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# ACOUSTICAL INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION

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## The David and Joan TRAITEL BUILDING

PITCH-PERFECT  
PRESENTATIONS

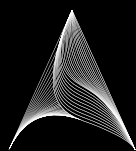
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INSIDE**

**CISCA Convention Preview -  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**We have planned a great convention for you in National Harbor, Maryland, from April 22 to 26, 2019. We will explore some of the trends we're facing in the industry, work on a few soft skills and have a remarkable time together celebrating what we do!**



**BY GARRETT LARSON, GOLDEN VALLEY SUPPLY CO., 2018-2019 PRESIDENT**

***Before coming to the CISCA 2019 Convention this year, think about what you are looking to get out of attending. Are you looking for new product ideas and innovations? Are you interested in education on industry topics and trends? Is it a new contact you're after for input on one of your projects?***

Take the time over the next few weeks to get to know the speakers we have lined up, the other attendees who have registered and the exhibitors who will be at the show. Prepare in advance the topics you're looking to explore this year, and be ready to engage with a diverse group of members in attendance. Your network can increase exponentially after just one CISCA event, and the Board of Directors will be available to you for referrals and introductions to others who share similar roles in the industry as you do. Please take advantage of this opportunity to grow your network, develop professionally and have some fun while you're at it!

We have planned a great convention for you in National Harbor, Maryland, from April 22 to 26, 2019. We will explore some of the trends we're facing in the industry, work on a few soft skills and have a remarkable time together celebrating what we do!

The Education Task Force has planned the following education sessions:

- 90 Minute Coaching Challenge: Transform Your Leadership Style Before Lunch
- The One Thing All "Best Place to Work" Cultures Share
- Create Connections That Lead to More Prospects
- Tough Talks: Turn Conflicts into Stronger Relationships

No CISCA event would be complete without networking opportunities. We have events every day of the week to allow for interaction with your peers – this astute group of contractors, distributors, manufacturers, manufacturer

reps and service associates! We have a kick-off welcome reception, local sight-seeing tour, an Emerging Leaders meet-and-greet, the ever-popular Awards Dinner and, of course, the INTEX Expo.

We revamped the Meet the Vendors event (formerly called One-on-One Manufacturer Meetings) to allow informal as well as scheduled appointments with the vendors. The first part of the event is open for all attendees to visit, and appointments can be made for longer personalized meetings with the vendors during the second half of the event.

Convention registration is open now – don't miss out on this great opportunity and gorgeous location a short distance away from our nation's capital.

I do want to take the time to thank our convention sponsors for showing their exceptional support to CISCA. We wouldn't have the ability to provide quality education, help advance trends and explore new concepts if it weren't for your generous contributions. Special thanks to all those listed on page 17.

We are excited to announce the CISCA App (named by *you*!) will be going live before the convention! We will use this app to grow, communicate, exchange ideas and challenge one another to think outside our comfort zone. There will be an app demonstration during the convention, so please make sure to attend. Download the app, start looking at all that is planned for the convention and contribute your thoughts, inspiration and color to the forum.

Finally, registration is open for the 2019 Fall Conference, set for September 18-20, 2019 in Nashville, Tennessee. What happened last year in Denver will only get better in Nashville! Visit the CISCA website to register and follow the link to reserve your room at the hotel. Don't be left out in the cold! Register and secure your room today.

I look forward to seeing you all in April! ■

## CORE PURPOSE

CISCA exists to provide the acoustical ceiling and wall systems industry with 24/7/365 expertise via diverse and state-of-the-art communication channels, interactive opportunities and regional and national events.

## VISION

CISCA is the global premier authority for the interior construction and acoustical ceilings industry. CISCA fosters and enables professional development and exchanges for and between association members and industry professionals.

## MISSION

Identify and address trends, diversity and growth of the industry and its members.

Communicate CISCA's vision to all members while fostering excitement and enthusiasm for a transformative, modern association experience. Offer a variety of collaboration and networking opportunities that will attract all CISCA audiences.

Create a structure within CISCA built on easy communication, visibility and accountability that allows volunteers and members to easily connect with the value of the association. Achieve standards of administration which are commensurate with the association's vision and focus on ensuring a positive experience for its volunteers.

Create modern two-way communication between CISCA audiences and the expertise of CISCA's members. Communication should be focused on education, current trends and the member knowledge base. Determine the next steps that allow CISCA to remain the authority in specialty interiors and acoustical ceilings using a modern mode of communication.



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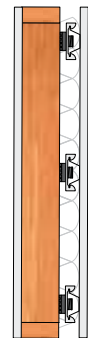


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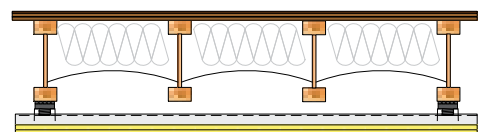
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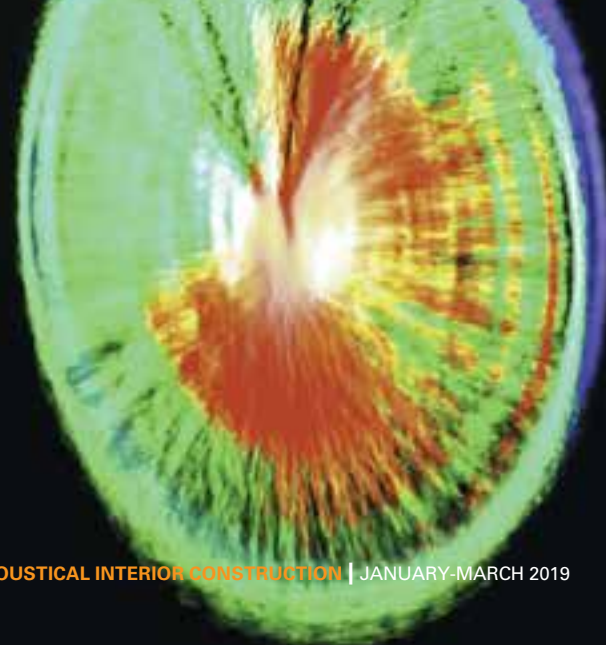


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# COME ONE,



**F**or some, making it to Washington, D.C., requires many years of glad-handing, flip-flopping, speechifying and fundraising, but CISCA members need not endure any of that in order to enjoy some meaningful time in the nation's capital. The 2019 CISCA Convention and INTEX Expo is scheduled for April 22-26 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, practically a stone's throw from Capitol Hill, where so much important action – and inaction – takes place.



# COME ALL

## Previewing CISCA's 2019 Convention and INTEX Expo



In addition to the usual full slate of educational and networking opportunities, convention attendees will have several opportunities to see the local sights. On Monday, April 22, members can head into Washington for the Honoring America's Heroes tour, which takes visitors to sites such as the Marine Corps War Memorial, World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Korea War Veterans Memorial. They can also wine and dine at the Flight Deck, an outdoor venue in

National Harbor that overlooks the Potomac River and is right next to the Capital Wheel, a Ferris wheel attraction.

Sports fans, take note: the Nationals are out of town during the convention, but the Capitals and Wizards just might be hosting playoff games. Whichever activities you choose, take the time to high-five a fellow CISCA member. You just might make a new friend and key business contact.

"When I think of the 30-plus conferences, as well as the leadership meetings that I

have attended, there are countless reasons why CISCA is vital to myself and my business," said CISCA past president Brad Sampson, chief marketing officer for CDM Investment Group. "But what stands out to me more than anything else is the connections and relationships that I have made with my peers and distribution/manufacturing partners that we all deal with in this industry. This is one location during one specific time that I can connect with those whom I value."



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On the fence about whether to attend? Here are the five most common reasons why CISCA members are booking their flights and packing their bags for another can't-miss event:

- **Education** – In addition to the technical sessions covering new techniques and products, the annual economic forecast is essential to contractors, manufacturers, distributors and independent manufacturers' reps seeking a clear picture of the construction environment in the year ahead.

"In the past, they've had educational sessions on some of the software that we utilize, and the annual economic forecast is one session that I've always really liked," said Matt Cline, senior estimator at E&K of Kansas City Inc. "That's always good knowledge to have. It shines light on the economy and what we can expect."

- **Networking** – The time might go fast, but there will be innumerable opportunities to grab a drink with old friends, make some new ones and meet the movers and shakers in the industry, including the welcome reception and off-site tour.

"As a younger professional who just turned 30 last year, the biggest thing for me is just networking and meeting people from my age group and beyond and having those contacts from here on out," said Adam Tonkin, outside sales rep for Beacon Roofing Supply. "The thing I like most about CISCA is the collaboration between distributors, manufacturers and contractors and just kind of learning what I can do on the distribution side to make their job a little easier."

- **CISCA Awards dinner** – You won't want to miss this showcase of the year's most impressive projects.

"I love the awards dinner, and I think it's one of the highlights because it's a chance to give recognition to the people who have lived the job, have helped build the job, have seen the job from beginning to end, have dealt with the trials and tribulations and were 100 percent committed to it," said Dominic West, outside technical sales rep for Western Interior Supply. "When you give that round of applause to someone you know – or someone you don't know – I think it's great. And

I enjoy seeing the projects from around the country."

- **INTEX Expo** – Get an early look at the new and innovative products that are sure to benefit the industry.

"With the trade show, I like seeing what's changing in the marketplace and how we can utilize that to enhance our business," Cline said. "I like seeing the new products, and for manufacturers, that's a good platform for unveiling them, whether it's metal-stud framing, new acoustical ceiling products, insulation products or tools."

- **Membership meetings** – Contractors, distributors, manufacturers and manufacturers' reps will meet to discuss best practices and industry issues, providing yet another opportunity for networking and education.

"I definitely attend the Small Manufacturer Rep Meeting," said Hunter Pope, business development manager for Hunter Douglas Ceiling and Wall Products. "I value that one so much because that's where Hunter Douglas creates all of our business – with the small manufacturers and our independent reps, who kind of drive our products to the marketplace." ■





# PITCH-PERFECT PRESENTATIONS

California Drywall Co. helps create a space fit for world leaders

BY NICK FORTUNA

**T**he list of newsmakers who have given speeches or participated in panel discussions at the Hoover Institution reads like a rolodex of America's most powerful and influential thought leaders. White House cabinet members Condoleezza Rice, Jim Mattis, Mike Pompeo and Rex Tillerson all have visited the public policy think-tank and research institute on the campus of Stanford University, as have U.S. senators such as Ted Cruz and Bill Bradley and Silicon Valley heavyweight Peter Thiel, to name just a few. Their words carry

great weight, so it's vital that the audience can hear every one.

Thanks in part to California Drywall Co., the Hoover Institution no longer has to hold major events in tents, and attendees don't have to cup their ears to hear an important speech. San Jose-based California Drywall handled the ceiling and interior walls of the new David and Joan Traitel Building, a 55,000-square-foot structure that now serves many purposes for the Hoover Institution.



The ground floor features a Welcoming Pavilion/reception space, the 400-seat Hauck Auditorium and William Blount Hall, a dining hall and multipurpose room that can accommodate 440 people. There's also a large courtyard where guests can congregate before a presentation or during a break, and students enjoy the patio-style seating and tables while reading a book and killing time between classes.

Boston-based William Rawn Associates Architects was the design architect, with CAW Architects of Palo Alto, Calif., serving as the architect of record. Armstrong Ceilings, Lamvin, ACGI and Allied Building Materials provided construction materials.

"We're now working together on other projects because we had such a great

experience working together on this one," Erik Tellander, senior associate at William Rawn, said of his firm's collaboration with CAW. "We took the lead on the front-end design, but rather than have some sort of handoff, we actually kind of merged our practice a little bit. They were involved in all the meetings at the front end, and then we were actually on-site as well, so it became a much more overlapping experience. They did more of the heavy lifting on the construction administration in particular."

The jewel of the building is the Hauck Auditorium, which combines the comfort of spacious, theater-style seating with a professional, academic atmosphere. The auditorium is ideal for speeches, films and multimedia presentations because it has a theater-size

dropdown projection screen above the stage and state-of-the-art speaker system.

Large ACGI Allegro concave, curved panels with a microperforated white-oak or walnut finish were custom built for the project. CAW Architects associate Mousam K. Adcock said the panels were an ideal choice because their tiny holes allow sound to pass through them and into insulation behind the wall.

"It's really about clarity of speech, so you have to make sure there's no slapback echo from reflective surfaces," Adcock said. "The wood paneling around the room helps to absorb the sound, and higher up on the walls, we have fabric-wrapped acoustical panels. The ceiling and the walls to either side of the stage also have microperforated







wood curved panels with insulation behind them to absorb sound.”

California Drywall designed and installed an engineered unistrut system to support the large panels, each of which weighs more than 200 pounds. Tyler Hovivian, project executive for California Drywall, said tight space constraints posed a big challenge during construction.

“Within the auditorium, there are more than 100 articulated baffles that needed to be suspended 30 feet in the air,” he said. “The crates that they came in were roughly the size of a VW Bug, so just getting these baffles into the building, laying out each one that was alphanumerically placed and ultimately getting them all perfectly lined up and installed was a tremendous feat. The laydown area was virtually nonexistent.”

Rick Cordova, project manager for ACGI, said it was a challenge to create the curved panels called for in the design while meeting

the noise-reduction coefficient standards that the architects were looking for.

“They wanted to see different curved panels throughout the ceiling, with light fixtures coming through between them,” he said. “The wall behind the stage also is curved, so we had to make curved panels to achieve that radius that they were looking for.”

The Welcoming Pavilion serves as pre-function space for the building’s dining/multipurpose room and auditorium. It features a six-inch-deep wood baffle ceiling from ACGI set at 20 feet above the finished floor. Work on the ceiling system was highly coordinated with the drywall and millwork trades so that the perimeter accent millwork appears to be another blade of the baffle system, making the ceiling look as though it floats without support. The room also has microperforated wood paneling to help with acoustics. The large glass wall allows visitors to look out on the courtyard.

When visitors walk from the Welcoming Pavilion to either the auditorium or Blount Hall multipurpose room, they pass through the Traitel arcades, which feature a four-inch-deep wood baffle ceiling from ACGI that starts at 20 feet above the finished floor and slopes upward to 25 feet. To augment the feeling of grandeur and elegance, the ends of both arcades feature compound sloping wood baffle intersections that were installed with incredible attention to detail.

ACGI wood grill ceilings in Blount Hall complement the building’s overall design and are integrated with two recessed ceiling projectors and two dropdown projection screens. Three sides of the room have walnut microperforated panels to handle the loud volumes that are common in multiuse spaces. Decorated with posters from the Hoover Institution’s world-renowned archival collection, the multipurpose room opens to the courtyard and the Welcoming Pavilion, offering plenty of natural light and easy access to other spaces in the



building. Windows strategically placed near the top of the walls provide more natural light without the distractions of the bustling campus right outside.

"I think the building has an incredibly open and airy feeling despite its solidity," Tellander said. "We were very successful in connecting the indoors to the outdoors in ways that make each of the spaces have a real point of view. So, when you're in the multipurpose space, you look out into the courtyard, and all the doors open up so you can filter directly out into it after a meal, after a speech or during intermission."

The top floor, which houses the Hoover Institution's administrative offices, features a lobby with a wood grill system

that provides a warm, inviting setting. The area is finished with high-end Armstrong fiberglass ceiling tiles, and the conference rooms are outfitted with custom Lamvin fabric-wrapped panels.

David Castellanos, general manager for Lamvin, said the tackable panels made sense for the office setting because they are durable.

"It's a panel that can withstand a bit of abuse from traffic, like if someone accidentally bumps into it with an elbow," he said. "This one will be able to resist that. And it's tackable, so you can pin papers and things onto it."

California Drywall's Hovivian said the finished product is well worth the effort it

took to overcome challenges during construction. Not only is the Traitel Building a perfect setting for the Hoover Institution's symposia and educational lectures, but it's a source of revenue, an elegant venue to rent out for big events.

"This was an extensive specialty project for us that really focused on relationships with manufacturers, and this was highlighted when there were several different wood blade depths and wood sizes that needed to seamlessly blend within the design," he said. "This is a facility where U.S. presidents, foreign dignitaries and some of the most influential people in the world are going to stand and speak, and I just feel really proud to be a part of adding to that atmosphere." ■

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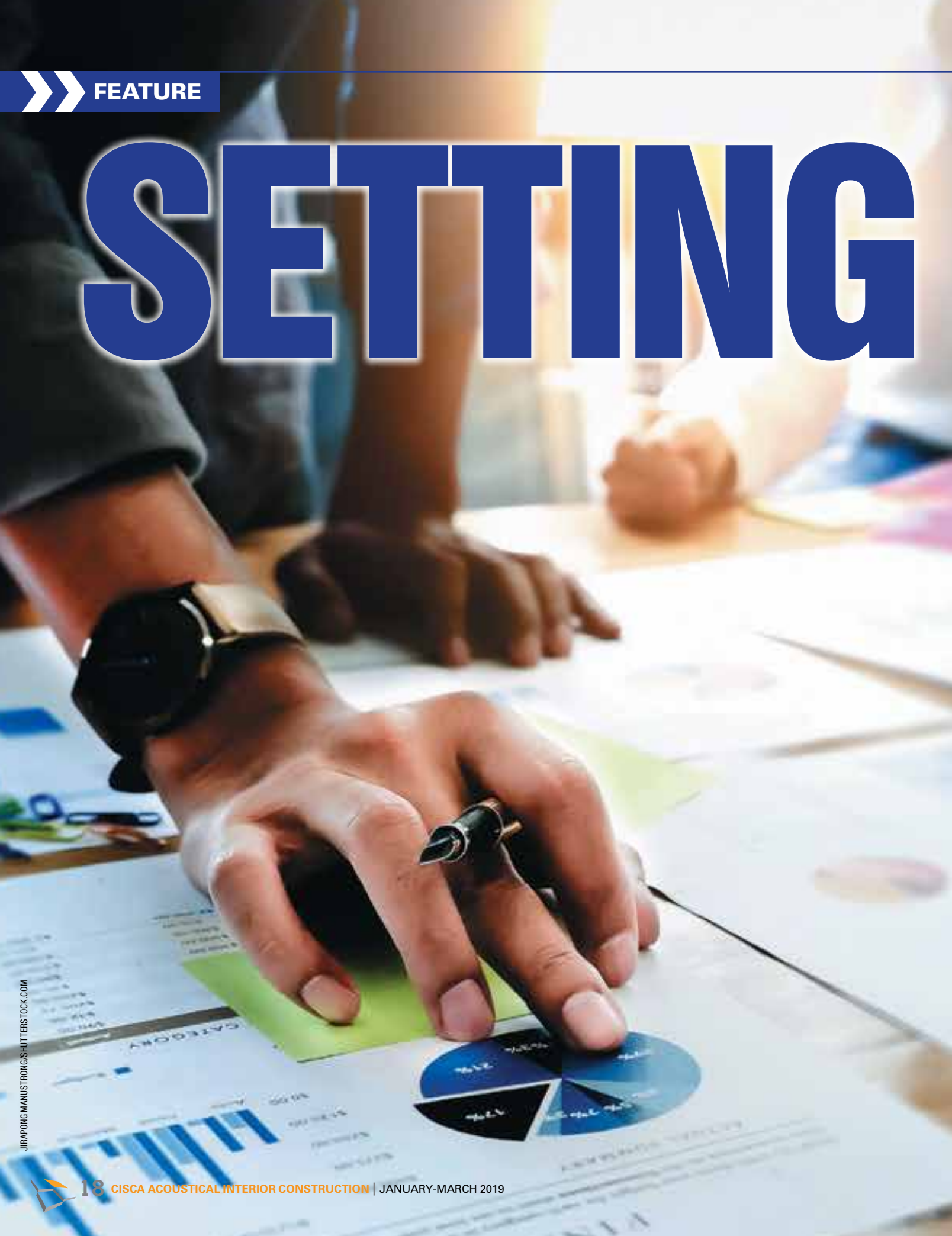
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# SETTING



# ANNUAL SALES EXPECTATIONS

BY TOM WOODCOCK

**A**s the holidays pass and we barrel into the new year, companies scramble to forecast next year's performance. Numbers will be thrown around, projections made and hopes elevated. Ownership will almost always demand better results in either revenue or profitability—or worse, both. Then the great master plan is formatted and presented at a company meeting. At that point, virtually everyone walks away leaving the sales team to make it happen. Kinda comical if you really think about it.

Marketing budgets get cut, entertainment expenses get reduced, and owner engagement wanes, yet you're tasked to increase business. "Do more with less!" is the new company motto. You sit there wondering how you're going to pull it off, if at all. Might be easier to just start making your excuses now. Earlier as opposed to later when the projections are blown — seems

to be an annual ritual. The real question is, how do you project what an upcoming year will hold?

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Projections can be very strategic or de-motivating in nature. Most are unrealistic in scope and cause unnecessary sales stress. Many have no formulation on how those projected numbers will be achieved. Whether it's revenue, profitability or expansion of customer base, projecting results without having a plan is a shot in the dark at best. There are a few key areas related to sales that will require a strategic approach. Otherwise, reaching a projected goal will be a seat-of-the-pants proposition. Hitting these main points will at least allow you to hit the basics.

**Market conditions:** Understanding and calculating what is taking place in your specific markets is paramount to setting your company's sales rudder. Is demand trending up or down? Are there economic factors that dictate market direction? Has the customer base shifted in need or demand? These are important questions to answer. These influencers can send you in the wrong direction if not addressed.

**Historical sales data:** I find many organizations evaluate their sales teams via gut reaction. You "feel" like someone is doing a good or bad job and approach them accordingly. The sales data may reflect the opposite of your impression. It's impossible to project where you're going without knowing where you are. What's the starting point? What increases have you been averaging year to year? If historically you've realized a 5 percent increase year over year, you'd better have some strong data supporting an expectation of a 20 percent increase for the projected year. Unrealistic growth is never realized.

**Ability of sales personnel:** Being realistic with the talent and work ethic of your sales team can assist in determining what you can truly expect that team to produce. Are they seasoned veterans? Developing rookies? Maybe a combination of both? Break the team down by individuals and measure their past contributions to your sales total. Use that as a baseline, then incorporate the information you attain in the first two points



**Projections that are hit will fuel the motivation tank. Overanalyzing causes paralysis, insecurity and mistrust. Set your direction and stick with it. Be sure everyone clearly understands the requirements and result of hitting or missing goals set.**

and project growth. Combining the individual results will give you a company-wide figure. It's useless to predict a high level of growth when you don't have the players to get there. It's like expecting your nine-player baseball team to hit 90 home runs when no one has ever hit more than five. Just not possible.

If you're diligent in at least these three areas, you can expect to make reasonably educated forecasts. Projections that are hit will fuel the motivation tank. Overanalyzing causes paralysis, insecurity and mistrust. Set your direction and stick with it. Be sure everyone clearly understands the requirements and result of hitting or missing goals set. Recognizing that your company can fall into the trap of letting external factors dictate your success will keep you working your strategy. You really do control your growth, not Wall Street or the next president. Rising above circumstances requires more than effort. Having a strong sales strategy tied to that effort has virtually a zero percent chance of failure. Of course, each company has their own idiosyncrasies that can affect the level of success, but having your sales ducks in a row can mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. The main point being, you're in control.

## HOLISTIC APPROACH

I'll be sitting with the companies I work with over the next few weeks setting these projections. Owners will argue with me and

want to push the numbers. My response will be, "Okay, how are you going to pull that off?" That will at least light the fuse. From there, reality will kick in, and we'll end up with a good, aggressive-yet-achievable projection. Which, truth be told, is exactly what both they and you need. Don't give in to the wishful thinking of pie-in-the-sky expectations. Realize everyone in the company has some level of sales responsibility, and all cylinders need to be firing to reach a sales goal.

Sales is an all-inclusive company effort. Everyone having direct or indirect contact with the customer influences the customer's buying experience. Failure in virtually any of these areas can cause the customer to go in another direction either in a future opportunity, or worse, the middle of an existing one. Departments such as accounts receivable, reception or even drivers play a bigger role than most companies realize. Direct contact positions such as project management and estimating can acutely affect the customer experience.

In construction, so much of the focus is on the project itself. The scope, schedule and costs take the forefront. What can be lost in those details is what the customer is feeling throughout the project. Not having the sales skills to handle customer personnel causes all the front end sales efforts to go for naught and the endless cycle of having to be low continue, and that's if the relationship isn't damaged to the point of elimination from the bid list.



Taking the time to train all company personnel in relation to their role in the sales process accomplishes several purposes:

1. *Creates a company sales culture* – Many companies sell, but few have an actual sales culture. This is an understanding that sales is the most important aspect of any business. Cultivating and protecting customer relations is first priority. The desire to meet and exceed customer expectations permeates all departments and personnel. This assures the customer will feel well-served and appreciated. All staff responsibilities are measured against the ultimate impact on the sales experience each and every customer has.
2. *Breeds a unified team* – If everyone is pointed in the same sales direction with the same sales focus, a sense of achieving a common goal is realized. Staff members keep each other accountable and encouraged. Sales and administrative personnel respect each other's role. They become more supportive of each member's role, knowing the sales success of the company is at stake. Understanding this affects everyone's financial position.
3. *Customer confidence* – The customer base notices the sales cohesiveness of the company and feels they are being taken care of. Though basic in nature, trust and security are a big part of the sales experience. The more consistent the communication company-wide, the more secure the customer base. Those customers are entrusting the company with their projects and funding. Consistency is the core of sales trust.

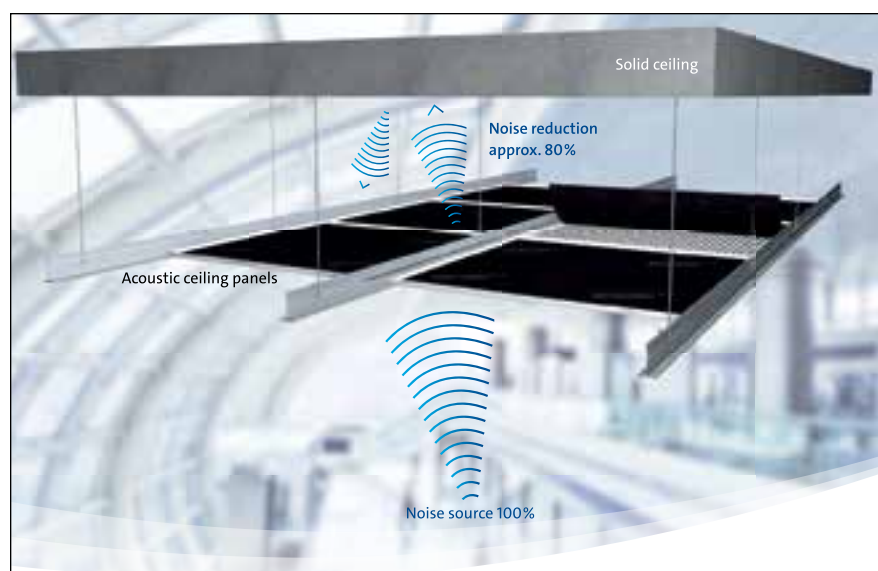
The strength of a company's overall sales effort can be the difference between strong profitability or weak, growing revenue or flat, large market share or small. These are the drivers of business success. Having an entire company that understands the critical nature of sales and respects the role each person plays is exceptional. I rarely see it in my travels but have witnessed it in the construction industry. Contractors that engage these practices reach high levels of sales success. Many achieve it for generations. It becomes more than just the company

culture, but the actual corporate identity. They become the company to beat, the contractor no one wants to bid against. When they're spotted on a bid list, competitors drop off and choose not to bid. These are the elite contractors. Sales excellence permeates project performance, estimating and vendor relations. It's not a stretch to link a strong sales culture to virtually every aspect of business.

Finally, a strong sales culture can drastically influence your marketing results. Marketing in itself cannot become a sales effort. The marketing message being embraced by a staff that has been trained or educated in relation to sales magnifies the overall point. They reinforce that message when speaking with customers and even go out of their way to communicate it. This can magnify the marketing campaign, gaining greater reach and penetration. The thought your marketing isn't working because your internal staff doesn't perceive the sales value is foreign to most contractors. It would

be like working for Apple and supporting their marketing campaign but buying a Samsung personally. That one sale making a difference – small, but real. A staff that understands the importance of each customer – even more so, each sale – will embrace the marketing message.

Making sure each team member is aware of the role they play in the sales process is representative of a company with a mature sales culture. Most will think it's trivial and do nothing to improve the climate. They'll continue to irritate the customer base and wonder why they have to fight for every project, usually putting the blame on the customer themselves. It's not that they don't want the results – they simply won't invest the time or resources for the training. Those that do will create an edge very few will be able to compete against. It's vitally important the whole company engages with the sales goals. This is because each one is selling in some fashion, whether they know it or not. ■



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# CONFIDENCE COMPOUNDS:

## The Impact of Boldly Seizing Opportunities

BY JILL JOHNSON

**O**ne of the most significant leadership skills you need to develop is your confidence. It is an essential core leadership competency. Confidence allows you to have impact far beyond your title or level within your organization. Building your confidence requires a disciplined focus on seeking and accepting bold opportunities to help you reach for higher rungs of influence and impact. You don't need to make huge leaps or take big risks, but each small effort or success will build your confidence over time. As your confidence compounds, you will find you



can do vastly more than you ever dreamed was possible. There are three keys to build your confidence: practice, preparation and presentation.

### CONFIDENCE IS A SKILL YOU NEED TO PRACTICE

Just as with any new skill, you have to practice it over and over for it to become something you can do with ease. The key is to identify what skill you need to master next. Opportunities to practice new skills are all around you. You should plan to practice your new skills both inside and outside of work.

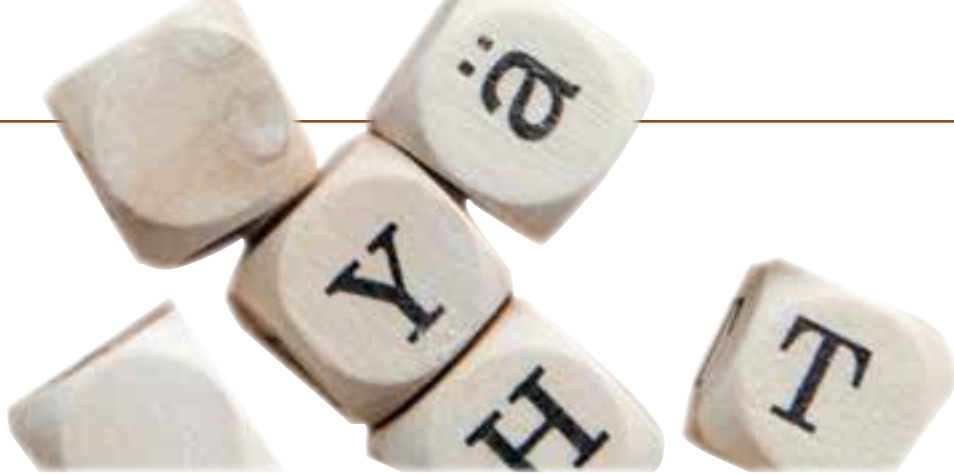
Find assignments you can take that will get you in front of more people and augment your experience. If someone you respect asks you to do an assignment or join a committee, say “yes” to it. Tell people what you want to work on next. Practice saying things before you ever need to – or feel ready to – say them in front of others. Put yourself forward for consideration, whether it is a board appointment or your next job or to receive an award!

Getting the opportunity is one thing – what do you do with it when you get it is even more important. It is the consistency of your efforts on practicing new skills that builds your confidence. This consistency is necessary before you can ever rely on it. You want this new skill to become so natural that you don’t even have to think about it. It just becomes a part of you. When you consistently deliver your best, you will feel like you can handle anything that comes at you.

Don’t expect to be confident in the beginning. Remember that all skills build in small cascades. Often we think we are at a plateau because we are not making larger moves. At that point, you are likely growing in a spiral that is just too subtle for you to see just how far you have really come. You are deepening your abilities with your practice. Others will see your growing confidence too.

### PREPARATION IS NECESSARY – DO THE HARD WORK

Most people want to take shortcuts. The more detailed and thorough your preparation, the greater the likelihood you will have success. Preparation is especially essential to having confidence in yourself, especially when you are dealing with power players.



Don’t wing it when you have a big meeting. Take the time to thoughtfully prepare well ahead of time. That will let you practice and adjust. When you do that, you will know your material cold and be able to respond effectively to questions and challenges.

Take calculated risks and do things you don’t expect will give you a big win. What do you have to lose? Just keep trying, as each attempt is building your skill and preparing you for the next opportunity. Leverage everything you have in your arsenal to build your confidence and give you a boost to try something bold. Bring all of your skills with you as you move through life!

When you have the chance to make your dream come true, grab it with both hands. Don’t let the golden handcuffs of thinking you should stay where you are hold you back from fully embracing your success. Don’t let your fears psych you out before you even see what you are truly capable of. Tell yourself, “Yes, I can! I will. I am. I’m gonna!”

But remember, not everything you try will work...but that does not mean you should stop your efforts. Build your confidence and your future by laying down a solid foundation of preparation.

### PRESENTATION – LET PEOPLE SEE YOU

To ever be noticed, you need to step out in front and allow people to see you. You need to identify, enhance and believe in your own leadership abilities. If you don’t, why should anyone else? Don’t assume that people will recognize and reward your talents.

Your posture and facial expressions play an important role in becoming more confident. You need to look, act and speak with confidence and clarity. People who project confident body language are listened to more carefully. Standing tall or sitting up straight when you speak helps convey an air of confidence too.

Make sure you control your emotions rather than let your emotions control you. Giving an over-the-top or hysterical comment is going to minimize the confidence people have in you. Be measured and mindful of how you are appearing to others.

The gap between our dreams and believing we can achieve them is confidence. We all get stuck at various times in our lives. We all have self-doubt. Self-doubt is poison to confidence.

Your confidence will fluctuate. Sometimes you will feel like you can conquer anything, and other times you will feel like you should have just stayed in bed. When this happens, there is something going on deep within you. That is the time to step back and reflect, reach out to confide in a trusted confidant or just allow yourself to embrace the stillness of a momentary plateau.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Confidence is something you work on your whole life. So continue to try new things! Stay resilient, even when you think you cannot. Remember the compounded impact of taking small, bold actions that don’t take a lot of time can morph into amazing opportunities with the potential to transform your future. Don’t waste any more time. Take control of your destiny! Think big and be bold! ■

*Jill Johnson is the president and founder of Johnson Consulting services, a highly accomplished speaker and an award-winning management consultant. Jill helps her clients make critical business decisions and develop market-based strategic plans for turnarounds or growth. Her consulting work has impacted nearly \$4 billion worth of decisions. She has a proven track record of dealing with complex business issues and getting results. For more information on Jill Johnson, please visit [www.jcs-usa.com](http://www.jcs-usa.com).*



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# PROTECT YOUR COMPANY *from* Bad Employees

BY MIKE CAMPION

# H

ow much of a negative impact can the bad apples in your organization have? Are having no bad employees a realistic goal? First things first: What is a bad employee?

- Is it just someone who is bad at their job?
- Takes too much time off?
- Has a penchant for punching other employees?

While none of those are ideal, they all focus on actions and results instead of the root cause.

Instead of trying to create a comprehensive list of “do’s and



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don'ts" for your employees to ignore, start at the foundation: your core values.

A bad employee is anyone who does not love and live your company's core values.

Discovering your core values is an action in and of itself, but when you have a set of "rules" to run your company with, you will find that the people who line up with those rules don't tend to violate the "do's and don'ts" of your company.

Luckily, you have the keys to the happy employee kingdom. Get ready to discover the three steps to protect your organization from the wrong employees:

1. Stop them from showing up
2. Stop them from getting in
3. Stop them from sticking around

## STEP 1 STOP BAD EMPLOYEES FROM SHOWING UP

Pre-framing is extremely important when weeding out potential problem employees. How an employee is first exposed to your company is key. Consider the following two examples:

- A current employee tells his friend, a prospective employee, "You should apply at my job; the place is so disorganized, we could get away with anything."
- A prospective employee comes across your website and thinks, "These are my people! I love what they are all about, I wonder if they are hiring..."

When you feature enough of your core values on your website, your hiring ads and phone systems and your current employees become evangelists for your mission, you position your company as the right place for the right employee. Whenever a prospective employee becomes aware of your company, they feel like they have finally found their tribe. This alone will dramatically increase the quality of your applicant pool. Which brings us to...

## STEP 2 STOP THE WRONG EMPLOYEES FROM GETTING IN

Once you have laid the foundation in step one, the job of keeping bad employees from infiltrating your organization is half done. All you have to do is make sure that your company is actually living and breathing the core values that brought prospective employees to you in the first place.

So many employers focus on job history and/or technical ability. Both offer good insight but are only relevant with employees who have the same core beliefs as you do. Hire for attitude, train for skill.

If your company is passionate about outstanding customer service, it is eminently possible to teach an employee how to serve a customer. It is a fool's errand to teach him to be enthusiastic about customer service. Your life and profitability will improve exponentially when you are in the business of stoking your employees' passions and values. You are not in the business of convincing people to do something they don't want to do or believe something they don't want to believe.

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Craft your interview process around the values that attracted your prospective employees. Once that is a match, job history and ability to do the job at-hand come into play. An unintended consequence of passionately living your organization's core values is an extremely attractive community. This can make employees that aren't a good fit work even harder to get in, even when your pre-framing and interview process is core values-based. Now, time for the big guns...

### STEP 3 GET 'EM OUT

Creating a core values-driven culture not only naturally repels the wrong employees; it strongly attracts the right employees. They feel "at home," like they have finally found something special. They don't want to leave. They stay longer, work harder and enjoy their jobs more.

The flip side is that people who are not a core value-fit feel out of place. They don't

fit in. They don't understand why everyone acts so differently. They discover that the amazing community that attracted them to your company isn't for them. More often than not, they wander off into the night on their own free will.

When you do have someone that doesn't get the memo and needs a little help recognizing they aren't a fit, you will weed them out by systematic recognition and application of your core values. Examples of core values being either applied properly or ignored or mishandled are common topics. Decision-making conversations regularly start and end with your core values.

Those who don't "get" your values will stick out like a sore thumb. When you see that is the case, have a conversation. Refer back to your hiring process. Verify they share your company's values. If they do, their behavior will follow and all is well. If they don't, it's time to help them transition into a company that is a better fit.

It can sound like an overwhelming prospect, but integrating your core values into your company is like pushing a flywheel. It takes a lot of energy at the beginning, but when it gets spinning, it creates a tremendous amount of power on its own. Not only will keeping bad employees out of your company help your bottom line – it will make your life and your employees lives far better. ■

*Mike Campion is a celebrated speaker, entrepreneur and author of I'm a Freaking Genius, Why is This Business So Hard?. A small business expert, Mike has built several multi-million dollar businesses, the most recent achieving \$4.3 million in sales in the first 18 months. As the host of the "Conversations with a Genius" podcast, Mike imparts his business wisdom on his listeners. For more information about bringing in Mike Campion for your next event, please visit [www.MikeCampion.com](http://www.MikeCampion.com).*

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# NONCOMPETE AGREEMENTS: Are They Worth the Paper They're Printed on?

BY LAURYN E. PARKS, MOMKUS LLC

**M**any employers have legitimate concerns that key employees could leave and take with them the employer's most important customers or trade secrets. For example, an account manager with close relationships with clients could potentially convince these clients to follow him if he left to work for a competitor, or an engineer with knowledge of how the product is designed could be lured by a competing business to build a similar product for them. In such cases, an employer might want the employee to sign a noncompete agreement restricting the employee from working for competitors, taking clients with him or divulging the employer's confidential information. However, if not drafted properly, a noncompete covenant agreement is unenforceable and not worth the paper it is written on.

The first factor to consider before drafting a noncompete agreement is: where will the noncompete agreement be enforced? This is important because different states have widely different stances on whether, and how, a noncompete agreement can be enforced against a former employee. For example, in California, noncompete agreements are void and unenforceable as a matter of law except in a few rare circumstances.<sup>1</sup> California's general prohibition is extreme, but most states require that a noncompete

agreement meet certain tests if an employer wants to enforce the agreement.

A common requirement is that the noncompete agreement must be in writing and signed by the employee.<sup>2</sup> Simply distributing a noncompetition policy to all of your employees is not sufficient unless they agree to its terms in writing.

Most states also require that the employer demonstrate a "protectable interest" sufficient to justify restricting the former employee. A "protectable interest" is typically an employer's business interest in preventing the disclosure of its trade secrets or the use of its proprietary customer information to solicit its customers.<sup>3</sup> An employee who works in the employer's warehouse loading boxes would probably not come into contact with the employer's trade secrets or with its customers. In such a case, the employer would have no legitimate protectable interest in preventing the employee from working for a competitor. Courts will generally not enforce a noncompete merely to prevent an employee from bringing their general training and skills to a competitor.

Another factor that many states examine is whether the employee received something of value (i.e. "consideration") in exchange for signing the agreement. In states such as Oregon, the offer of employment is sufficient consideration to

make the noncompete enforceable.<sup>4</sup> Other states require something more, such as a monetary bonus.

Additionally, the noncompete must be reasonable as to time, geography and scope.<sup>5</sup> An employer that only does business locally cannot prohibit an employee from competing nationwide. Likewise, in a quickly changing industry, it might not be reasonable to prohibit an employee from finding competing work for three years, as the special knowledge that the employee would bring with him would be irrelevant and outdated long before the noncompete expired.

Prior to presenting employees with noncompete agreements, employers should research the states in which the agreements would be enforced and determine if such an agreement would stand muster. If so, the noncompete agreement must be carefully drafted to make sure that it meets all the requirements set forth in that state. ■

1. Cal. BPC §16600.

2. North Carolina, among others, requires that the agreement must be in writing and signed. N.C. Gen. Stat. §75-4.

3. See, e.g. *Brentlinger Enters. V. Curran*, 141 Ohio App. 3d 640, 649 (Ohio, 2001).

4. Or. Rev. Stat. §653.295(1)(c).

5. See, e.g. Tex. Bus. & Com. Code §15.50.



**Prior to presenting employees with noncompete agreements, employers should research the states in which the agreements would be enforced and determine if such an agreement would stand muster.**





# Enduring





# Enterprises:

## Eight Essential Strategies for Achieving Business Longevity

BY JILL JOHNSON

**E**veryone who starts or leads a business dreams of passing it along to the next generation. But few are successful in making it happen. Every year, countless businesses and organizations fail. Excuses are made and fingers are pointed. Long-term success takes more than hard work and a little luck. Leaders and entrepreneurs who achieve exceptional business longevity share eight business practices that move them to long-term success. They think differently. They operate differently. And they lead differently.

1

### ENGAGE IN ONGOING PLANNING WITH A REALISTIC VISION

Successful executives and entrepreneurs prepare for success on an on-going basis, not just when they are in start-up mode. They move beyond their initial business plan to augment their success by leveraging new opportunities and seeking ideas to enhance operations and profitability. They are disciplined in writing down their plans, reviewing them and

sharing with their key employees and advisors. They know on-going planning keeps them focused and moving forward. These leaders continually and formally evaluate what is working and what needs changing.

### 2 ESTABLISH A REALISTIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Lasting business leaders also match their vision to their abilities. They leverage one success into another rather than rapidly making huge leaps beyond their capabilities. Those who don't have a realistic vision risk everything because they reach too high before their cash, talent or operational capability is ready for higher levels of success. Enduring leaders actively and effectively manage their transitions and hire sophisticated talent to match their future needs. Their success is sustainable because they build it on a viable foundation that is based in reality, not on wishful thinking.

### 3 USE DISCIPLINED APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE SKILLS

Leaders who operate enduring enterprises understand experience is critical not just with the operational or technical expertise, but also with the ability to lead, manage and weather the daily challenges of not having someone tell you what to do. These leaders understand they need to continue cultivating their ability to manage and create strategies. Those with enduring success continue developing and enhancing their skills to build their business arsenal. They read. They hire the consulting and professional talent they need to augment their internal expertise.

### 4 IMPLEMENT SOUND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Fiscal discipline is fundamental to long-term business or enterprise success, yet few leaders have the self-discipline to manage their cash flow for the inevitable peaks and valleys. They respond to immediate pressures and spend money they don't have. Too many leaders spend money on the flash and glitz trying to impress people. They never prepare for the future because they're focused on living in the moment. Some make ill-advised decisions that create

financial crises rather than making prudent commitments they can realistically handle. Successful leaders of enduring enterprises focus on building real net worth by being masters at financial discipline and tightly controlling what they spend.

### 5 ADAPT TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

Markets change and technology advances. Those who are successful over the long-term understand and adapt to change. They invest in people and technology to enhance productivity. They stay on top of competitors and respond as necessary. By continually adapting, they are able to leverage the evolving trends that are fundamentally transforming their industries. Enduring leaders create enterprises that last well beyond their tenure, always looking ahead to identify tools, resources, ideas and technology that can enhance their organizational success.

### 6 BUILD SUBSTANCE INTO THE ENTERPRISE

Businesses and organizations have come and gone over the decades. Some succeeded brilliantly, but most failed to meet the expectations hyped by their founders and owners. The primary reason is lack of substance to the enterprise; most of what was promoted was smoke and mirrors. Sustainable enterprises have substance. They deliver on their promises. Clients, vendors and employees can count on them. These enterprises demonstrate a consistency of product and service quality that can be trusted over time. An on-going reputation for dependability is often a real predictor of long-term enterprise success.

### 7 CONTROL GROWTH

Those who survive long-term carefully and deliberately manage the size and growth of their enterprises. Those who focus on growth ensure they have adequate finances, equipment and staff to meet their evolving needs. Those who maintain a smaller size often find they can better manage the stability of their overhead and fixed costs. Maintenance-oriented enterprises may even make more money and have less stress than their growth-oriented

peers. Both growth- and maintenance-oriented leaders who succeed over the long-term effectively manage their appetite for risk and keep business scope within their comfort zone. They maintain leadership enthusiasm through controlled growth or by achieving sustained financial success.

### 8 MAINTAIN MOTIVATION

Staying motivated is tough in any enterprise after the euphoria of taking over or starting up dies down. Once the day-to-day activities begin to become routine, most people lose their enthusiasm. Even harder is dealing with the real stresses of leadership. Boredom is often a leader's worst enemy. Leaders of enduring enterprises motivate themselves and their employees by continuing to look for new opportunities to better meet client needs. This provides an atmosphere of innovation and ongoing success measured in revenues, customer satisfaction and employee retention.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Leaders who enjoy enduring business success have learned to constantly adapt and evolve. They respond to continuing competitive pressures by finding ways to meet evolving client needs. The secret to long-term sustainable success is doing things with discipline and excellence. Leaders of enduring enterprises both big and small do more than just dream of success. They make their success a reality by taking the actions necessary to achieve it and make it last.

Are you ready to become a leader of an enduring enterprise? If so, what is the first strategy you need to begin to implement? ■

*Jill Johnson is the president and founder of Johnson Consulting services, a highly accomplished speaker, an award-winning management consultant and author of the forthcoming Bold Questions series. Jill helps her clients make critical business decisions and develop market-based strategic plans for turnarounds or growth. Her consulting work has impacted nearly \$4 billion worth of decisions. She has a proven track record of dealing with complex business issues and getting results. For more information on Jill Johnson, please visit [www.jcs-usa.com](http://www.jcs-usa.com).*



# PREDICT-ABILITY

## How Partnering Scorecards Can Dictate a Project's Success

BY SUE DYER

**H**ow would you like to be able to predict the level of success (or failure) of your projects? Well, it seems that it is closer than you might think. Studies show that by using a monthly partnering scorecard, you can in fact have a great handle on what is actually happening on your project, and the scores turn out to be a great predictor of what is going to happen! That way, you and your team have time to make course corrections before they become inevitable. How would you like to be able to predict the future for each of your projects?

It seems the scores that the team provides accurately and truly depict what is going on within the project. A recent study on the efficacy of partnership when constructing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge found that what the team members scored and said on the partnering scorecard was in fact what was going on (strong correlation) at that given time on the project. So, the collective wisdom of the team came forth in a clear snapshot of the project's status.

In the International Partnering Institute's Study of 13 different projects that used a monthly partnering

scorecard over a two-year period, 12 of the 13 projects' scores improved over the life of the project. Overall, project scores improved by as much as 1.13 points (28 percent) over the life of the project. The average improvement was 1/2 a point (+0.54, or 14 percent).

This "Predict-Ability" does take commitment. You must use the construction scorecard as a tool. Just like every tool, the better you are at using the tool, the better your results. Here are some tips for getting the most from your partnering scorecard.



### MAKE THE PARTNERING SCORECARD A REQUIREMENT

- The project scorecard must be a requirement, and the team must feel that it is valued and valuable

for them to take the time to share their scores and comments. It is the leader that can and must make this happen. If you take the scorecard seriously, so too will your team members. If you ignore it and don't use it, they will do the same.





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- Putting the requirement into your project documents will help ensure everyone knows you are serious.
- Having senior management remind everyone that you want 100 percent participation in this month's scorecard – and convey that it is an important part of your project's success – will get people to complete the scorecard.
- Monitoring and acknowledging those who are completing the scorecard will reinforce its value. Monitoring who is not completing the scorecard will help ensure they will complete it next time.

## TIP NO. 2

### CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST

- Your partnering effort is designed to develop a culture of trust and collaboration. This fosters the open, honest atmosphere that will allow your scorecard to reflect the good, the bad and the ugly that occurs on your project. The truth will set you free – free to work on what is needed to succeed.
- Trust happens when you grow certainty that you will be fair and resolve issues before they grow into problems or disputes. To have the most meaningful partnering and scorecard program takes commitment. Your actions show your commitment.
- Trust can be built over time, but it is highly predictable that your expectations define your relationships. So, check yourself to make sure you are not defensive, protective or hostile toward your teammates. You will define the atmosphere, and it will heavily influence your results.

## TIP NO. 3

### UNDERSTAND THE TOOL

- The partnering scorecard is a snapshot in time of what is occurring on your project and allows you to measure your teamwork effectiveness and the ability to achieve your project's goals.
- Orienting your team members on the partnering scorecard and its importance can go a long way to overcoming barriers to its use.

## TIP NO. 4

### EVALUATE YOUR RESULTS

- Your scorecard will be emailed to everyone on your project team each month – but you have to evaluate what the scores mean. This can easily be done during a regular weekly project meeting.
- Look at any scores where you have a "1" or "2," as these indicate negative momentum. These are where the team is feeling frustrated or issues are emerging. Focusing on these areas will help a great deal.
- Look at your scores in the "3s." These are OK, and with a little focus might be able to achieve a "4" or better. This will grow your positive momentum dramatically!

## TIP NO. 5

### MAKE COURSE CORRECTIONS

- Resolving issues where the team is stuck or creating frustration is your top priority and needs to happen before the next scorecard if possible. You can use your partnering session

for this and get the help of your professional neutral partnering facilitator.

- Elevating issues up your dispute ladder is needed and should not be put off because you want to hold on to the decision. Get a decision and move on.
- Set deadlines and keep them. This will create trust and grow your predictability. It is not the issues that predict your success or failure; it is how the team deals with the issues. Correct your course so the team stays together and gains positive momentum!

Woody Allen said, "We are all interested in the future, because that is where we are all going to spend our lives." Think about using a partnering scorecard to allow you to predict how you and your project team will be spending your time. Will it be celebrating the building of great things? Or fighting over project disputes because things didn't turn out as hoped? ■

*Sue Dyer is President of OrgMetrics LLC, the author of Partner Your Project and a recognized thought leader on collaboration in construction. Sue just launched Partnering FIT™, a training program using new virtual training technology that allows her to include 30 years of lessons-learned and make them available to you and your teams any time, any place, 24/7. For more information about Sue Dyer, please visit [www.OrgMet.com](http://www.OrgMet.com).*



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# Once is Not ENOUGH

## Repurposing Writing to Grow Your Business and Career

BY CATHY FYOCK

**J**eff is a busy executive who has always wanted to become a published author. He's seen his colleagues' work published and envied their newfound recognition as authors and thought-leaders. Jeff knows that having a book can be a way to stand out from the competition, get speaking engagements, create new revenue streams and move his business to the next level by providing him with a first-class business card.





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Jeff is typical of so many business professionals today who know the value of publishing but don't understand how to leverage the value from writing.

The good news is that Jeff can repurpose this writing – that is, he can create content once and use it for many different mediums.

As a professional or thought-leader, you are constantly selling your intellectual property (IP). There's no reason that IP can't be repackaged for many different media, like speaking, writing, training, consulting, coaching and so on. If you can create the content for a major presentation, for example, you can reuse that content for a post on LinkedIn, an article in your professional journal or trade publication or rewrite it as a component of your book.

Even when you're focused on the material itself, be aware that you can publish that

written material in many forms and formats: blogs, articles, books, training materials and whatever others make sense for you.

Let's say that you've just written a weekly post of 350 to 800 words. That's a short piece of content, but even so, there might be numerous purposes for that short bit of IP. The blog post could become part of your next book. It could be incorporated in a new training program. You could tailor it for a specific industry publication – or generalize it for multiple industries. You could write it for staff and then change it up for managers or senior leadership.

To begin, here are some steps to follow to discover content that is ready for repurposing.

1. Review materials that you've created – presentations, articles, blog posts, workbook materials, or templates – and determine what is relevant and offers value. Create a folder (electronic or paper) that organizes these materials.
2. Analyze where you have used these materials and what other purposes they might serve. As suggested, a short article published in a trade publication could now be published on LinkedIn. A presentation could become an article. An article can become a chapter in your book.
3. When moving from one genre to the next, you'll need to see what works and what doesn't. For example, when converting training materials into a book, you'll need to flesh out the stories or the narrative that wasn't written. When turning a short blog into a longer academic article, you'll likely add research and cited sources and beef up the content. If you move from a blog to a training session, you'll need to consider how to make the material interactive and engaging to make that material "sticky."
4. Similarly, but in reverse: a new exercise you develop for a client program could be repackaged and used as a series of shorter blogs or incorporated into your book. Or, if you've already published a book, you could extract chunks of that writing for short blog posts.
5. Is the material current and/or relevant? Is it evergreen? While your original

content was certainly current when it was published, does it still hold water today? If, for instance, your blog post featured Lance Armstrong or Bill Cosby as examples of strong character and leadership (as they once seemed to be), you might need new examples. While most material will retain its relevance, some will become noticeably dated over time – especially if it involves technology or anything else that changes quickly.

6. Does it reflect your own current thinking on this topic? While you may have felt strongly about an issue at some point, more recent events may have changed your perspective or adjusted your thoughts. When your material is published, you want it to reflect your most current philosophies and ideas on the issues – or, so far as possible, the ways you always have always thought and will continue to.
7. Does the material's thesis fit with your business strategy? If you're repurposing material to support your business or career, your material should be closely aligned with your business strategy. In other words, whatever you write should serve your business in some direct way: it should bring in customers, raise your position or credibility and/or provide you with media attention. Your writing can take you where you want to go, but only if the writing and the thesis which defines it points in the same direction.

If you've put blood, sweat and tears into your writing, then repurposing your writing is a great strategy to ensure you're squeezing the maximum value out of your own work so that you can realize the benefit of being a published professional. ■

*Cathy Fyock is The Business Book Strategist, and works with thought leaders and professionals who want to write a book as a business and career growth strategy. She is the author of eight books, including her most recent, Blog2Book: Repurposing Content to Discover the Book You've Already Written. To contact Cathy about speaking engagements or coaching support, reach her at <http://www.bizbookstrategist.com>.*

A close-up photograph of a hand moving a purple block with two white person icons on a light blue textured surface. The block is being moved from a position where it overlaps with other blocks (blue, green, orange) to a new position. The background is a grid of these colored blocks, each with one or two person icons.

# THE HR Department of the New Millennium

Four Skills to Compete in the New Hiring Landscape





BY MAGI GRAZIANO

**T**hroughout the last decade, it has become painfully apparent that while most CEOs recognize there is a drastic talent optimization problem, they have absolutely no idea how to fix it, nor time to take it on alone. Most CEOs address people and workforce issues like a hot potato – they want it off their plate immediately. This is where the 21st century HR professional steps in.

Today's budding HR professionals have a whole new set of concerns that set them apart from previous generations. The human resources departments that remain from the 20th century are ill-equipped to manage the scaling concerns of the 21st-century enterprise.

In the early days of business and industry, human resources emerged as the answer to increasingly challenging and demanding labor relations' problems. But what fundamentally worked in the pre-information age is grossly ineffective for optimizing the workforce of today's wisdom age.

Today's human resources teams must grow beyond what HR requires. They must develop themselves and their teams into savvy business professionals who leverage talent, optimize people at work and deliver tangible returns on their "people program" investments.

Whether you are a seasoned professional on the aging side of a successful career or a newcomer entering the field, it is imperative that you gain the knowledge to address today's workforce challenges head-on and strategize winning solutions that reduce or remove these constraints from adversely impacting the business.

By learning these four imperative skills, you position your business to compete in today's hiring landscape.

## **1 DEVELOP AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The first skill you will need to develop is the ability to write an executive summary. You must evaluate the major workforce challenges your specific business faces and outline your plan to rectify them. If you do not establish a stout plan to address these issues, your business almost certainly will face an uncertain future. How

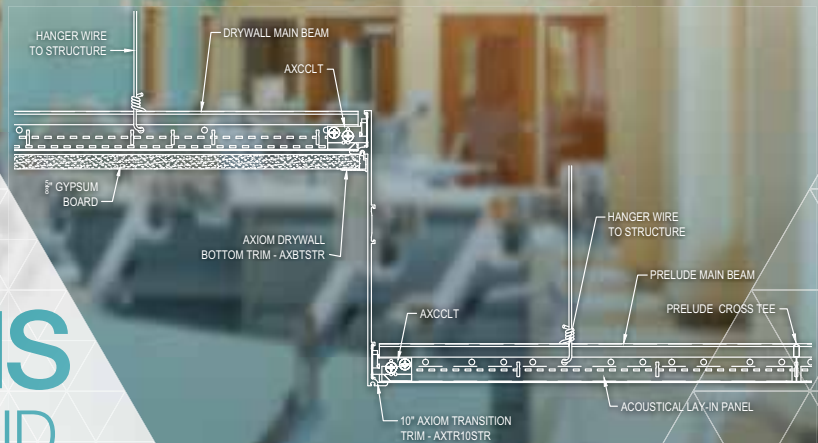


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do workforce gaps and frequent turnover impact the customer experience, employee partnership, innovation and the business' bottom line? As a businessperson specializing in hiring, you need to know how to communicate both written and verbally in a way that can be heard.

## 2 LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF UTILIZING BIG DATA

The second skill you need to develop is the ability to resonate with, speak to and learn from data. Big data rules today's world, and understanding it and how to make it work for you is imperative to your success. Sorting critical data from superfluous data is another key to getting your point across and keeping your audience's attention.

In order to catch the ear of people who can solve a problem from a strategic and financial point of view, you need to speak to them in a financial and strategic manner. This means you need to be able to read a profit and loss statement. You need to understand the total cost of labor and staffing in your company. Most decision-makers in business have a strong preference for evaluating propositions through three to four salient points grounded in accurate, relevant data. To speak with someone who understands and responds to data, you must elevate your ability to think from data and make recommendations that speak to improve the data.

## 3 CULTIVATE CONFIDENCE

The third skill you need to continue to develop and nurture is your confidence. Standing for stronger people-optimization in the workplace and human systems transformation is a pretty big stake in the ground. If not you, who? Someone needs to keep people present to the commitments around the workforce. Most managers in most organizations fall astray from their talent optimization commitments as soon as the pressure of another commitment overshadows it. Without someone standing for – and in some cases fighting for – doing the right thing and making people and talent a companywide focus, your competitive advantage initiatives fall out of existence. It takes confidence and

stamina to create sustainable change; it takes a continual, unwavering commitment, sometimes in the face of no agreement – and that takes confidence.

## 4 FIND COMFORT IN THE QUESTIONS

The fourth skill you need to improve is your ability to be comfortable with not having all of the answers. Curiosity is a major strength of people who succeed in the new HR world. Having all the answers and knowing how things are going to or not going to turn out is a trait that no longer serves the business professional of the 21st century. In today's world, curiosity, agility and creativity are how you win.

Fostering a workplace of collaboration and innovation begins with you. You need to be the change you want to see. Facing problems with an eye on understanding the systemic impacts on the business and the people in it opens you up to hear from people you might not otherwise hear from. Inviting ideas and solutions from your team gives you a much wider perspective and develops your balanced decision-making skills, which are a requirement for a 21st-century business professional.

On the surface it might not be obvious, but the keen HR professional is the key to the successful evolution of optimizing people

at work. Every business in every industry needs someone in HR focusing on the future of people and talent optimization. From reducing unwanted employee turnover and filling the leadership gap to hiring better and transferring today's knowledge to tomorrow's workers, the right HR pro doing the right things affects every single strategic lever in a company. The effective attraction, engagement and optimization of high-quality people in any organization, may be as – or more – important than your services or products themselves. Therefore, the right HR pro is just as important as the right coder or right sales rep – choose and develop your 21st-century HR team wisely. ■

*Magi Graziano, as seen on NBC, is the CEO of Conscious Hiring® and Development, a speaker, employee recruitment and engagement expert and author of The Wealth of Talent. Through her expansive knowledge and captivating presentations, Magi provides her customers with actionable, practical ideas to maximize their effectiveness and ability to create high-performing teams. With more than 20 years' experience as a top producer in the recruitment and search industry, she empowers and enables leaders to bring transformational thinking to the day-to-day operation. For more information on Magi, please visit [www.KeenAlignment.com](http://www.KeenAlignment.com).*



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[cisca.org/emergingleaders](http://cisca.org/emergingleaders)

*Participation is limited to registered Emerging Leaders program participants. See website for details and to register.*

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