposal coordinator with the proposal clock ticking down. As I reflected on our current realities, I thought I would use this column to send both a message to employees and a reminder for employers. Our realities include a freeze on hiring additional administrative support personnel contrasted with staffers who become time bombs when faced with proposal production they don't enjoy.

### A message to all proposal coordinators

Proposal preparation is one of the most critical responsibilities within our company. We each must take a tour of duty. You have to earn your proposal badge. It is part of what we all must do to better understand how our business functions. Use this experience

Often, when a coordinator cracks, they yell loudly, "No more proposals!" We have a young proposal coordinator with the proposal clock ticking down.

to grow and learn.

**1) Read each proposal.** Listen to what the client wants from your internal team.

### A MESSAGE TO BOTH SIDES

Here's Lisa Schauer's message to proposal coordinators:

- Read each proposal.
- Be empathic.
- Share your frustrations.

Here's her message to employers:

- Include the entire team when you celebrate, i.e. proposal coordinators.
- When you make a go decision understand the impact on proposal coordinators.
- Recognize signs of stress exhibited by your proposal coordinator.

delivering what you are helping them to sell. Give them a break.

**3) Share your frustrations.** Don't let challenges encountered during the proposal production fester. Share your thoughts honestly, but effectively, with those who can impact change. Do not share your thoughts just to complain with fellow co-workers as this can be a waste of time and non-productive.

On behalf of all us who have had to prepare proposals full-time:

### A message to the employer

Proposals are the lifeblood of our organization, ensuring our employees have projects to bill. Remember, proposals are deadline-driven, intense, and often stressful. When you celebrate, don't forget to include the entire team in the announcement, including those who may help you win the work but may not have a role in delivering the work.

When you make a "go" decision, be present in the proposal schedule and understand the impact of the proposal on your existing workload. If you cannot meet the agreed-upon deadlines, remember that bad news does not get better over time. Communicate

Think like a client when you review the proposal. Do not be afraid to express your opinions. Be respectful about how you share your thoughts.

**2) Be empathic.** Your primary job is to produce proposals. Your entire work environment revolves around proposals, yet your team members balance proposals, personnel, and project management. They are responsible for

proactively to the proposal coordinator so they can adjust their schedule to keep the proposal moving forward.

If you have internal team members who are consistently late in delivering their content for proposals, this should factor into the go/no-go decision. Support the demands placed on your proposal production team by exerting leadership when others internally don't do what they say they are going to do. This may even include reversing a go decision midway through proposal production.

Recognize the "signs" of stress exhibited by your proposal coordinator. Sometimes the difference between sane and insane is a simple gesture of appreciation and gratitude.

### Bottom line

Proposal production is a stressful exercise for all those involved. It is important that we acknowledge a symbiotic relationship when we rely on each other to win more work. The typical longevity of a proposal coordinator is short, so understand what motivates and stresses your employee. Ensure they have adequate backup in case of overlapping deadlines. We all want to be part of a team, so don't forget your team extends outside of those technically oriented. The result is new revenue so in reality we all win! **G**

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## Entering the federal market? Tune to this webinar!

In this ZweigWhite webinar on June 29 from 2 to 3:30 p.m., Dave Alexander discusses important factors to consider before entering the federal market. Drawing on 30 years of experience pursuing and winning federal government contracts, he explains how to size up the market, determine whether the market is right for you and how to identify and pursue federal opportunities in a timely manner.

For more information or to register, call 1-800-466-6275 or log on to [www.zweigwhite.com/zw-955.aspx](http://www.zweigwhite.com/zw-955.aspx).

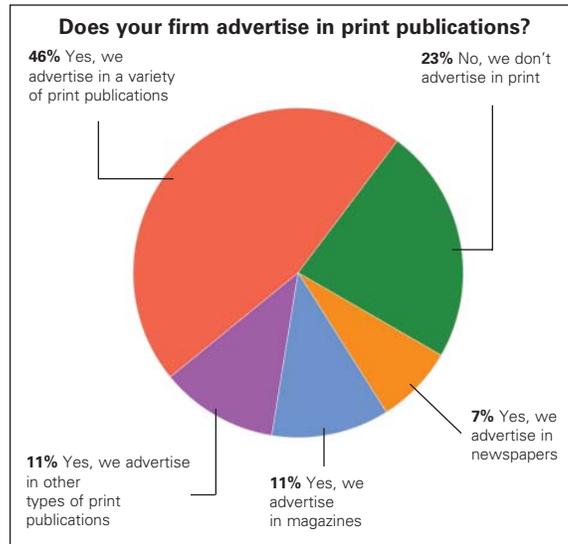
# Print publication advertisements and web site ROI

Despite the advances of online platforms, print remains popular; on the other hand, firms are tracking their online presence.

## FIT TO PRINT

Despite the continuing advances of social media platforms, almost half of respondents say they advertise their firms in a variety of print publications. Another 23% don't advertise in print publications at all, with the remainder choosing one type of publication to spread their messages.

"Anything regarding clients, projects, new hires, promotions, or community involvement is considered appropriate to 'touch' as many people in the real estate community as possible."



"We invest our dollars in PR vs. advertisements. We find ROI on dollars invested in PR to be higher than those in advertisements."

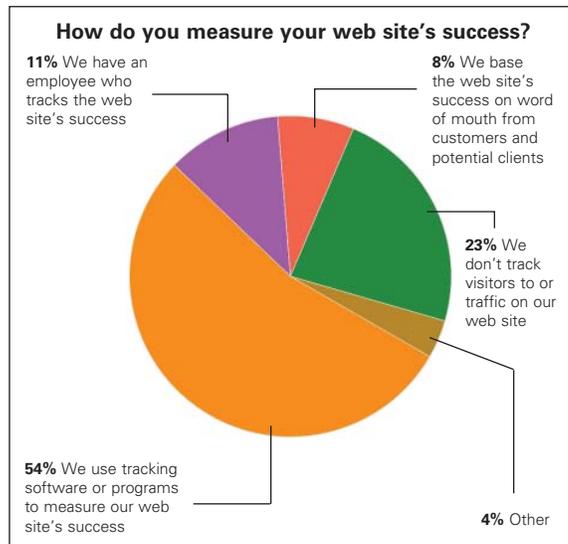
"(We have) scaled back our print advertising strategy due to lower readership and an increase in social media/web-based communications."

"Very limited budget on print advertising. We see more value in placing advertising dollars into events and direct marketing."

## ONLINE CRED

More than half of firms say they're using tracking software to figure out how successful their web site is. Almost one-quarter of respondents, though, don't track activity on their sites. Many say they are revamping their sites and will add tracking as part of the new design.

"We want to see what people are interested in, what they've looked for and couldn't find, what they find but quickly bounce away... helps us build the right content, improve navigation, increase traffic through a variety of means."



"We have used Google Analytics to look at our web site traffic, but use it primarily to monitor our blog. There hasn't been much of an interest in looking at our web site because I think we believe it to be fairly robust."

"This gives us a quantitative way to measure success (number of visits, pages visited, etc)."

## NEXT MONTH

**Question 1:** What percentage of your projects come from competing proposals?

**Question 2:** How do you promote your brand?

## AWARD WINNERS

**RETTEW GETS ACEC AWARD OF MERIT:** The American Council of Engineering Companies of PA (ACEC/PA) honored **George Rettew Jr.** with the 14th Annual ACEC/PA Distinguished Award of Merit. Rettew is chairman and CEO of **RETTEW Associates, Inc.** (Lancaster, PA), a 200-person design firm providing engineering, transportation, environmental consulting, planning and surveying services.

Rettew received the award based on his outstanding contribution to the advancement of the consulting engineering profession and service to ACEC/PA. Along with his efforts to promote ACEC/PA to non-member firms, Rettew has served ACEC/PA in several capacities, including president, chairman of the

board of directors, chairman of the municipal government committee, and member of the transportation committee.

ACEC/PA also awarded a 2010 Diamond Award to RETTEW for the Auction Road Bridge replacement project. Located between Rapho and Penn Townships in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Auction Road Bridge was originally built in 1916 as a 58-foot single-span reinforced-concrete tied-through bridge carrying Auction Road over Big Chickies Creek. The original one-lane bridge was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and believed to be one of only four reinforced-concrete tied-through arch bridges remaining in the commonwealth.

**RAIC HONORS:** The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) has chosen **Bing Thom Architects Inc.** (Vancouver, BC), a 45-person architecture and engineering firm, as its 2010 Architectural Firm Award recipient. Founded in 1982, BTA has executed a wide spectrum of projects in North America and overseas, from single-family residences to the design of entire cities.

RAIC also presented a career achievement award to Toronto-born architect and teacher **George Baird**, naming him the 2010 recipient of the RAIC Gold Medal, its highest accolade. The honor is awarded to an individual for his or her significant contribution to Canadian architecture.

## All the news that's fit to click

EYP's internal news portal delights employees with quick updates on latest happenings.

With employees showing an almost-insatiable desire to know the latest news before things happen, **EYP Architecture & Engineering P.C.** (Albany, NY), a 325-person design firm, has come up with the answer: an intranet with all the news that's fit to click.

The *Hub* launched in September 2009, and has received more than 200,000 visitors in nine months. The internal news engine has been so successful that EYP is now working on rolling out some of the features on its company web site later this year.

"When we were researching how to do this, we got a lot of feedback from our employees that they were inundated with e-mails," says project executive Kelly Donahue. "So, with that in mind, it made sense to create a platform that could be the hub of activity for all of our employees across the whole firm."

On the morning of the *Hub's* launch, as employees entered their offices throughout the country, they saw oversized posters in entry areas and communal spaces announcing the site. When they arrived at their desks, they found bags of *Hub*-branded candies next to their computers.

Also that day, when employees opened *Internet Explorer*, they were automatically



This screenshot shows the inaugural edition of the *Hub*, when all employees received candy on their desks, and their screens!

taken to the new *Hub* home page, where the center story announced and introduced employees to the *Hub*; images of the candy bags and posters were included in the article to create resonance.

"We see this as a way to link people together," Donahue says.

### History of sharing

EYP originally published a monthly print newsletter that was distributed to all employees, and later shifted to a PDF format before moving to the intranet approach. In the early days, there were three stories along with the monthly PDF.

Today, editor Emily Sobiecki says, there are somewhere in the range of 20 new stories a week on the *Hub* along with blogs by six employees at all levels of the firm.

"We've always tried here to have a strong system of internal communication," she says. "The interaction between people on the Web has become so important that this was the way we decided to go. It was a long process, but I think people are happy with the results."

That's an understatement, Donahue says, noting that firm leaders now want *Hub* staffers to help the firm's external site become more like the *Hub*, posting news as it comes in and becoming more interactive for visitors. They believe that these features will boost the firm's visits and help bring in new business.

External site additions may include a Twitter feed or updates on the firm's Facebook page, she says. Some information from the *Hub*, including a screenshot of the homepage, is already included in recruiting materials at job fairs and in *PowerPoint* presentations, Donahue says.

### The news never stops

Mary Catherine Coolidge, lead contributor/consultant for the *Hub*, spends somewhere between five and 10 hours a week writing, editing, and coming up with story ideas.

The stories come from people at all writing levels, she says, noting her newspaper background has helped her work with writers and even turn bullet points into news stories. There is one "reporter" in each office.

"The staff has always wanted more news on a daily basis," she says. "What we've seen happen is, once people started seeing the dynamic aspect of this, it created a culture where people wanted to submit their news."

Site Administrator and Developer Scott Birdsey has trained several staffers on posting content to the intranet, while Designer Susanna Tsipyuneuk created a logo for the site with interconnected, rounded letters, representing the interconnection among offices and the site's fluid nature. The site is chock full of photos, includes a Flash slideshow, and wherever possible includes videos to go with the stories.

While the *Hub* has remained largely unchanged, a few tweaks have made it even more popular. The site now has a dropdown navigation menu, separate areas for hard and soft news, and perhaps most importantly the ability for readers to leave comments.

"We've started a dialogue from people from all of our offices," Sobiecki says. **E**

### DETAILS

**FIRM SIZE:** 325

**MARKETING TACTIC:** Adapt daily intranet news updates for use on company web site and in marketing and recruiting materials.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Internally, available to all employees in seven offices.

**COSTS:** Budget was \$100,000. Actual cost was \$75,420 (including promotional materials, printing costs, outside consultants, and staff time).

**RESULTS:** President and CEO Tom Birdsey calls the *Hub* "better than the morning paper!" Director of Human Resources Melissa Lassar says, "It's a great way to get information quickly— what I want to know, when I need to know it. And, it's FUN." Architectural Designer Calvin Rugg sums it up: "The 2010 phrase of the year is going to be 'I saw it on the *Hub*.'"

## IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND



Now that gas exploration in the Marcellus Shale has commenced, pipeline design work is beginning to emerge. **Larson Design Group** (Williamsport, PA), a 215-person architecture, engineering, and surveying firm, has been fully immersed in this work, providing design work and permitting for gathering lines, compressor stations, and transmission corridors.

To further develop these services, two of the firm's business development representatives went to the INGAA (Interstate Natural Gas Association of America) foundation conference in San Antonio in early April. Because they were flying to Texas, they needed an easily portable brochure that could market the company's service capabilities and recently completed projects. Since this is a new market for Larson, staffers needed to create something from scratch. At the same time, they needed an item that could feature their contact information, with a

business card that recipients could keep in their pockets. Adding to the matter, they had about a week and a half to pull it together.

Graphic designer Brad Breneisen had a brilliant idea: why not design a mini tri-fold in-house, using specialty paper and their new high-capacity color printer?

The end product is stark, easy to read, and can fit in your pocket. The brochure's inner contents showcase Larson's services, while the cover simply features Larson's logo. Slits for a business card were created inside, while the contact information was duplicated behind the slit in case the business card got separated from the brochure. Each brochure was printed and trimmed in-house, controlling brand standards for color, and saving them money.

Sometimes a creative solution is right in the palm of your hand. **E**

## JUST DESSERTS

In today's tough economic climate, helping clients obtain funding is often the key ingredient to getting projects implemented. Using its expertise in funding to both secure new work and help move previously shelved projects along was a conscious decision **Nolte Associates, Inc.** (Sacramento, CA) a 450-person full-service engineering firm, made in late 2009.

In response, staffers identified funding champions—those experts with a track record for helping clients get funding—in each of the company's geographic regions. They then began identifying a variety of tactics, such as webinars, the employee newsletter, and direct mail campaigns that they could effectively use to broaden Nolte's reach in the marketplace by touting their ability to get funding for clients.

The "Eating Cake" postcard demonstrated to current, past, and prospective clients, as well as their employees, that Nolte has the ability to help clients locate project funding (the "missing" ingredient). Nolte's postcard campaign is well-established and resonates with its clients because the imagery is unique—you won't find a project photo on any of the postcards—and the text is short and easy to digest. With an established format that is immediately recognizable, the primary cost



associated with this campaign is postage as the piece is mailed to over 11,300 recipients.

Nolte regularly receives positive comments from clients after releasing a new postcard, and this one was no exception. However, with a goal of staying "top of mind," this postcard may have taken the proverbial cake. Nolte was invited to a mandatory pre-bid meeting, along

with three other competitors, for a large project in Utah. When they asked the prospect why he'd thought to invite Nolte, he said it was because of the postcards.

And the best part? He hadn't (previously) been on their mailing list—it was a co-worker who had continually shared Nolte's postcards with him! **E**

Short takes on real-world marketing tactics that are producing results

## ON THE LOOSE

The purpose and concept of the “Green Valley Dogs on the Loose” postcard series is to capitalize and emphasize the uniqueness of **Green Valley Consulting Engineers** (Santa Rosa, CA) a 20-person civil engineering, land surveying, and landscape architecture firm, as a way of standing apart from its competitors and staying in front of both existing clients and potential clients, while bringing a little humor to an often serious setting.

Over the years Green Valley has become known in the A/E industry for being “dog-friendly” and visitors often get greeted by a four-legged friend when visiting the corporate office. Each card in the “Green Valley Dogs

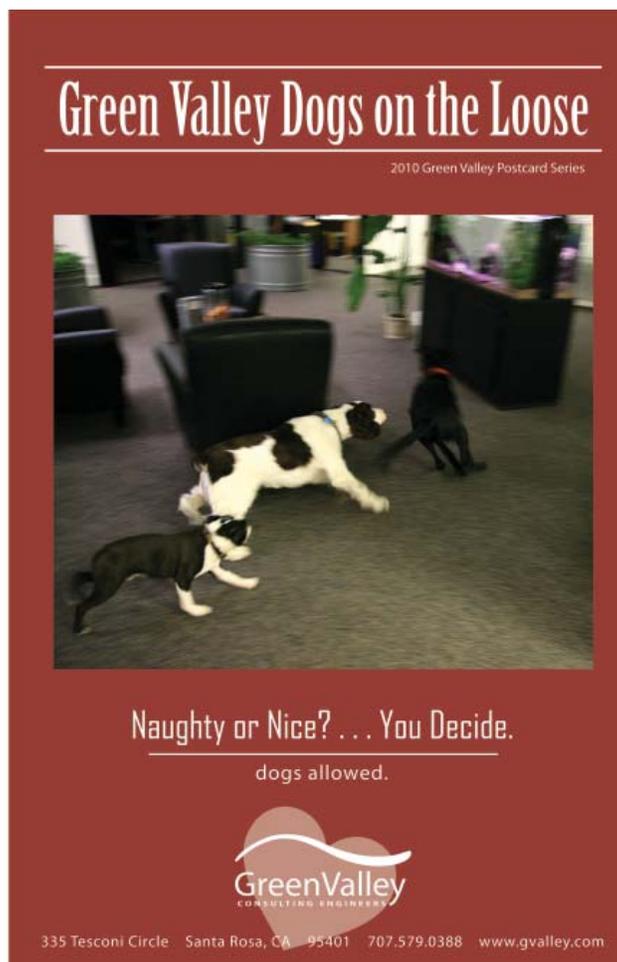


on the Loose” postcard series highlights one of the employees’ dogs in a humorous way, while it also features a completed Green Valley project/client. The monthly cards often revolve around a holiday or special calendar

event.

The postcard series began in February 2010 and will continue through November 2010, culminating in a year-end 2011 calendar. The cost to produce and send one postcard is \$500 per month and includes labor, printing, and postage. The postcard series targets key clients and potential clients and Green Valley sends approximately 250 cards each month.

Green Valley receives overwhelmingly positive feedback from recipients who say they love the cards and look forward to each month’s “Green Valley Dogs on the Loose” postcard! 



## FOLLOW THE LEADERS

**Panamerican Consultants, Inc.** (Tuscaloosa, AL), a 180-person cultural resource firm, recently began a series of outreach and educational videos that have been featured on their web site, Facebook, and YouTube. The videos were made for a federal client who was interested in gaining better outreach to the general public. Each video focuses on a different phase of cultural resource management and they have made an immediate impact for the client and for Panamerican. Both videos have received numerous accolades from the general public, the cultural resource and academic community, and potential clients. Several anthropology programs have begun using the videos as evidence of work expectations for their programs’ graduates.



Both videos have received numerous accolades from the general public, the cultural resource and academic community, and potential clients.

to e-mails and phone calls, Panamerican’s web site has made an immediate impact through increased repeat business as clients and other interested parties come back to review new videos in the series.

An interesting side effect of this video series is the request from new clients asking for their own outreach and capability videos. In

some cases, clients want videos that have nothing to do with cultural resources but the clients like the quality and content of Panamerican’s clips so much that they want Panamerican to produce the videos for their own firms. 



# The ultimate balancing act

## Leaner economic times require you to do more with less. Are you ready?

You're 200 feet above ground, walking across a tightrope and everyone in the arena is watching your every move. They need you to entertain them, but they also fear for you may lose your balance. As the head of marketing, you realize these are tough times, but not impossible. On one hand, you are balancing the need to market your company and tell its story. On the other hand, you are balancing senior management questioning every single dollar you spend. It's a balancing act.

### ASK THE QUESTIONS

When deciding whether Ulteig should sponsor this year's Denver Film Festival, the marketing team asked five fundamental questions:

- Are potential clients attending the event?
- Will the media be available at the event?
- Is there a sustainability or green opportunity at the event?
- Can we brand our company with excellence to the desired audience?
- Is there an opportunity for thought leadership?

Many of you can relate to these leaner economic times and the pressure to do more with less. The symbolic balancing act reminds us of the circus and how the spectators "ooooohh" and "ahhhhhh" as we watch in amazement from our safe seats. But, high up on the wire, it can be scary.

The good news is the overarching goal of a company needing to market its services and tell its story has

remained intact. Every expert or analyst I have encountered concludes with the same message: companies that cut back on marketing efforts during tough economic times will have more difficulty climbing back into competition when the economy improves. The secret in leaner times, however, is not to become polarized by the balancing act itself, but rather welcome the idea of adopting "balance" into your decision-making processes.

Ask the fundamental question: in order to justify the spending of marketing dollars to senior management, what five things

can our company gain from this marketing campaign?

When deciding whether or not Ulteig should sponsor this year's Denver Film Festival, our marketing team approached this decision with balance and thoughtfulness. We literally asked five fundamental questions, each centered on providing value to our shareholders:

- Are potential clients attending the event? Yes.
- Will the media be available at the event? Yes.
- Is there a sustainability or green opportunity at the event? This year's theme is focused on green living.
- Can we brand our company with excellence to the desired audience? Yes.
- Is there an opportunity for thought leadership? No. (Actually, we created this opportunity and turned it into a "yes." I will share how in just a moment.)

Sponsorships are usually suspect and questionable. Sponsorships usually permit the company to brand its logo and receive complimentary passes and meals. Sometimes companies sponsor an event because the competition is also sponsoring (a silly reason, if you want my opinion. Never let another company dictate your agenda or strategy.).

Sometimes companies simply want to be associated with the event itself, and therefore demonstrate their passion for the event by sponsoring at high levels. If you are a gold sponsor, you must REALLY care about the issue, right? And so on.

Every company has its reasons. What's important is the balancing act of advancing your company's message, while demonstrating results.

I challenged Ulteig's marketing department to think three-dimensionally about the Denver Film Festival opportunity, and to fully recognize the company's potential by identifying the five areas highlighted above.

We found out that sponsoring the event at a reasonable level provided our employees with VIP tickets to the event and, if possible, to potentially bring clients along for the evening. Networking is where the rubber meets the road, and quite frankly

Every expert or analyst I have encountered concludes with the same message: companies that cut back on marketing efforts during tough economic times will have more difficulty climbing back into competition when the economy improves.

this opportunity alone made the sponsorship interesting. We also knew that an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people were expected to attend the event, and therefore media coverage was certain.

We made it a point to contact the media in advance to inform them we are a sponsor of the Film Festival, and invited them to interview our engineers at the event.

Since it was a green film festival, our investment provided Ulteig the opportunity to sponsor one film. We chose a film on water/wastewater, which is a pivotal and strategic market that Ulteig serves. The sponsorship allowed us to hand out promotional items, so our marketing manager decided to provide a brilliant, cost-effective, eco-friendly popcorn holder with our company's logo. Everyone who watched the film received a free eco-friendly popcorn holder, a big hit with our attendees.

Lastly, we lacked the thought leadership opportunity. So, we came up with the idea from the Denver Film Festival of hosting a roundtable discussion and Q&A from the audience regarding the impacts of sustainability in communities.

The idea worked, and they adopted the roundtable discussion immediately following the movies. The roundtables provided our engineers a seat at the table, and an opportunity to lead the discussion and serve as thought leaders.

Marketing was positioned to communicate all of these value propositions to our senior staff, and it made it almost impossible to argue the notion that Ulteig marketed itself effectively in one of America's most vibrant, growing cities. 

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## How to stay ahead in a down market

Send out “Wanted” posters to your clients and prospects, and you’ll like the results.

**Wanted:** *New clients.*

**Reward:** *Great service, fabulous designs, and outstanding technical support.*

The first lesson I ever learned was that you have to ask. ASK. If you aren’t marketing hard, you aren’t asking. If you don’t ask, then you don’t get. Those old “Wanted” posters were repetitious, in your face, and plastered everywhere. You couldn’t misinterpret their meanings, or misunderstand their needs. All ads are needs. All visibility is an ask or a need.

The old “Wanted” posters had a severe look and feel— they used dark colors and a dangerous character’s face, and, oh yes... they had a reward attached. They told you what they wanted and what you got in return. Easy. Well, maybe not so easy. To stand out takes work. The tone, or the message, takes time to develop. Advance research and analysis must take place. Which periodicals give the biggest bang for the ad dollars? What are the latest colors and trends? What will be the consistent look for the whole year’s campaign?

The people who nailed those “Wanted” posters weren’t real picky about placement either. Public display— period. To catch a train robber hop-scooting across the Wild West, their philosophies had to be, “The more, the merrier.” Or, in today’s terms, direct mail, speaking engagements, and articles in print. Sort of an important extra: they told you who was interested and who would convey the reward.

I am sure those sheriffs didn’t say, “Golly, there are so many train robbers out there. We can’t afford to do posters.” Or, “What’s the use?” I know it’s the worst recession in a million years, and your point is? If visibility didn’t work, then we wouldn’t have any ads. Only firms soon to be left behind in the dust will say, “How can a direct mailing and all of this marketing help?” You have to spend money to make money. The math is simple: marketing campaign= new work.

Why keep your marketing and advertis-

ing budget and team a priority during hard times? Because most firms don’t. I’ll write this article, a marketing director will take it to a principal, and it will fall on deaf ears. Fear freezes the smartest minds. Too bad, because it’s kinda like exercise; it hurts, but it works.

The ask is more than advertising. It’s the total exposure— especially direct mail. To be effective, direct mail must (that’s MUST) be repeated (that means several times), as most of it gets a fast look and then gets pitched. And oh, here’s the show-stopper: it has to go out to the whole mailing list. Oh, and don’t cut the list down; try to think of ways to EXPAND it. The tendency to cut happens too often. The line of thinking should not be about saving postage. Distribute the mailing to everyone. It culls the list fast and inexpensively. Billable hours should be spent finding new possible clients.

Another impediment to getting out there is the perfectionist syndrome. The uncountable hours spent nitpicking and squabbling over things that should just go out— NOW. Firms can spend thousands of dollars for corporate collateral material or holiday cards and never be able to come together enough to make a final choice— so nothing goes out. OMG. I don’t get it, but I do see it over and over and over. Think “Wanted” posters: Cheap. Simple. Easy. Quick. Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Get it out the door. There’s a sneaker company that must have been really frustrated one day when they came up with their tagline. Say it simply. There’s a Gold Mine Town TV show where the paper’s editor wants to use the word “gratis” when the town is trying to get people to get vaccinated for small pox. The saloon keeper says, “No, use the word ‘free.’” Think, “Wanted— Dead or Alive,” not “in whatever condition you happen to find the person and we will not be responsible for any loss of ... blah blah.”

Now on to return on investment. No question budgets matter today, but if you go hide in a hole, then you’ll lose everything when the market pops. If you’ve never tracked your media hits, start now. If you haven’t gotten your principals, and for that matter your whole firm, speaking

Why keep your marketing and advertising budget and team a priority during hard times? Because most firms don’t. I’ll write this article, a marketing director will take it to a principal, and it will fall on deaf ears.

and writing, start now. If you don’t have a written plan with every conference, writing opportunity, along with press releases to coincide with editorial calendars, then start right now. Team advertise with product manufacturers or with editors for speaking engagements. Make choices for advertising based on your records. Who did you get the most coverage from last year? Be tough, and cancel ads that don’t work. Admit failure and move on.

In this rough climate, brave firms that market over time win. The word “courage” rarely gets play in marketing articles. However, great marketers have to tell the truth, they have to push for their budgets, and they have to take arrows because they know it is for the good of the firm. If a marketer can’t press hard, then a firm may suffer if a competitor gets a larger share of the market. Persistently brave always wins. Consistent marketing in the worst of times— just do it.

MARILYNN DEANE MENDELL is director of marketing and corporate communications with **Hickok Cole Architects** (Washington, DC). Contact her at [mmendell@hickokcole.com](mailto:mmendell@hickokcole.com).

### Participate in ZweigWhite’s 2010 marketing survey!

Times are tight, and your firm may not have a lot of money to spend on marketing. How can you get more out of your marketing dollars? See what’s working— and what’s not— for your competitors and other firms just like yours with ZweigWhite’s 2010 *Marketing Survey of Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Consulting Firms*. You could find out what’s working by trial and error, but why not save time, money, and headaches by getting the most comprehensive report on marketing for design and environmental firms?

Survey data is being currently collected and if you participate before June 18, you can get the finished report for just \$95. To take the survey log on to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/CBYS5V9](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CBYS5V9).

## ZWEIG | DOTCOM: TIPS FOR YOUR CORPORATE BLOG

Whether you are in the blogosphere or are thinking about jumping in, check out these tips from corporate social media consultant Debbie Weil and Compendium Software Co-Founder/CEO Chris Baggott:

- Corporate blogging should be the content hub for your firm's other social networks, whether that's Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or whatever.
- About 80% of traffic to your blog comes from first-time visitors, so make sure your posts are written with that in mind. Don't assume that everyone who's reading your post will be in on the joke or know the background of what you post.
- Corporate blogs should provide a solution to what the visitor is looking for. In most cases, that's whatever product or service your company sells. Including links to your firm's web site or online store in your posts is a key part of generating business for the firm through the blog.
- Include links in as many posts as possible. Better: all of them. The links don't always have to point to your firm's web site, but can direct readers to an article that inspired you to post. Including the article author's name in your post can get you noticed too, and might encourage the writer to link back to your blog and get more eyeballs on it.
- Don't worry about how many followers or subscribers you have to your blog. Traffic, click-throughs, conversions, leads, and orders are much more important.
- Make sure your blog represents many different voices. Good writing is a must, no matter whose name it's under, but don't rely on a single blogger or readers will view it more like a personal blog.
- Stay away from long posts and rambling stories. Short, more frequent posts are much more effective than occasional ones that seem to go on forever. A range of 200 to 300 words is plenty, and be sure to post at least once a week— if not more— to keep readers coming back for more.
- Be authentic, conversational, and useful.
- Tell lots of stories about your firm's products and services and how they've helped others succeed.

Have you stepped into The Board Room to see ZweigWhite's blog? If not, check it out at [zweigwhite.blogspot.com](http://zweigwhite.blogspot.com). Let us know what you think. We'd love to hear from you, or add you as a contributor!

## CALENDAR

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR:** The ZweigWhite Management Series on Business Development is an interactive program that will help your employees become skilled at identifying business opportunities and understanding exactly what to do to transition opportunities into actual projects. Find out how to create persuasive proposals and presentations, secrets of negotiating and closing the deal, and what will make the critical difference in nurturing rich and enduring client relationships.

Dates and locations for this one-day seminar include June 15 in Los Angeles and Sept. 9 in Seattle.

For more information or to register, call 1-800-466-6275 or log on to [www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/bde/index.asp](http://www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/bde/index.asp).

**THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY:** The Principals Academy is ZweigWhite's crash course in all aspects of managing a professional services firm. The program is presented by a team of speakers with extensive experience working with and for A/E firms—including ZweigWhite founder Mark Zweig.

The two-day agenda covers six critical areas of business management— business planning, financial management, project management, ownership transition planning, and human resources management— from the unique perspective of architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms in tutorial and case study workshop sessions.

The Principals Academy comes to Miami on June 8 and 9 and Chicago on Sept. 21 and 22.

For more information or to register, call 1-800-466-6275 or log on to [www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/tpa/index.asp](http://www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/tpa/index.asp).

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## Not out for the summer

### Marketing and business development never take a vacation.

Summertime generally means some downtime in this industry. After a long winter and anxious spring, most people head to the beach, visit the grandparents, or escape to parts unknown for a little rest and relaxation. It's been a rough and tumble 18 months— everyone needs to recharge. But even if the year wasn't so hectic, you'll find very few conferences scheduled during the next few months and even less training simply because, next to the holidays, summer is the best time to take a vacation.

Business activities within the firm are generally put on hold until the vacationer returns. Most project tasks are transitioned to the care of someone trustworthy because we have to meet important deadlines and schedule requirements. But, in the case of marketing and business development activities, these are things that cannot afford to take a vacation. In fact, it is worth arguing that the next few months are the perfect time for architects, engineers, and environmental consultants to think about a little summer school.

I'm not assuming that anyone out there has little to do or is twiddling their thumbs,

so here are a few ideas that are easy to implement without costing a bunch or adding a tremendous burden in terms of time:

■ **Summer reading list.** I enjoy reading a wide variety of topics, but I've had my eye on several business books recommended lately by peers and clients. I do value this input because I've been disappointed in the past with several overrated best-sellers. A book either resonates with someone or it doesn't, so I am cautious to offer suggestions. I will, however, encourage choosing a marketing or business development book and making it your summer read. One book by the end of August is a reasonable goal. Reading is good for you— and learning a thing or two in the process that can help you at your job is even better.

■ **Summer business development activities.** Most of us live in areas with seasonal changes and have been waiting eagerly to break out of winter. Admittedly, it's tough to get motivated about business development when it's cold and dark outside. Now that the beautiful weather is here, though, we rush home to start grilling, cut out early on Fridays, and spend weekday evenings enjoying the weather. Summer makes business development so very easy without sacrificing too much personal time. Baseball games, golf, and outdoor networking events are always popular. What about

catching up over an iced coffee, running a charitable 5K together, or sponsoring their event? What do they enjoy doing? Maybe you're not into model railroading as enthusiastically as they are, but the least you could do is ask how they enjoyed the latest show.

■ **Check-in of 2010 marketing goals.** No doubt there were goals and a plan established at the beginning of the year for what the firm was to accomplish. Targeted market share, market size, and revenue goals are likely just a few. There were other tactical actions like conferences, newsletters, postcards, and special projects identified as well. Summer is a good time for a reality check on that plan. Is leadership still supporting it emotionally and financially? Is the firm on target with the timeframes established? If there was anything we were unsure about early in the year, do have more clarity or confidence now to make a decision? What's working? What isn't and what are we prepared to do about it now so we're not exhausting more resources to it?

■ **Push for the fall.** Everyone knows there are no immediate results from marketing and business development activities. It takes three to six, sometimes as long as nine, months for the fruits of this labor to manifest in real terms— all the more reason why you can't hit the pause button. What you do over the summer months will determine your opportunity pipeline for autumn. September will be too late.

As a closing note, these activities are not reserved for the marketing department or principal level leaders. These are certainly activities that project managers and others interested in the business can easily adopt (reading) and improve with practice (business development). This continues to build a marketing culture as well as reinforce that everyone in the firm is involved in it one way or another. With more hands on board, it also gives those in the marketing department some time for a well-deserved vacation. ☐

CHRISTINE BRACK, PMP, is a principal with ZweigWhite who specializes in strategic business planning and project management optimization. Contact her at [cbrack@zweigwhite.com](mailto:cbrack@zweigwhite.com).



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SHIP TO PAYMENT METHOD

## Return to A/E has brought about many rewards

Marketing Excellence Award just the latest in a long line of kudos for EYP's Radzynski.

Susan Radzynski is a principal and director of marketing at **EYP Architecture & Engineering P.C.** (Albany, NY), a 325-person architecture, engineering, and energy firm. With six U.S. offices, EYP has a global project reach in government and higher education, with expertise in



Susan Radzynski, Director of Marketing, EYP Architecture & Engineering P.C.

academic planning and design, campus and master planning, science, student life, energy, historic preservation, and embassies. EYP is an acknowledged industry leader in Building Information Modeling and Integrated Project Delivery. Additionally, the firm's long-standing commitment to environmental responsibility and energy-conscious design has led

to the development of a dedicated energy practice with its own engineering test farm at the University at Albany's College of Nanoscale Engineering Sciences.

Radzynski worked for EYP as a marketing manager from 1990-1998, and returned to EYP as director of marketing in 2008. She is responsible for leading the corporate marketing and communications team comprised of 16 members across offices. She is also working closely with President and CEO Tom Birdsey on the firm's new branding initiative. One of her most important assignments since rejoining the firm has been working with the sector leaders and business development team to streamline the go-no go process and focus marketing efforts on proactive pursuits. Here, she shares her story with *Marketing Now* readers.

### **Marketing Now: How and why did you get into this profession?**

**Susan Radzynski:** "I blame (credit) my dad, who is an architect and introduced me to the marketing director at the A/E firm he worked for when I was a sophomore in college and interested in marketing. The introduction opened my eyes to the

depth of options to consider in a marketing career. I had never considered marketing professional services. That director, Wayne Kruse, became one of my earliest mentors and even influenced my choice to transfer to the University of Miami (where he graduated from) to study international business. It was a great move, and having lived in Brazil for a year, I loved the international flavor of Miami.

"At the time of graduation, the firm Wayne worked for, **Stetson-Dale**, located in upstate New York, was going through a merger with Chicago-based **Harza Engineering Company**, a major international engineering firm. Harza offered me a job to help integrate the marketing efforts between the two firms. I went to work in Chicago in the Proposal and PR Department of Harza. I was given the opportunity to work on major PR and proposal initiatives involving multi-million dollar projects located throughout the world.

"One of my favorite projects involved teaming with **Flour Daniel** on a proposal for the Super Conductor Super Collider, which took me to their Orange County, CA office. I worked there for three weeks, sequestered in their War Room, working on this major submission. These types of pursuits, although stressful, were fascinating to me and because of the technical nature, pushed me far outside of my comfort zone. At one point early in my career, I remember thinking, 'If I can market hydro-electric dams, I can market anything!'"

### **M.N.: Why did you choose this market?**

**S.R.:** "Life has a funny way of planning things for you. I think it was just meant to be. Having a job offer as I did right out of college to work for a major international firm in a great city was a huge factor in choosing this profession. I also looked into banking and sales, but the caliber of the jobs and locations of offers were not nearly as interesting. I also benefited from the variety and types of firms I have had the chance to work for. While in Chicago, I also worked for a small architecture and interior design firm, where I was the only marketing person. This was a great position for me, as I had to learn to do everything, from BD to database maintenance, to pro-

posal writing, PR, and much more. I grew professionally in my skill set and recommend anyone starting out in their career to grab an opportunity like this. It has the potential to fast track your career growth as you learn to do it all.

"I did leave the industry for a period of 10 years. Curious to learn marketing in a different industry, I left the A/E industry to work in the financial services market as the VP of marketing for a national bank in Albany, NY. It was a good experience and one I will not regret. Two years ago, I was invited back into this industry by a former employer, EYP Architecture & Engineering. I draw daily on my learnings and experience from the banking industry. Some things in marketing apply to every industry, especially the importance of building relationships and trust."

### **M.N.: What is your proudest professional accomplishment and why?**

**S.R.:** "This business is all about teamwork and collaboration, from the way our technical team approaches our projects to the way we market and pursue our business development and PR initiatives. My proudest professional accomplishment happens at EYP often. It comes from watching our high-performing marketing team accomplish winning results. Results just like the Carbon Zero Hero campaign (a 2010 Marketing Excellence Award winner for target marketing— see the May 2010 issue of *Marketing Now*). ☐"

To read the full version of *Marketing Now's* interview with Susan Radzynski, log on to [www.aemarketingnow.com](http://www.aemarketingnow.com) and enter your username and password.

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