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NWCB is the place where knowledge meets know-how, where technical innovation meets practical experience, where today’s vision illuminates a bright future. The Bureau is for individuals and organizations that recognize the best way to build their own businesses is to leverage the best thinking the industry has to offer.

Cover, top photo: Oregon State University Learning Innovation Center project by Western Partitions, Inc.
Cover, large photo: Allen Institute for Brain Science project by Performance Contracting, Inc.
Cover, right photo: 12th & Clay project by Billings and Cronn Co.
This page: Gonzaga University Center project by Western Partitions, Inc.
Sometimes it’s best to put the hammer down and use our head.

–Howard S. Wright

A new year with new beginnings. It is always exciting to think about the possibilities that a new year will bring. The quote reminds us that it is also important to learn from our mistakes and develop safeguards so that we won’t repeat them. We learn from the past, which allows us to change and be more successful in the future.

Our board of directors has been working hard on the plans for our association and what we can do to better serve our members and the industry. More efficient bylaws, new educational tools, an additional Architectural Consultant to work with Terry Kastner and ways to enhance member involvement are only a few of the new things that the board has earmarked as vital to the Northwest Wall & Ceiling Bureau’s sustained success. Please continue to attend chapter meetings, social events, seminars and the convention. In addition, consider getting involved with a committee or volunteer to assist at an event. The growth, health, and continued success of the NWCB largely depends on the efforts of our members.

There have also been some recent changes to the board. Along with a new structure, we have new directors: Josh Brown of Gordon Brown Associates, Inc. serves as a Washington contractor representative; Kyle Young of GTS Interior Supply is our dealer representative; and Eric Eschbach of USG Building Systems is our manufacturer representative. We welcome these individuals and look forward to working with them.

Our industry, once again, showed its support in 2016 for disadvantaged youth through many donations to our annual Toys for Tots toy drive. We donated over 1,500 toys between the Seattle and Portland NWCB offices, which made a lot of kids very happy during the holidays. The wall and ceiling industry continues to be one of the largest U.S. Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots contributors in the northwest. Thank you for your continued support of this fantastic cause. If you haven’t already, register as soon as possible for the 2017 Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Convention and Trade Show. This year’s convention will be at the Coeur d’ Alene Resort. Along with being at the premier northwest location, the convention will provide Project of the Year Awards, a large trade show, informative speakers, many educational seminars, fun social events, golf and much more. In addition, there is always time to meet new people in the industry and catch up with your old friends.

The American Institute of Architecture has reported a strong outlook for 2017. “Healthy job growth, strong consumer confidence and low interest rates are several positive factors in the economy, which will allow some of the pent-up demand from the last downturn to go forward,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon, AIA. This positive outlook is good news for all of us.

Please be sure to share with me any industry news such as new hires, job changes, new products or any other information that is relevant to our industry. Or if you have ideas that are for the good of the industry or issues that are on your mind, please give me a call at 206.524.4243 or email me at mark@nwcb.org.

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Polarization

We have just gone through one of the most divisive, bitter, and polarizing elections in recent history. In the past, after the elections were over and the ballots counted, this nation would get behind the winner and move forward. After this election, we have a nation that is still bitterly divided. There are continuing riots in some cities and both hatred and threats are being spewed by both sides on social media.

With polarization, each side takes an extreme position, believing they have the moral high ground and that the other side is somehow evil for opposing their cause while ignoring the fact that most citizens or members may not support either extreme. The problem with such polarization is that it most often leads to one side imposing their will on all others, which is rarely successful for the long run. Impose means there is a lack of consensus, thus creating a few winners and a lot of losers. All group activities work better when most, if not all, members feel like they are all winners and when they believe that the leaders and powers are looking out for the rights and betterment of all, not just a few.

In the end, the one thing we all have in common is that we are Americans. The success of our nation will bring blessings to all, both sides. The failures of our nation will have consequences for us all, both sides. Hopefully someone will rise up on one or both political sides or somewhere in the middle to bring us all back together for the common good.

Our nation has gone through this type of division before, and it should be noted, survived. A couple of examples come to mind. The election of 1800 pitted Thomas Jefferson against John Adams and was fought around whether the Constitution should be viewed as a general suggestion to the government or as an absolute definition of rights to protect all citizens, both minority and majority. Actually, that sounds vaguely familiar to some of our present day political issues. Even though both candidates were signers of the Constitution, Adams, as the incumbent President, had found it limited his ability to get his goals accomplished and wanted to weaken it. Fortunately, Jefferson and the strict Constitutionalists won the day and the election. It should be noted that Adams and Jefferson were good friends. Then some sixty years later, another even more extreme polarizing division occurred that tore apart this nation ending in a bloody civil war that was brutal and cost 750,000 American lives, over 2 percent of the population. Over 150 years later, we are still suffering the consequences of that division.

It is said that if we do not learn from history we are doomed to repeat it. I fear that our industry currently suffers from similar divisions. There has been deep polarization resulting from individuals and groups with different ideas on how to best achieve certain objectives. We have an opportunity to either find a path that is inclusive and benefits all, or face a destructive division. As with most polarizing issues there are extremes which promote some benefit to some, but not necessarily the majority, and both sides believe that they are right, and hold the high moral ground. This leads to politicking and actions by some who seek to impose their views on others. (a my way or the highway approach) As a result, one side may win a battle but ultimately lose the war. Unless we can find ways to come together, lessen the polarization and work together to accomplish our common objectives, we may have some very hard times ahead of us. If such polarization continues, neither side will likely be winners in the long run. That is the choice we have before us. In the heat of the debate or battle, it may be difficult to look to the long term results, but that is where our focus needs to be. We need to decide together where we want to be 5 or 10 years from now and then develop a plan to get us all there together.

Similar to our nation’s government, both our Bureau and our Contractor Associations are governed more as republics not democracies. This is designed to protect minorities regardless of size from being tyrannized by concentration of power in the hands of a few stronger communities. There can be a temptation to change the model when we do not feel like we are being equally served. However short term, emotionally based changes will often have long term, unintended detrimental consequences.

We must dedicate ourselves today to getting involved, lessening our divisions over issues, and finding ways to work together to resolve them. The strength of our industry, much like our nation, is based on our commonality and our ability to not only hear, but listen to, consider all aspects of, respect, and wherever possible incorporate views outside of our own. We will always be stronger as a single group, with one voice working together to accomplish our common goals, than as many smaller less impactful individuals or smaller groups seeking primarily their own personal goals. The more companies we represent as a single group the stronger we can be. Let’s all choose to work together to heal the divisions and have a better future for our industry and our community.

Neil O’Connor
President of NWCB
Western Partitions, Inc.
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The Priceless Header and Kwik-Jamb System is pre-engineered and designed, cut-to-length, and ready to install. Our unique assembly will help standardize the installation process and provide a flush finish system.

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- Flush Finish Eliminates Build-Up at the Header-Jamb Connection

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On October 13th, the NWCB’s board of directors approved amendments to the bylaws. These amendments to the NWCB bylaws were ratified by the membership in a Special Meeting at the association headquarters in Seattle on December 2, 2016.

The revisions consist of:

- An addition of a Table of Contents.
- Article I – NWCB: Clarification of one vote per entity, honorary member criteria, participation in Industry Promotion Fund and dues required for being signatory or non-signatory to industry collective bargaining agreement for the wall and ceiling industry.
- Article II – Member Meetings: Clarification of no voting by email.
- Article III - Officers: Clarification of the officers for NWCB and their service as directors, filling vacancies for officers and role of past president.
- Article IV – Board of Directors: Major updates for listing of Board members, number of board members, organizations represented on Board and qualifications to be a Board member. Updates nomination process and eliminates Ex Officio Board. Clarifies voting procedures.
- Prior Article VI: Ex-Officio Board is eliminated and provisions deleted.

The NWCB bylaws serve as the association’s constitution. The bylaws regulate the composition of the Board of Directors, the officers, standing committees, membership guidelines, dues, and the operational structure of the organization. Amendments to the bylaws require both a board of directors and membership approval. The NWCB bylaws are available online at http://www.nwcb.org/governance.html.
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CEMCO HOTROD Type-X is a compressible intumescent firestopping that provides 1 and 2-hour fire-ratings for both dynamic and static joints according to UL-2079 (for both standard walls and shaft walls) and is sound tested according to ASTM E90.

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NWCCA Welcomes New Executive Director

James Kahler, president of Northwest Partitions, Inc., and board president of the Northwest Wall and Ceiling Contractors Association (NWCCA), announces that the association has hired a new executive director:

“We are excited to have Ray Baca as our Executive Director as we enter the next phase of Northwest Wall and Ceiling Contractors’ evolution and growth. He brings decades of professional experience which includes association leadership, labor relations, legislative advocacy, business to business sales, and general management. His predecessor, Dick Mettler, will continue serving the NWCCA by working directly with Ray for some time to ensure a smooth leadership transition. Dick and his wealth of industry knowledge were instrumental in helping shape NWCCA into its current form. We are confident Ray will propel NWCCA to the next level and provide unparalleled service and support to our members.”

Ray holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resource Management and a Master of Science degree in Organization Leadership from Regis University in Denver, Colorado. He has called Seattle home for over two years now and hails from the Eastlake neighborhood with his 10-year-old rescue Yorkshire Terrier, Zeus.

“I am very enthusiastic and eager for the opportunity to serve as Executive Director for the NWCCA—a highly respected organization that plays such an important role in advancing the interests of the wall and ceiling segment of the construction industry,” Ray said. “It is indeed an honor to have been selected and entrusted with this position, and I look forward to working with our board, our members and our partners to explore new opportunities and to face industry challenges of the future.”

Ray, who grew up along the Rio Grande Valley of northern New Mexico, spending much of his time on a family cattle ranch north of Albuquerque, has enjoyed his transition to the Pacific Northwest. “It’s a really exciting time for me. I like the diversity of people and cultures, the energy and the positive and forward-thinking atmosphere,” he said. In his spare time, Ray likes outdoor adventures and spends time reading and writing. In fact, he is a published author of a historical novel titled “Brotherhood of the Light,” published in 2005.

Ray takes over at the helm of the contractors’ association as Dick, who has served as executive director since 2008, plans to devote more of his time to his winery business. NWCB staff are looking forward to working with Ray and wish Dick the best in the next chapter.
GTS Interior Supply, a subsidiary of Gypsum Management and Supply Inc. (GMS) and a leading Pacific Northwest distributor of wallboard, suspended ceiling systems and other specialty building products, has acquired Wall & Ceiling Supply Company Inc.

Wall & Ceiling has served the Seattle market for more than 40 years through a diverse offering of wallboard and construction products for residential and commercial applications. The yard will operate under the name GTS Seattle, and the management team will remain intact. The addition of the Seattle location gives GTS Interior Supply 22 conveniently located yards across the Pacific Northwest region to serve their customers. To learn more, visit www.gtsinteriorsupply.com.

Intercorp, an importer and master distributor of high-performance construction fasteners under the Strong-Point® brand, is pleased to announce the release of their new product and submittal catalogs. Featuring more than 500 items, these catalogs are complete resource guides for Strong-Point® construction fasteners.

“Our product catalog has been updated with new product offerings, new images and now includes both our bulk and packaged products,” said Director of Marketing David Harlan. “The submittal catalog is brand new. We took all of our submittals and packaged them into one complete catalog. We created it as a tool for our customers, architects, specifiers, and contractors.”

To download the new product catalog, visit: http://www.intercorpusa.com/download-catalog/

To download the new submittal catalog, please e-mail info@intercorpusa.com to request a link for the download.

Plastic Components’ new, updated Architectural Binder is now available online on the company’s website.

The full-color document contains new and improved products with new sizes, specifications, test data, photos and drawings. Plastic Components is a leading manufacturer of plastic trims and accessories that support the design and trim requirements of the construction industry.

Download the new binder here: https://interactivepdf.uniflip.com/2/69658/293886/pub/html5.html

For more information, contact Herman Guevara, Director of Worldwide Sales, 800.233.4717 or hguevara@plasticomponents.com or visit www.plasticomponents.com.
Our particular industry tends to be very relational based. This often leads to specialized leadership teams being established to deal with particular projects, customers, as well as direction and growth objectives for our businesses.

At our convention in San Diego this last spring, we learned about communicating with seven primary types of listeners. I would suggest that there are in reality many thousands of differing personalities we deal with on a regular basis.

However, here I would like to reflect on four specific types that can have huge impacts on our businesses and our industry. These four types are: Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty, Small Picture Thinkers and Big Picture Thinkers. There is no right or wrong type here; rather I would suggest that it is almost always better to have a good balance of all four types on leadership teams, negotiation teams, committees and trustees on the various trusts we tend to serve on. An imbalance of these types can get us all in deep trouble quickly.

A team made up of primarily Glass Half Full types, who tend to be very optimistic and encouraging, might overlook some of the negative realities and believe everything will always turn out all right regardless of issues. A Team made up of Glass Half Empty types might find themselves unable to take necessary steps because of their tendency to see primarily the negative potential.

A group of Small Picture Thinkers could create a number of long term negative impacts by seeking only short term gains, primarily considering only short term objectives in their decision making process. A common response with this group is “I did not see that coming.” This can be especially true when involving negotiations, where quick settlements and trade-offs often have long term implications. A quick settlement of a particular claim, for instance, might get money in your hands, but it could, depending on the wording of the settlement, be setting a bad precedence in your dealings with a particular customer for future projects as well. Having legal counsel involved is no guarantee of someone looking out for your long term interest. An attorney’s primary concern is getting you a settlement and getting paid because that is what we tend to request when we engage them. Negotiations of any type are more like a chess game where any move could potentially lead to a number of different outcomes. Big Picture Thinkers may tend to overlook the short term benefits and sometimes overanalyze potential long term consequences of decisions. Their value comes in developing plans to get from Point “A” to Point “B” and looking at where this plan could get us five or ten years from now.

There can be a real and present danger of not having balanced representation of these four types in our leadership groups and various committees. We all have a tendency to want to surround ourselves with those like us, who think in a similar manner, whom some would describe as “yes” men. Wise leaders however seek out advice and counsel from those with a differing outlook. They understand the value of several differing points of view, are willing to take the time to consider all options, and then make the best overall decision.

It is important to note that these are not genetic differences that cannot be changed but are, in reality, learned behaviors that can be altered on an as needed basis. The key here is balance. When we consistently take the time to consider the views of others, we can learn to take on some of the traits of each of these types and become more well rounded and better leaders. That is a good thing for our businesses, our employees, our industry, our families, and for us as individuals.
We are moving from a mostly digital to a digital-only world that will certainly deliver infinite benefits. While this is an exciting paradigm shift, it is also making us more vulnerable to cyber-attacks than we have ever been before.

Thankfully, there are simple things we can do to protect ourselves from cyber-attacks so we can get the most out of this connected world.

If there is only one thing you take away from this article, please let it be this first step that we recommend (I am going to beat this point to death so everyone remembers). The first fundamental step every organization should take is based on one critical fact: Your people are your greatest risk.

So then, what is the first step?

Immediately after reading this article, we recommend you designate one person on your team as the DSO (Designated Security Officer). The DSO is responsible for seeking advice from experts who stay on top of cyber-attacks and share that advice with the company.

The reason for this is simple: Many companies hire IT security providers to protect them and expect results. This can be a huge mistake as most security attacks target your people and the tactics used are ever-changing. Keeping your colleagues educated about how to use technology and what actions are dangerous is more effective than paying IT staff to react to mistakes. IT staff are critical but you will be wasting your money if you pay them to end user behaviors that should not have had ever taken place.

Without a DSO, the strongest IT infrastructure can be easily breached. For extra clarity, here is a small example of an update our DSO, Mitranand Singh, shared with our staff a while back.

Hi Everyone,

A virus is going around that is tricking people into typing in their usernames and passwords into a pop-up window ‘when they are already logged in.’

I attached a screenshot of one that just came into our environment. It looks like a real window’s login prompt so people are easily fooled.

If you are logged in already and see a pop up requesting credentials DO NOT enter your credentials. SHUT DOWN your computer, unplug your network cable and notify me through someone else’s workstation or device.

We will get the workstation repaired before connecting it back to the network.

Thank you,
Mitch
Cyber security is about people first, and technology second. The most difficult challenge then in a digital world is protecting people from themselves. This is what makes the DSO so important.

Once you have your DSO in place, we advise you implement the following:

1. **Internal controls**

   Despite all efforts of the DSO, some people will ignore the lessons. It only takes one mistake to impact everyone so we recommend you protect everyone by limiting each person’s access to only the tools and information they need to complete their work.

   This includes blocking certain internet websites and online activities. This may annoy some people, however those who wish to use the internet in an unrestricted fashion should use their own personal devices rather than devices on the company’s network. There are many products that can help companies do this in an automated fashion.

2. **Reduce the number of technologies used by the company.**

   Without even realizing it, many companies use over a dozen systems, spreadsheets and apps. As administrative requirements, new regulations and customer expectations increase, contractors tend to add more systems and apps that help them complete their tasks. Each app and system you add to your daily operations increases the points of failure to your organization.

   As we move closer to a digital-only world, we recommend you move closer to a single source for all data and functions. It can be expensive to unite your entire team onto a single solution that handles all tasks so investing time into solutions that help reduce the number of system, spreadsheets and apps is time well spent. Managing 3-4 systems and apps rather than 12-15 significantly reduces your risk and points of failure while greatly simplifying security, data integrity and efficiency.

3. **Secure mobile devices**

   Mobile devices sometimes hold more data than computers and should be considered just as valuable. Furthermore, mobile devices are at GREATER risk of being lost or stolen. For this reason alone, securing them is an absolute must.

   Here are three simple steps to secure mobile devices:
   - Ensure all of them are password protected
   - Enable the lock-out period feature
   - Purchase remote wiping software so you can clear lost or stolen phones

4. **Use strong passwords and enforce a password change policy**

   People are notorious for using simple passwords that hackers really enjoy figuring out. Even hackers who do not enjoy figuring out passwords use programs like dictionary attack algorithms which automatically run word and number combinations to crack passwords.

   All you need to do is use a combination of numbers, upper case letters, lower case letters and symbols and then occasionally change passwords.

   Your DSO can send reminders to everyone at an acceptable and manageable frequency.

5. **Audit infrastructure and implement a multi-level security and back-up solution.**

   NOTE: this last step requires either an in-house or external IT security provider.

   If it is in your budget, hire an IT company to conduct a security audit after you complete the previous steps. This will help you identify which parts of your business are vulnerable. This audit should include any computer and device connected to your network.

   As attacks are getting more sophisticated every day, we recommend hiring experts who stay current and can implement and monitor multiple levels of security. Like the audit, the multi-level security should apply to all devices, workstations, servers etc. This multiple-level security will block attacks, notifies you, recommends actions, helps revise polices, manages user access and helps your DSO stay informed.

   The solution should also include data encryption in case of stolen data, and a data back-up strategy in case of theft, loss or disaster. Encryption and back-ups should also be applied to flash drives and other external hard drives. These are often forgotten in the security plan, yet they almost always hold critical data and are lost or stolen with great ease.

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Chad Pearson is Director of Business Development at Plexxis Software Inc.
The 2017 Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Annual Convention will be held May 4-6 at the Coeur d’Alene Resort in beautiful Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. The goal of this event is to help the attendees focus on elevating their businesses to a new level of efficiency, profitability—and fun!

A key element of the convention is a trade show displaying and demonstrating the latest tools, systems, equipment and services to the wall and ceiling industry. It is a one-stop source for information to those who want to stay abreast of the latest products to help enhance their businesses. To the exhibitors, it is a precious chance for face-to-face time with existing and new customers in a relaxed environment.

In addition to the trade show, the convention offers educational sessions providing the latest must-know information and many opportunities to connect with industry peers and partners at meetings or, more informally, at fun social events. The 2017 Outstanding Project of the Year Awards will be announced at the opening ceremonies as we celebrate the contributions of our industry.

This year’s speakers have been chosen to provide you with new business tools and strategies as well as the latest trends and technical information in the wall and ceiling industry. We are especially excited to feature two keynote speakers at this year’s event. Our opening keynote speaker is Scott Crabtree, Founder and Chief Happiness Officer at Happy Brain Science, who empowers individuals and organizations to apply findings from cutting-edge neuroscience and psychology to boost productivity and happiness at work. Our event will close with a keynote by Troy McClain, CEO of McClain Companies, who is business owner, speaker, consultant, philanthropist—and a onetime contestant on the show Apprentice. He will share with us the mindset and strategies that took him from poverty to profits and will inspire us to lead others to be the best they can be. Make plans now to attend the convention from opening to closing to maximize your results and the new information you can take with you to make a positive impact on your business and bottom line.

While the convention agenda is packed with learning opportunities and meetings, we’ve also scheduled time for fun off-site activities. To many, Coeur d’Alene is synonymous to great golf. Our golf tournament will be played on the infamous Coeur d’Alene Resort Golf Course on Thursday on May 4. A fun scramble format promises a great golf and networking outing for our delegates. The golf course features stunning water views and the challenge of the notorious floating green at the signature hole.
In addition to golf, we are offering fun activities such as lake fishing, a sushi-making and sake-tasting class and an excursion to a paint-and-wine studio, where anyone can be an artist. Space is limited for these activities, so register early!
EDUCATION

Scott Crabtree
Founder and Chief Happiness Officer
Happy Brain Science
Opening Keynote and Seminar Speaker

Troy McClain
CEO, McClain Companies
Closing Keynote Speaker
BEWARE OF CONVENTION HOUSING PIRACY

Room pirating is a practice carried out by third-party companies that act as travel agencies, wholesalers, or destination management companies to solicit attendees—sometimes very aggressively—for room reservations for other organization’s meetings. They use various tactics such as offering supposedly better rates, saying that the room block is full, and representing themselves as being affiliated with the convention organizer by illegally using the organization’s name, logo and materials. **Note that NWCB does now have third parties contact you regarding the convention.** If you are contacted by one of these pirate companies, please get as much information as possible on the party approaching you and pass it along to the NWCB immediately.

GROUP RATES

Lake Tower Room $189/night
Park Tower Room $159/night
North Wing Room $139/night

(Guestroom rates are subject to sales and lodging tax and surcharge). There is no additional resort fee.

ROOM CUTOFF: APRIL 1, 2017
(OR EARLIER IF THE BLOCK FILLS UP)

ONLINE RESERVATIONS

Link found at wallceilingshow.org

PHONE RESERVATIONS

800.688.5253.

When making reservations by phone, you can also arrange a shuttle pick up at the Spokane airport.
Let’s Fix Construction

By Letsfixconstruction.com. Reprinted with permission.

Construction Needs a Fix

“I have always done it this way.”
“I didn’t ask.”
“I didn’t know.”
“No body told me.”
“When did that change?”
“That will never work.”
“This is what I learned.”

Frankly, when the phrases above are uttered in my presence, they give me pause. Sometimes they give me fits. Sometimes my eyes bug out of my head in amazement. My response to these phrases is in direct proportion to the topic or issue at hand. In design and construction, we have many.

The fact is that our buildings are getting more complex every day. The process has more shades of grey than ever. The roles and responsibilities are muddy, there are more players in the project and there are more hands in the pie.

More communication is needed in the architecture, engineering and construction fields.

About the Blogger
Letsfixconstruction.com

Let’s Fix Construction is written by a collective group of construction professionals involved in letsfixconstruction.com, an online impartial platform to provide forward-thinking solutions to many longstanding issues that have plagued construction. Organizers and contributors seek to better the industry by sharing knowledge, while creating open and positive communication and collaboration. Many of the posts have appeared first on letsfixconstruction.com and are republished on Durability + Design with permission. Author information is available at the bottom of each blog entry.
This complexity necessitates a more positive, collaborative working environment with more communication than we have typically employed in architecture, engineering and construction in the past. In addition, we need to educate our professionals differently than has been typical historically. Gone are the days where an AEC professional slowly works their way through the phases of the project with years of experience in each area before moving to the next.

Because of the current, and very real, generational imbalance—our young professionals are walking into a job expected to learn in many areas at once. This learning curve is often navigated without an experienced mentor to guide them.

The project complexity, speed-of-light changes in technology and our generational issues are contributing to the already longstanding issues we have faced for years in construction. We face very real issues that we just can’t seem to fix.

I could spend hours writing about things in our industry that we can’t seem to fix. Here are some examples: Lack of knowledge of contract documents; concrete moisture and flooring issues; roofing issues; lack of understanding of the differences between design-build and delegated design; proper building envelope design; poor communication; and decision-making. . . . the list could go on for miles.

But I am not here to complain. That is not my style. I am here to offer a positive step in the right direction and I am going to ask you to do the same.

Tunnel Vision

Our biggest challenge comes from working in a bubble. It comes from only seeing things from the perspective of our own discipline. It comes from lack of knowledge of how other disciplines work and where there is risk.

Each discipline has a different stake in the project and is often focused, fairly exclusively, on that stake. I offer that this kind of thinking actually hurts all involved more than it helps.

I am not here to offer any easy answers. There is no such thing. I am here to say we need to work differently. We need to get our hands dirty. We need to learn how everyone on the project team works.

We need to finally start talking to each other and working together!

Making Connections

I have said many times that I choose the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) as my association of choice for two main reasons.

1. CSI is inclusive to all disciplines. Often when I am at a CSI event discussing a problem, I get the viewpoints of many members of the project team. That changes the way I approach a problem. This variety in membership and their input keeps me from having tunnel vision.

2. The people are amazing, helpful and collaborative. When I attend CONSTRUCT (CSI’s annual meeting and affiliated tradeshow), I get access to these professionals from all over the country. Not only have I made friends, I have learned much that is outside of my box. This has changed the way I work.

This kind of collaboration, information sharing and problem solving is what we need on a bigger scale.

We need a place where we can come together with an issue and share information across disciplines, geographical areas, organizations and experience levels to find positive and collaborative solutions. To share lessons learned, forward thinking ideas and possible ways to work together more effectively. To teach each other what we don’t know.

continued on next page
I am tired of hearing people complain. I am tired of the attitude that it is just “the way it is” when it comes to longstanding challenges we face in delivering a project.

One of the beautiful things about CONSTRUCT is that it brings many passionate members (and non-members) together for a few short days to share and collaborate.

Those few days are just not enough.

So, how do we continue that positive and empowering experience throughout the year? How do we continue to share and problem solve until we actually start to see change? How do we teach each other, from our real life experiences, to do a better job?

A Path Forward

I can’t answer those questions, but I can offer one suggested path: One possible way to step outside the box. An avenue for anyone in AEC, CSI member or not – Owners, Architects, Contractors, Engineers, Consultants, Subcontractors – anyone on the project team to come together.

LetsFixConstruction(www.LetsFixConstruction.com) is the brainchild of Eric D. Lussier, current president of Vermont CSI. It is a grassroots effort to bring all members of the project team together, in one place, to share positive solutions and/or ideas to move our industry forward in a different format, a format of finding solutions together. Sometimes all it takes is a couple of passionate people with the drive to try something different to promote change.

LetsFixConstruction aims to address some of the most pressing issues we have dealt with for years from a different perspective, one of problem solving with everyone at the table.

Will it solve all of the world’s ills? Probably not, at least not right away.

Will it change the way you understand and approach daily difficulties in our industry? Absolutely!

Why? Because you will have the opportunity to understand that issue through others eyes. To see how what you do and how you do it affects the project as a whole.

#LetsFixConstruction will be a place where anyone in #AEC can contribute content, ideas and possible solutions. Our hope is that many will offer solutions on the same topic to allow us the opportunity to see that issue through a variety of lenses.

This is NOT a place to complain. This is a place to move forward, learn and grow together.

I hope you will join us, contribute your voice and work toward positive change.

You can follow the conversation on Twitter: #FixConstruction.

Editor’s Note: A version of this blog post first appeared on LetsFixConstruction.com and has been republished on Durability + Design with permission.
On Halloween this year, I read a great blog titled “Let’s Fix Construction” authored by Cherise Lakeside (see page 20-22). The Blog, dated Oct 28, 2016, dealt with some of the excuses and sometimes valid reasons we encounter issues on projects and introduced an organization named “Lets Fix Construction. Their Website is LetsFixConstruction.com. I would encourage you to read it. This Lets Fix Construction blog shows that other sectors of our industry, specifically the design sector are also embracing the need to adapt to a new and improved model. This is something that from a contractor’s point of view, I am excited to hear.

In the blog, author Cherise Lakeside has opened what some might consider a Pandora’s Box. However, those with the ability to look at the big picture will see a path to a brighter future. Many of the phrases she opened her blog with are the result of the teaching methods of the Greatest Generation to the Baby Boomers. Boomers often, when given a new task, were basically put into sink or swim situations, thus it was easier and safer once you learned how to do something to not vary from it. They were often told “you are not getting paid to think.” Mentoring was a rare if not nonexistent concept for Boomers to learn by.

The upcoming Millennial Generation, with their innate desire to be part of a team, has an opportunity to totally refashion the Construction Industry for the better.

continued on next page
Today, there is a brighter future for our industry as some Boomers have had the foresight to break out of that mold and realized there are different and often better ways to accomplish a common goal and that, with some training and mentoring, the new generation coming up can have a higher success rate when given new tasks and roles. Those with the foresight are teaching that improved communication and out of the box thinking can often lead to Win-Win solutions.

The upcoming Millennial Generation, with their innate desire to be part of a team, has an opportunity to totally refashion the Construction Industry for the better. Many of our current issues with designing and building a project are often the result of one or more individuals or companies with a “my way is the only way” attitude. (Please note this is a Boomer that is excited about the potential of the Millennials.)

One of the primary concepts Lakeside promotes is learning about other facets of this industry, and expanding our understanding of how the work and thoughts of others may interact with the issues of our particular part of a project. Since time and resource limitations affect our ability to individually understand all such possible interactions, forming teams with a broad variety of experiences would appear to offer a viable opportunity to expand everyone’s view while reducing the anxiety of everyone trying to protect their “turf.”

Within the context of such teamwork, below are a few concepts which, if implemented, could radically change our industry.

1. More time to work together will result in less cost.

It is said “time is money.” In our industry it is the lack of time that will always cost everyone more money. When a design team and a construction team (including subcontractors) are given time to work together, especially with the advent of BIM modeling, the results tend to be far different and better than some projects of old, including fewer clashes, problems, arguments, workflow stoppages, and claims resulting in more savings for everyone including the owners.

2. Creative solutions that work will give rise to more creative input when issues do arise.

As noted above, one of the primary reasons Boomers tend to fall back on “we have always done it this way” is because creative thinking was not exactly a valued commodity. Standardization was always the easier and safer way. When multiple options to resolve a problem become available and are analyzed by the team, we are far more likely to find the “best solution available.” Such successes will encourage seeking out more out of the box ideas. Success breeds success.

3. The cheapest bid is rarely the best value.

There is always a real cost to achieve or build anything, and if someone says they can do it for much less than anyone else, be very careful. Every company that bids projects has a single goal, and that is to be profitable. In order to do so, they must cover all their direct cost plus the overhead costs and (not or) some profit. Generally there are three primary business models in this industry.

1. Contractors who are historically the highest priced, consistently successful, no issues, often niche oriented contractors, and who tend to do most of their work for a limited clientele.

2. The consistently cheapest contractors who have a reputation for finding every gray area or problem with the design, seem to wait until the last minute to point it out, then demand change order after change order to “correct the situation.” These contractors not only end up costing as much or more than the other bidders, but the value of the time and effort expended to resolve their issues is a hidden cost that can never be recouped. In other parts of the world, especially for public works projects, the bid closest to the average bid is awarded the project which helps to avoid the cheap bid with tons of change orders.

3. The third model are contractors, including subcontractors, who have identified the real cost of the work and built it into their bids. They are usually in the middle of the bid range and will work as part of a team to resolve issues ahead of time. If you can identify and form teams with these type of forward thinking partners, the quality of life and business can be far better.

This is an industry that, regardless of the technological advancements, will always have at its core, success based on our interactions and relationships. We each will have opportunities to add to that level of success or perhaps fail. Please be open to adaptation and work to achieve the former rather than the latter.
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Does social media feel like yet another obligation that you don’t have time for? Does it feel like you are wasting your time because all you see are posts about coffee, what someone is eating, or how people feel about that issue that you are not interested in at all?

Understanding some core principles can help you spend less time on social media, get access to the information you want to see, and stop feeling that heavy burden of “yet another thing I have to do.”

When you are going to meet a new business connection, do you go to Bing or Google or LinkedIn to look them up? You are not the only one! The same people that you are looking up are the same people that are looking you up as well! General contractors use social media (usually LinkedIn) and their website to prescreen potential subs to work with. Subcontractors can use it to identify and contact that specific Project Manager within a particular company. Without this direct access, it may take you months to actually connect with the person you need to connect with. You can also use these tools to learn about the person’s personality and what they are like to work with.

I was in a meeting with a client who was as anti-social media as you could possibly be. We had taken a break and when I returned, he was studying something on his computer. I asked what he was looking up, and he told me that he was looking up the Project Manager for an upcoming project that he wanted to bid on. He continued on to tell me what he was learning and how he was going to change how he was originally going to reach out to him. When he was done, I asked him what he would’ve done if he wouldn’t have been able to find him. He responded, “I would’ve been flying blind and just had to hope that I was reaching the right person with the right message.” I responded, “Oh . . . so how do you think he is going to respond when he goes to look you up and can’t find you?”

In another meeting with a Project Manager, we were talking about the company’s process of selecting subcontractors. He was sharing how the subs they know and have a good relationship with get the first dibs on a project because they know what to expect and have confidence there will be minimal problems. But when we got to talking about the subs he or the company didn’t know or have experience with, he explained that he goes and looks them up online. He looks to see who they are, what projects they worked on, who has recommended them, whom they know, and if they are worth calling to finalize their bid.

So the moral of both stories is if you can’t be found online, you don’t exist and you may not get the job. Social media can seem like a time hog and that it isn’t worth it, but it is where people are going to learn about you before they contact you. It saves you time and allows you to be more intentional when connecting with and reaching out to people.
Another common frustration with social media is that it can feel impersonal because we do not actually see or hear the person we are addressing. Also, we may be addressing our whole network instead of a single person, which can make us feel like we are spending our time talking to a wall instead of an individual person.

Consider for a moment that engaging with someone on social media is no different than picking up the phone and calling them or sending them a text. There is actually a person on the other end of that message or post that you are sending! That person, like you, has feelings, goals and intentions. That person, like you, doesn’t like to be told what to do. They, like you, like to feel as if they are in control and have a say in their own life.

So what does mean? We’re taught to use social media as a marketing platform and therefore we should use marketing speak, “DO THIS,” “BUY NOW,” or “SIGN UP TODAY.” But most of us don’t want to feel like we are being talked AT.

Imagine you are meeting someone at your local Starbucks. You both order your drinks and sit down to talk. Every time they say something to you it comes out as a marketing headline. They never acknowledge what you say or even that you are sitting just three feet away. Most likely, you are going to leave this meeting and never talk to or recommend this person again. Conversations are meant to be organic, meaning that you talk a little while I listen. I’ll then acknowledge what you said and continue the conversation while you listen. We’ll go back and forth like this until the conversation or our meeting is over. This same approach is how you communicate with someone on social media. Write your message as if you are actually talking to one specific person and that person is sitting in front of you. When you make them feel like they are sitting there with you, they are more likely to respond and you are more likely to achieve the result you are looking to achieve.

These core principles will help you be more intentional and get better results in a fraction of the time and turn your fans, followers and connections into paying clients.

—Mixing brand development, strategy, and implementation, Mel DePaoli works with her clients to build brands worthy of going viral. As President and Brand Catalyst of Omicle LLC, she is a sought-after speaker and international author of three books on culture-driven brands. For more on Mel DePaoli, please visit www.omicle.com or join her Facebook Group, Brilliant Branding.
Toys for Tots

The NWCB, with the help of its generous members, continues to be among the top contributors to the US Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots in King County. This year’s toy drive coincided with the NWCB Holiday Open House at the association headquarters on December 8. Three member organizations, IUPAT District Council #5, the Pacific Northwest Council of Carpenters and Washington Interior Exterior Systems Local #41, made cash donations, in addition to their donation of toys, and had a chance to meet with the representatives of the US Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots coordinators for our area.

Toys for Tots is an official activity of the U. S. Marine Corps and an official mission of the Marine Corps Reserve. It purpose is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community. The primary goal of Toys for Tots is to deliver, through a new toy at Christmas, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens—a mission the NWCB is proud to support.

Thank you to all who participated in the NWCB toy drive!
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Proper Sequencing of the Work to Prevent MEP Interference

Terry Kastner

In 2009, the Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau completed the publication Impacts to Labor Productivity in Steel Framing and the Installation and Finishing of Gypsum Wallboard. Statistical analysis was performed on 226 individual projects for the purpose of determining the effects to planned productivity when the work was subjected to Impact variables such as, trade stacking, out-of-sequence work, fragmentation, congestion etc. The research concluded that when specific variables are present, their presence will have an adverse effect to planned productivities. The research examined the effects of 38 separate variables or impacts and provided a value of impact for each of the 38 variables.

Although the degree of impact was unique for each variable, few variables were proven to be more harmful to the planned productivity of wall framing, drywall installations or finishing than MEP interference. As noted in the Labor Productivity Study, “There are basically two types of interior wall framing: Primary (also referred to as corridor or interference walls) and secondary (also referred to as partition walls). The corridor or interference walls are defined as walls that must be installed (including top-down gypsum wallboard) before any of the mechanical (HVAC ducts), main electrical conduits, plumbing, and in most cases, fire suppression piping (collectively referred to as MEP’s). Secondary walls that are full height, extend to the underside of the structure and are in conflict with MEP, must also be installed prior to MEP. When MEP precedes wall framing, the interfering MEP often prevent adequate access for construction of the wall systems, including drywall top-down installations and firestopping (life safety) and compromise the ability of the building official to inspect the work.

Even though MEP interference can severely impede the construction of primary and secondary wall systems, MEP interference is also one variable or impact that can be easily eliminated. To eliminate MEP interference to wall framing systems, including top-down drywall installations, fire-taping and firestopping, MEP installations must be scheduled to follow framing and top-down activities. Currently most project schedules sequence MEP to follow wall framing and top-down construction but, in some cases, the project schedule indicates MEP activities precede framing and topping down activities. Depending on the severity of the MEP interference, the effect to the planned production rate for framing and topping down activities can reduce productivity by as much as 40 percent, or, at times, even more.

When framing activities are affected to this extent, the resulting ripple-effect will also delay all follow-on activities. When framing installations are delayed, drywall installations are delayed, finishing or fire-taping to drywall and firestopping at the head of wall and penetrations are delayed, in-wall MEP such as electrical conduit and plumbing are delayed, in-wall backing for cabinets grab bars or fixtures are delayed, ceiling framing is delayed, etc. Once again, with proper coordination and proper sequencing, these delays can be eliminated.

One of the functions of Building Information Modeling (BIM) is to discover those areas where the installation of MEP will interfere with the construction of wall and ceiling framing. Once discovered, necessary changes to the schedule and/or installations can be coordinated to eliminate the conflicts. On projects that utilize BIM, timely conflict resolution has been shown to reduce impacts to labor productivity and
permit the project to proceed as scheduled and complete on-time. But BIM is not utilized on all projects.

Whether utilizing BIM or not, proper communication begins with the *bid proposal*. The NWCB recommends that the bid proposal always include the clarification that, “*All full-height walls are to be completed prior to overhead MEP trade work that may conflict or interfere with the completion of our work.*”

In some cases, the request for proposal does not permit modifications, clarifications or exclusions to the bid documents or the bid proposal. When this is the case, and once we have secured the work, we have a responsibility to advise the general contractor that modifications to the project schedule are necessary to prevent project delays that will be experienced if MEP installations are permitted to precede the construction of primary and secondary wall systems. Evidence of the effect of MEP interference can be demonstrated by providing the general contractor with a copy of the publication, *Impacts to Labor Productivity in Steel Framing and the Installation and Finishing of Gypsum Wallboard*, authors Gerald H. Williams Jr., Ph. D., and Timothy R. Anderson, Ph. D., or the peer-reviewed paper of the same title, prepared and presented by Williams and Anderson. 

—Terry Kastner is Director of Technical Services Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau
The Oregon chapter is going strong. The economy is up, which makes everything seem easier of course, and we’ve further developed relationships with dozens of architects, owners and general contractors over the last several months. This has included outreach for projects of the year, hosting a couple of dozen architects at our fall classes and providing solid technical support through Terry and myself as I get more educated on a variety of common situations.

Another major effort we have taken on this fall is the build-out of the joint apprenticeship and training center for the painters and finishers here in Portland. A few years ago, the finisher and painter training trusts joined together to purchase a building (with a considerable bank loan). We have worked to build out training areas, modular lab experiences, offices and finally classrooms. While most of the work was hired out, we did take on the drywall, finishing and painting through apprentices and volunteers. We owe thanks to several members including Performance Contracting Inc., Western Partitions Inc., Amning-Johnson, The Harver Co., Harlen’s Drywall, Intercorp, Certainteed and Knez Supply. The contractors provided expertise, labor and materials. Certainteed and Knez came in huge for the project by partnering to supply the gypsum board, and Intercorp stepped up by providing the fasteners. During the build-out, many apprentices received great hands-on education, doubling the value of the program. The project was completed in early January, and regular training schedules resumed shortly thereafter.

In addition to the above efforts, we are already working on another set of great industry seminars coming this spring. Our January seminar, for instance, was an economic forecast by Tom Potiowsky. The economy is a subject we all watch closely. A great source for data on the subject is Oregon’s economic website www.qualityinfo.org, my go to employment data source. Among a plethora of economic data, this site has month-by-month breakdowns of all the various business sector employment figures. Incredibly, total construction employment peaked this August at over 96,000 total construction workers employed in Oregon. This is the highest point since August 2008 and only 13 percent off the unsustainable 2007 peak levels. This is what we can certainly call full employment in the construction industry.

I also know from our training centers that apprenticeship ranks are at or near all-time highs in a mad rush to fill the workforce needs. Additionally, I have heard that there is as much overtime and as many Saturdays full of work as anyone wants. It is a great time to take advantage of opportunities and stock away savings. It really is an exciting time in the industry, but are there with dark clouds on the economic horizon? We certainly have another good year coming. But what about after that? We are having a great run, but we have to be mindful. While failure forces us to reflect, success discourages reflection. However, a new year is a great time to reflect, not just in the glory of a hot economy but to find our industry’s flaws. Our local group will be gathering in the coming months for strategic planning to work on long term goals, including broad industry marketing plans. We would welcome your input in this important discussion as we continue this journey as an industry.
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NWCB NORTHWEST CHAPTER

Wednesday, February 15
Luncheon: “General Contractor Panel Discussion”
11:30 am to 1:00 pm (Check-in starting 11:00 am)
Sheraton Bellevue Hotel
Bellevue, Washington

Wednesday, March 18
Luncheon: “Social Media”
11:30 am to 1:00 pm (Check-in starting 11:00 am)
Sheraton Bellevue Hotel
Bellevue, Washington

Thursday, June 15
Annual Golf Tournament
Druid’s Glen
Covington, Washington
1:00 pm Shotgun Start

For more information on the events of the NWCB Northwest Chapter, please visit www.nwcb.org or call 206.524.4243.

NWCB OREGON CHAPTER

Wednesday, February 22
General Contractor Panel: How Can We Help Them?
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
The Grand Hotel - Bridgeport
Tigard, Oregon

Thursday, March 23
“Building With Social Media”
11:30 am to 1:00 pm
The Grand Hotel - Bridgeport
Tigard, Oregon

Thursday, June 1
Annual Golf Tournament
Langdon Farms
Aurora, Oregon

May 4-6, 2017
Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Annual Convention & Trade Show
The Coeur d’Alene Resort
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Please visit NWCB.org and/or nwcboregon.com for the latest information.

SAVE THE DATE!
May 3-5, 2018
Northwest Wall & Ceiling Industries 2018 Convention & Trade Show
The Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa
Tucson, Arizona

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