

**ACEC Summit
St. Andrews by the Sea, NB
CEO & Principals' Roundtable
June 25, 2010**

Moderator: Mike Currie, Kerr Wood Leidal Associates
Reporter: Saskia Martini-Wong, Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO)
Medium Firms: 56 – 200 Employees

Participants	Firm	No. of Employees	Province
Rejean Boudreau	Roy Consultants	100	NB
John Clark	Williams Engineering	190	NT
Mike Currie	Kerr Wood Leidal Associates	120	BC
David Kozak	Terrain Group Inc.	150	NB
Jack Lee	Dayton & Knight Ltd.	80	BC
Rick Turchet	Walker Projects Inc.	60+	SK
Milt Walker	Walker Projects Inc.		SK
Guests			
Andy Robinson	Robinson Consultants		ON
George Roter	Engineers Without Borders		ON

David Kozak noted that his firm had just been acquired by Genivar.

Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA)

For members in BC and Alberta, TILMA has become an issue. Participants urged those in Manitoba and Ontario to understand TILMA and the implications for the industry (e.g. even very small projects must be advertised nationally).

Action: ACEC to help MOs not currently affected by TILMA by information sharing and best practices from BC and Alberta.

Electronic Procurement Methods

Mike Currie noted that in BC the use of MERX is causing problems for many consultants. Participants agreed that systems like MERX are useful for EOIs, short-listing and prequalifications, but not for professional services. It should also not be used for projects under \$75,000. Dave Kozak noted that it does save on centralization and in NB, firms can see which firms have already requested documents. Andy Robinson informed the participants that Andrew Steeves is the chair of the ACEC procurement committee. This issue should be raised and may warrant a sub-committee.

It was agreed that part of the problem is that each municipality works differently. Andy Robinson reported that the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has developed a tutorial for individuals responsible for procurement on the Best Practice.

Action: ACEC to raise this issue with its procurement committee. ACEC to work with MOs to develop one message.

Action: ACEC to promote the CSA tutorial.

Bilingual Documents

All participants are concerned about the federal government's request for bilingual documents. Dave Kozak noted that even in NB, a bilingual province, they do not have the capacity. Andy Robinson reported that ACEC is pushing hard in asking if the government will take responsibility for translation.

Infrastructure

Dave Kozak voiced concerns about what the federal government has done to get money flowing in infrastructure investment. As noted by a few speakers at the conference Canada needs to be concerned if 70% of its national infrastructure is past its useable life cycle.

Participants also voiced concerns about small communities and how they could finance infrastructure upgrades/repairs.

Action: ACEC needs to have on-going dialogue with the federal government.

HR

There were some general discussions around HR regarding whether firms had designated full-time HR staff and if they did, were they part of the senior management team. Saskia Martini-Wong noted that one benefit CEO offers its members is access to BottomlineHR, a virtual HR library. She explained that feedback had been positive from small to mid-sized firms that don't have formal HR departments.

Action: ACEC to look into offering the services of BottomlineHR for members rather than this being done at the provincial level.

Action: Rick Turchet to send book title that may be of interest to participants.

IT

There were some general discussions around IT and associated costs. None of the participants had a clear idea the amount their firm spent per employee on IT.

George Roter noted that Engineers Without Borders (EWB) had recently started using Google Apps for their mail servers. John Clark indicated that BaseCamp is another application that can be used, although cautioned that it had limitations.

Participants noted that software licensing is very expensive.

Action: Can ACEC look into discounts/volume licensing fees for members?

General Comments

Milt Walker suggested that because firms are so busy, clients might need to look at hiring firms under separate contracts (e.g. rather than a \$300,000 contract divide the project up into 4 contracts of \$75,000 each). His firm is starting to look at bringing on account executives who are not engineers to provide a higher level of service since technical staff do not have time for client relations.

Participants agreed that educating small public sector clients on consulting engineering was difficult. John Clark reminded participants about engineeringlegacies.com and noted that this is a useful site.