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Riding the Evolutionary Wave

by Charles Nelson AIA, LFRAIA, with thanks to Mark Kalin FAIA, FCSI, LEED, for review, comments, and corrections.

Today's Project Managers, together with their Project Directors and Principals, are scrambling to stay on top of the swiftly uncurling wave of change in project delivery. Those that don't will be "dumped" by the wave.

This issue of Project Management is focused on this future, including challenges in DB, BIM and IPD. Although separate concepts, these three are all closely related and mutually dependent in the emerging project delivery model. Although DB (in the guise of the "master builder") has been around since before the separate profession of Architecture was invented, it is enjoying a resurgence today – now accounting for more than 40% (and growing) of all US non-residential construction.

A brief review of history helps put this change, along with IPD and BIM, into perspective. Despite more than a half-century of experimentation with variants on design+build logic – and there are at least a dozen that have emerged – none have ever really satisfied clients. Why? Because none gave clients BOTH of the things they desired in project outcomes: Freedom from risk, and control over cost.

Bridging and Partnering

For reasons I've never understood, the "Bridging" model developed more than a decade ago by George Heery and Chuck Thomsen never gained acceptance – despite its obvious superiority to other delivery models.

(continued on page 4)

Beyond The Obvious

by Chris Klemmer, P.E.

As engineers we sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that facts are just facts. Sometimes, they have deeper and more interesting stories to tell. This article is the introduction to a series of discussions exploring operational data, where it comes from, the deeper insights it might reveal, and some practical applications to consider.

Virtually all AEC firms use (or say they use) data to support planning, management, and process improvement. However, too often the data are unusable for the stated purpose and the analyses weak, thus wasting time and corrupting the decision making process. This type of bogus logic is immediately transparent to staff and quickly kills their respect and motivation to support evidence based management.

The starting point for our discussion is operational data, in this case any collection of information that describes what PMs do, how they do it, where resources are applied, and the results achieved. Analysis of this data is unlike most engineering design problems in that there isn't a mathematical model with strict cause and effect relationships for how a firm works. Reality is far too complex to be adequately described by any practical set of data.

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Beyond The Obvious *(continued from page 1)*

(Remember the Butterfly Effect.) However, logic, inference and intuition can provide useful insights.

Some sources of operational data we will consider in this series include:

- *Financial Information which come primarily from time sheets and purchase orders. Conveniently, this large collection of numerical data is collected efficiently and mostly automatically.*
- *Quality Control Systems, such as check lists, provide direct insight into how we work. Large scale aggregation of this data is often difficult because of the differences within and among project types.*
- *Contracts, when well written, are a rich with information as to why clients buy, what they want, and why. Coherent compilation of insights and trends is difficult and rare.*

Financial data is a convenient place to start because of the abundance of available data. In this context, it is important to understand that financial data is not about the money. It is a window into what we do, how we do it, where resources are applied, and the effectiveness of the work process. In the next several articles we will explore the Opportunity Pipeline, Authorized Backlog, Aged Accounts Receivable (A/R), and Aged Work In Progress (WIP).

If you have questions, lesson learned, or other suggestions for this series, please email me. ■

Chris Klemmer, P.E. has 40 years of project management experience in industry and consulting and teaches at the University of Hartford. He can be reached at PMBluePrints@gmail.com

The Equation for Failure

Karen Compton, PSMJ consultant and principal of A3K Consulting (Glendale, CA) recently suggested the following:

While there is much disagreement about what the equation for success looks like, I am of the opinion that the equation for failure looks much like this:

$$\text{Failure} = (\text{U} + \text{D}) - (\text{C1} - \text{C2})$$

U=Understanding the client's most important problems

D=Determining the best solution to those problems

C1=Communicating the solution

C2= Compelling and convincing the client that the proposed solution will really solve their problem

Do you have an equation for failure or success? Please share it with us. Send it to editor@psmj.com ■

Improve Your Networking Skills

by *Richie Deason, PE*

We have all been there, attending a conference or social gathering of A/E/C professionals where we find ourselves in a room full of people – potential customers or teaming partners – that we don't know. Here are a few tips that can help you “work the room” and expand your network:

- **Set a goal to introduce yourself to at least five people.** You can't get to know someone if you don't take that first step in approaching them. You will be surprised that most people are receptive to a friendly introduction.
- **Have an “elevator pitch.”** You need to be able to tell someone, in a 30-second summary, about your company.

You need to be able to tell someone, in a 30-second summary, about your company. It doesn't need to be detailed, but it does need to be interesting

It doesn't need to be detailed, but it does need to be interesting – enough so that they want to hear more.

- **Listen more than you talk.** The more you listen...the more they will tell you about themselves, their business, etc.
- **Ask questions.** You don't always have to carry the conversation. By asking interesting questions, you'll keep them talking.
- **Don't oversell.** Remember, you are just trying to get to know them at this point. They aren't interested in a sales presentation.
- **Follow up.** Don't toss their business card into your desk to collect dust. Drop them a quick email. Let them know that you enjoyed talking with them. Mention something specific from your conversation, such as how their kid's baseball game went.
- **Use an application (i.e. Outlook, Google, etc.) to help solidify your networking.** Use the notes field in Contacts to remember information such as where they went to school, their spouse's name, and the hobbies that interest them. Also, use your calendar for follow-up reminders in a few weeks. ■

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