

**ACEC Summit, Whistler, BC
CEO and Principals' Roundtable
June 26, 2009**

Moderator: Brian Pearse (Stewart Weir)
Reporter: Jean-Marc Carrière (ACEC)
Group B (201-850 Employees)

Participants:

David Crandall (ADI Limited)
Herb Khuene (Associated Engineering)
Réjean Breton (Breton Banville & Associés)
Mathieu Riedl (Breton Banville & Associés)
Paul Evans (EBA Engineering)
Neil Cumming (Levelton Consultants)
John Blair (McElhanney Consulting Services)
Bruce Miller (Morrison Hershfield)
Terry Gowing (Urban Systems)
Naseem Bashir (Williams Engineering)

Topics:

- Ownership transition
- Corporate Structure – Employee-owned versus Corporate shares
- How to get larger contracts
- TILMA – Labour Mobility Agreement – specially in BC and Alberta
- Problems in finding personnel – Eastern Canada
- Human Resources:
 - Leadership & Development
 - Succession Planning
 - Retention & Development
 - Expectations of younger generation
 - Cross training
- Business Excellence Modelling
- Growth
 - Through Hires
 - Through Acquisitions

Issue 1: Ownership Transition

Participants identified best practices by providing guidance in employee-owned companies. Proper succession planning was a directive in employee motivation. Involvement of key personnel at different levels in the succession plan also was seen as an insulating factor against “consolidation or takeover”.

Although the discussion identified various ownership models by different firms at different stages of transition and succession, it was determined that not one specific key model (or best practice) can fit all succession plans. Some firms recruited outside consultants specializing in the field while others built the plan in house.

Actions for ACEC:

Have discussion with successful firms with proven succession models and present findings to the membership.

Issue 2: How to get larger contracts

A discussion was held on what some member firms do to attain larger scale contracts. Some solutions provided included partnering with other firms in submitting proposals. Other suggested applying different business models such as Construction Management as part of the additional services.

No specific suggestion for ACEC action on this topic.

Issue 3: Staffing Professional Development

Various practices of professional development was discussed including the use of "Quality Management Systems" which provides excellent guidance formats and the use of "ISO" which also provide tools for implementing quality management.

Professional development was seen by the group as a motivator for employees. ACEC's continued provision of training resources such as PSMJ Seminars was seen as valuable to members.

Some best practice suggestions were recommended:

- Allocate a specific budget line for Professional Development; Normal investment in education is 1.5% to 3% of budget
- Have regular Project Manager meetings
- Provide Leadership training courses
- Provide "Team Building" exercises
- Allow staff to get involved in charitable/community work such as United Way, Blood Services, Art Groups, "Green" initiatives
- Sponsor employees in the annual participation in "Construction" engineering competition

Actions for ACEC:

1. Provide information on ACEC website on best motivators as identified by Young Professionals.
2. Continue to expand the Young Professionals group at ACEC.

Issue 4: TILMA (Professional Services Mobility)

CEBC and CEA have been discussing this issue due to the agreement created between these two provinces. A document replying to this TILMA agreement is in final draft form in Alberta (CEA). Members were concerned on how this agreement or a new potential National agreement on Professional Services Mobility might impact their businesses.

Actions for ACEC:

1. Document from CEA should be shared across the country in its final version for information
2. Verify that QBS can be implemented within this agreement
3. Provide training to member firms on the impacts of Mobility agreements
4. Determine if a best practice can identify a way to change client "process" to accommodate such agreements.