Construction Industry Security

Contractors are no stranger to the costs of equipment and supply theft at construction sites. In recent decades, the problem has become so epidemic that most Contractors have developed different strategies to offset costs including; increasing insurance coverage, adding line items in the budget for equipment and inventory losses and even raising prices. Although these strategies may offset some costs initially, it is not an effective long term solution to the problem. This reactive approach will only lead to increased deductibles, work stoppages or delays, lost man hours, and a never ending cycle of equipment and supply replacement. It is these unexpected costs that can rapidly erode the margins on any project. In an environment of increased competition and shrinking margins, the Contractor(s) that can learn to anticipate and control costs through effective security planning strategies will be one step ahead of their competitors.

We could spend volumes talking about the cost benefit analysis of security planning during project development. For those who are already caught in this vicious cycle and are looking for a “better way” of doing business and minimizing unpredictable costs, this article is for you. Security planning needs to be a well-defined, proactive methodology throughout all phases of project development. Below are some recommendations to consider in security planning that will help Contractors develop a quantifiable metric for doing cost benefit analysis.

- Appoint a Security Liaison/Manager to coordinate security planning at the site. This can be an internal employee or a reputable, experienced contract security expert. The key is you need someone representing your security interest that has experiences in physical security, vulnerability assessment, risk mitigation, and security planning. The Security Liaison should immediately establish relationships with local civil authorities.

Continued On Page 24
Product Profile

LOAD ONCE, LOADRITE

Trimble Loadrite provides payload measurement systems to measure material movement in construction, quarries, mines and other operations worldwide.

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Engineer’s Corner

Less Environmental Impact with High-Strength Steel Reinforced Concrete Beams

For many years, concrete structures in the U.S. have been reinforced by deformed steel bars with yield strength, $f_y$, of 60 ksi. The use of steel bars with higher $f_y$ values will reduce the amount of required reinforcement, and therefore results in savings is material, shipping, and handling costs. It also alleviates congestion problems by lowering the required reinforcement and improves the construction quality.

Figure 1 shows a sample stress-strain curve of the conventional Grade 60 reinforcement alongside with commercially available high strength steel reinforcement.

An investigation to study the cyclic response of concrete beams reinforced with steel bars having yield strengths approaching 100 ksi (97 ksi) was conducted at Pennsylvania State University. Seven specimens were subjected to large transverse displacement reversals: three specimens were reinforced with conventional steel bars (Grade 60) and four specimens were reinforced with high-strength steel bars (Grade 97). All transverse reinforcement was Grade 60. The nominal concrete compressive strength was 6000 psi (for more details see Tavallali 2011).

The specimens consisted of two beam elements connected to a central stub (Figure 2). The overall length of each specimen was 88-in., consisting of two 36-in. long beam elements and a 16-in. central stub. The ends of the cantilevered beams were supported by rollers located 24 in. from the face of the central stub. All beams had an overall depth of 10 in., width of 16 in., and an effective depth, $d$, of approximately 8 in. All beams were proportioned to have nearly identical flexural strength. All beams were tested under cyclic reversal loads. The cyclic load test was conducted to provide a measure for seismic behavior of the beams. The drift ratio was defined as the ratio of transverse displacement to shear span, corrected for the rotation of the central stub. This definition of drift ratio closely resembles the interstory drift ratio of modern multistory frames (designed with columns stronger than beams), where inelastic action occurs predominantly in the beams. Figure 3 compares the hysteretic curves of a specimen reinforced with conventional Grade 60 reinforcement (CC4-X) with another specimen reinforced with high-strength reinforcement (UC4-X). Both specimens exhibited similar behavior. The comparison demonstrates that Grade 97 rebar is a viable option for seismic resistant design.

Figure 2: Typical test setup

Figure 1: Sample Stress-Strain Curves of Grade 60, 97 and 120 ksi (Tavallali 2011)

Continued On Page 7
Five Things You Need To Know About That Can Impact Your Workers’ Compensation Premium

The State of Maryland Department of Labor has a pretty rigid definition of what an employee is and this carries over to your workers’ compensation program. Since every employer must carry workers’ compensation coverage to protect their employees (and sub contract employees by extension), it is a budget line item every construction company must address.

In Maryland, Workers’ Compensation premiums vary from carrier to carrier. But there are many other factors that determine how much your premium charge is.

Five Things Every Contractor Needs To Know About Workers’ Compensation:

One

There is common belief that insurance rates are standard for each classification code and that only the individual characteristics (such as the experience modification) determine the final rate. This is false. Insurance carriers typically have multiple rates filed with a State for the same classification. One carrier may have 5 sets of rates and uses the rates based on underwriting data and competition. Find out if you are getting the most preferred rate tier, and if not, why. The difference between the highest and lowest rates may be significant.

Two

Maryland Workers’ Compensation carriers can file for scheduled credits up to 25% What this means is that your carrier can add up to 25% credit to the modified premium based on underwriting your company and based on the competitive nature of the market. Find out if your program is providing a schedule credit, and if so, for how much, and if not – WHY?

Three

Most carriers have a drug free workplace program credit filed in Maryland. If your firm has an approved drug free workplace program (usually includes pre-employment, post-accident, and random testing along with and employee assistance component) you can get an additional 5% credit on your workers’ compensation premium calculation. If you don’t have a program in place, you can determine whether the credit will pay for the testing program. You can get the benefit of a proven risk management tool at little or no additional cost to your company.

Four

Carriers in Maryland may also use the NCCI Construction Credit program. This is designed to measure the average rate for construction class codes for the third quarter of the prior year. If the average rate is above the starting point, a credit is calculated and applied to the premium. This program helps offset wage differences required in union vs. non union or prevailing wage requirements. If you are a union company, do prevailing wage work, or pay higher hourly rates than your competition you may qualify. This is in addition to your experience modification.

Five

The NCCI changed part of the experience modification calculation in January 2013. They raised the split point on primary claims from $5,000 to $10,000 and to $13,500 in 2014. This will go up again to $15,000 on January 1, 2015. This means the weighted average includes more loss dollars and if you have claims over $5,000. If you have a lot of claims over $5,000, this will adversely impact your experience. Many companies have had their loss history remain stable and have seen their experience modification go up because of this change.

Workers’ Compensation premiums are usually the largest property and casualty expense a contractor has. Understanding how your premium is determined and ways to improve it will only help your bottom line.

Richard Shaw is a Vice President with CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc, and has over 25 experience working with clients to help them manage their risk. For more information about these plans and any other insurance needs, you may contact Richard at rshaw@cbiz.com.
Five Pieces Of Wisdom From A Successful Business Builder

At a recent executive Tech Breakfast at DLA Piper in Baltimore, Michael Chasen, founder of Blackboard who sold the company several years ago for $1.7 billion, shared some wisdom he learned in growing the company from his graduate school thesis into an international force in education. Blackboard pioneered e-learning that has gone on to change how education is designed, delivered and consumed.

1. Be passionate about what you do, even if others aren’t. That passion will carry you through the tough times and it can be contagious.

2. Focus on the business and not your title. OK, you are the boss. But don’t jam that fact down the throats of others. And, do you really need wildly expensive and fancy offices? Always ask and answer the following question when wrestling with a decision: What’s the best thing for the business?

3. Share the vision with everyone and make sure they get it and believe in it. In the 1990s, two Harvard professors did an extensive study of successful CEOs to find what made them successful. They thought they would find education, environment or personality to be the foundation of success. What they found instead was the clear communication to all by the CEO of what the company’s vision was and the stamina to keep emphasizing it until it was totally understood.

4. Constantly seek advice but be the expert. Be open to questions and disagreements; accept different ideas and points of view. But in the end you have to decide. Keep yourself in position to constantly learn and figure out what is coming next.

5. Realize that disruption changes everything and changes it again. Look at how the Internet has disrupted:
   a. Music: Napster became iTunes and other sources
   b. TV: streaming technology that they have embraced while competing with Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube is challenging Cable/Satellite.
   c. Books and Bookstores: Amazon, Kindle, Tablets, Smart Phones
   d. Education: Classrooms in Buildings are anywhere a device can connect to the Web.

We are descended from people who found a way to deal with disruptions, many of which were life threatening. So we are wired to adapt and look for the next change coming.

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Business Development Time

How are you spending yours?

Let’s be honest, in the competitive environment and economic conditions we are challenged with today, we best be sending and investing our time well. After all, it’s the one thing we can’t get back. When it’s gone, it’s gone.

What we can do is maximize our chances for having a great ROI “Return on Investment” for the time invested in pursuit of sales opportunities. And how we do that is by spending time in “High Risk” selling activities.

If you or your salespeople are like most, you’re spending far too much time in low to medium risk activities with like rewards. When it’s you’re high risk/high reward activities that will impact sales outcomes the most.

Would you like to gain more discretionary (Personal) time while increasing sales?

Then it’s time for daily self-analysis on just how you’re spending or investing your time. And the best part, you’re the only one who can win or lose in the process. To begin, let’s define what low, medium or high risk work activities are below.

Low Risk

No Work, Planning, Reading, Prioritizing Activities, Decision to Work, Looking Up Phone Numbers, Getting Ready, Etc. (Plans & Admin)

Medium Risk

Proposals, Networking, Getting Referrals, Research, Talking w/ Support Teams, Gathering Competitive Info., Etc. (Necessary Activities Before Sale)

High Risk

Prospecting, Qualifying Prospects, Any Face-To-Face 'Interactive' Selling, Presenting, Fact Finding, Negotiating, Closing/ Connecting, etc. (i.e. Getting The Sale)

My guarantee! Increase your % of selling time in High to Medium risk activities and eliminate or minimize Low risk activities and you’ll have significant gains in your sales outcomes.

To assist you with this, download the ‘FREE’ “Daily Sales Time Analysis” Template @ http://www.ultimatesellingsolutions.com/documents/USS_Time_Analysis_Tool.pdf#

It’s your personal analysis so be honest with your assessment. Then start changing how you spend your time.

Jim Martin, is a sales consultant, motivator, coach, and author of “Ultimate Selling, The Art & Science of Sales Success” and “How to Prepare for a B2B Sales Call”. For more information, go to www.ultimatesellingsolutions.com. If you own an iPad, go to www.UltimateSellingSeries.com where you can connect to the iBookstore and download a multi-touch, interactive eBook titled: “How to Prepare for a B2B Sales Call”.

MCN’s Next Direct Connect

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Using high-strength reinforcement provides several benefits to the AEC industry. It can alleviate congestion problems in many applications, reducing the labor costs and improving the construction quality. The reduced amount of material usage and shipping would reduce the environmental impacts. The high strength rebar is commercially available now and experimental tests of concrete beams reinforced with high-strength reinforcement (Tavallali 2011) provide information for their mechanical behavior.

Figure 3: Comparison of measured response, beams CC4-X (Reinforced with Grade 60) and UC4-X (Reinforced with Grade 97).

References:


Hooman (Hugh) Tavallali, Ph.D., P.E is the V.P. of Production with Deihimi Engineering. For more information, please contact Hugh at hooman60@gmail.com.
Is The Recovery Truly Here?
SIORs Doubt The Strength & Staying Power Of The Recovery

There seems to be little disagreement that the overall economy and many commercial real estate markets are significantly improved over where they were at the depth of the recession, but opinions diverge when you ask SIORs if this is a “true” recovery or merely the prelude to another crash.

“All expansions today are prelude to another crash! The world has a very short-term memory,” warns Gabriel Silverstein, SIOR, President of Angelic Real Estate, LLC, New York, NY. “This is the slowest and least job generating recovery in memory. We are past another crash for this cycle, though, and a slow recovery, while not cause for a Tyco party in Sardinia, is real, and real estate has been seeing it for two years or more.”

Richard D. Whitney, SIOR, CCIM, CPM, GC, of Whitney Commercial Real Estate Services, Asheville, NC notes that, “Things are certainly much better than they were in 2008-2010, but while last year was our second best year in our 12-year company history, we find that not only is our company, but our region, down in sales volume by 35 percent this year compared to last. I really thought we had come out of the woods, but I see 2013 as down.”

Whitney also says that when you crash ‘last’, you will recover last. “And we are – just not as quickly as I had hoped based on the success we had in 2012,” says Whitney. “I guess we’ll close the year out ‘up’ -- maybe as much as 50 percent from the bottom.”

“I think probably there’s a geographic influence concerning the threat of another crash,” adds Mike Hillis, SIOR, CCIM, Principal with Cushman & Wakefield/Commerce Real Estate Solutions in Las Vegas. “Because Las Vegas was an original epicenter of the real estate recession, we are probably more vulnerable than a lot of other places.”

450 miles north of Las Vegas in Salt Lake City, Michael Jeppesen, SIOR, CCIM, LEED AP, President and Managing Broker of IPG Commercial Real Estate states that, “As one of the first markets to emerge from the downturn it is fairly easy in Salt Lake City to point to the substantial amount of activity and absorption of space.” He notes that 2012 was an all-time record year for both leasing and sales activity in the industrial sector. “But even with all the good news coming out of our area, I am sure if you took a straw poll of our clients about a ‘true recovery,’ the results would certainly be mixed and the naysayers would probably be speaking more loudly.”

Still, he continues, “If capitalization rates and market liquidity are the source of measurement, then yes, real estate will rebound, and in fact, it already has! Cap rate compression is prevalent in all major markets, secondary markets, and even in tertiary areas. Picture a nest of hungry fledglings vying for a bit of worm from their mother. That is a similar picture when it comes to the amount of appetite built up for investment grade product across all product types in our area. Institutional money has been slow in coming back to our market, but it is here now, and it is seeking major placements.”

Why All the Concern?

SIORs have numerous reasons for their less than optimistic long-term projections. “Personally, I think we have experienced what we can now consider the ‘new recovery,’” says Jeppesen. “That means slower than desired job growth, and a long-term ‘output gap’ (The output gap measures the spread between potential GDP and actual GDP). We can see this directly in the time it takes to get transactions completed. Business decision makers tend to take much longer to make major real estate commitments than they did five years ago.”

“We have seen the [industrial] market go from nearly zero liquidity - almost no buyers and zero lenders – to a deluge of liquidity for both buyers and lenders, and lease terms and cap rates have moved faster than I have ever seen in any three-year period...and we still don’t have a strong recovery,” says Silverstein. “I believe that corporate users have exercised more discretion and caution (read: fear) in post-recessionary expansion and

Continued On Page 30
Best Kept Secrets of Profitable Construction Companies

It Starts With This Simple Rule: Don’t Botch the Contract Pricing!

There are many reasons why construction contracts lose money, but most relate to botching the contract price during the bid process, and poor project management.

Sometimes contractors aren’t given accurate bid documents up front. This often results in the scope of the project being significantly understated by the company soliciting bids. These price discrepancies are usually fought out with change orders.

For the sake of this article, we will assume that adequate contract specifications are available. Bid failure usually results from estimators and/or project managers not understanding the true total cost of performing their services under the contract.

Understanding Fixed and Variable Costs

Costs of any business fall into two broad categories: fixed and variable. For contractors, fixed costs exist regardless of whether a contract is obtained. Variable costs exist only as a result of a specific contract.

What makes it a bit more complicated is that contract costs, which tend to be predominately variable (generally described as “direct costs”), have some fixed component (generally described as “indirect costs”) as well. Major types of direct costs for contractors include materials, labor, equipment rental, and subcontractors, if used.

Examples of indirect costs are automotive expenses, depreciation, rent related to construction activity, general liability insurance, repairs and maintenance, project management labor and training. Examples of general and administrative expenses include office salaries and burden, office rent, telephone / communication, marketing and advertising, utilities and perhaps interest and taxes if applicable.

How to Bid a Profitable Job

I often hear frustration from my contractor clients that their employees in charge of bidding on new construction projects do not understand the overhead costs of the business. At the same time, training and tools are not provided to help estimators with bidding. Construction company owners want estimators to recover overhead costs, and even better, make money on the jobs they bid. But owners are often reluctant to provide estimators with the data they need, out of fear of disclosing too much of the company’s financial information.

Overhead is a term that is not always clearly defined or understood. Some think of it as the indirect contract costs only, while others include general and administrative costs as well. However, what needs to be understood is how your contract pricing model is going to cover the total costs of the business plus provide an adequate profit.

When it comes to bidding on contracts, direct costs other than labor are generally not the issue. Due to the labor intensive nature of the construction industry, labor is often the primary cost utilized to recover “overhead.”

The Benefits of a Labor Overhead Calculator

Gross Mendelsohn offers a labor overhead calculator. You can download it at http://bit.ly/HourlyRateCalculator. This tool checks billing rates for your field personnel. While every business is unique, and models have to be somewhat tailored to your specific context – for example, adjusting for overhead and profit recovered from markups on other direct costs – the labor overhead calculator will help you better understand and assess the rates you are using in light of the total costs of operating your business.

Steve Ball, CPA, CVA, CCFIP, is director of Gross Mendelsohn's Construction & Real Estate Group. He is passionate about helping contractors become more profitable. Steve provides audit, review, compilation, tax, business valuation, succession planning and consulting services for construction contractors. Contact Steve at 410.685.5512 or sball@gma-cpa.com.
Biz Basics Q & A

What Is A Teaming Arrangement?

A teaming arrangement is a form of business arrangement that involves two or more companies coming together and combining resources for a specific purpose. Companies sometimes utilize teaming arrangements when bidding for contracts awarded by the Federal Government. Each company in a teaming arrangement has a specific set of responsibilities, with one company generally serving as the prime contractor and one or more companies serving as subcontractors. Such arrangement may be desirable for businesses looking to complement each other’s capabilities.

Businesses should use care when structuring a teaming arrangement, particularly if they wish to maintain their autonomy and be viewed as separate entities. Otherwise, the teaming arrangement could be viewed as a joint venture, with participants to the arrangement considered affiliated, or a single entity for size determination purposes.

Affiliation occurs when one participant to the teaming arrangement is dependent on another for business to such a degree that its economic viability would be in jeopardy without such business. Factors considered in determining affiliation include who will manage the contract; which participants possess background and expertise for contract performance; the degree of collaboration in preparing and submitting competitive proposals; whether there are discrete tasks to be performed by each participant or commingling of personnel and resources; and the amount and type of work to be performed by each participant.

When a teaming arrangement is deemed affiliated, smaller participants could be at risk for not qualifying as a “small business” under the Small Business Act (“SBA”) and lose the benefits associated with such designation. Consultation with legal counsel is therefore recommended for businesses desiring to enter into a teaming arrangement to ensure the arrangement is properly structured.

James R Benjamin, Jr., is an attorney with Pessin Katz Law, PA. This information is provided for general information only. None of the information provided herein should be construed as providing legal advice or a separate attorney-client relationship. Applicability of the legal principles discussed may differ substantially in individual situations. You should not act upon the information presented herein without consulting an attorney of your choice about your particular situation. While PK Law has taken reasonable efforts to insure the accuracy of this material, the accuracy cannot be guaranteed and PK Law makes no warranties or representations as to its accuracy.

Have No Fear - Account Management Is Here

The days of being able to visit a provider for mere copays are gone. There are no longer simple answers as to why a service was covered a certain way or how to get a physician to accept your insurance.

Healthcare continues to change which requires employers and employees to put more “skin in the game.” Employees are now expected to engage in their employee benefit programs and to navigate the ever-changing platform. But rest assured, you are not alone. Account Management is here to help you maneuver Health Care Reform and all of the idiosyncrasies that come along with it. Account Management is like an art form, it takes adaptability, creativity, and sincerity to get the job done. We practice our craft every day to hone our skills and deliver unwavering support to all our clients.

Account Managers will handle your issues quickly, professionally, and with the utmost confidentiality. Please take a moment to connect with your dedicated Account Manager today. We are your strongest advocate.

Kathleen Janocha
Workforce Tactix
VP, Account Management
I was recently contacted by a local subcontractor who was seeking advice on what to do when a general contractor refused to pay him for his work.

As soon as you realize there will be payment disputes, you should contact an experienced construction attorney. The more time that passes, the less likely you are to be paid. Bond claims and mechanic’s liens have very sensitive deadlines with which you must comply, or you may lose your ability to collect entirely.

If the project included work on property owned by the state or federal government, the next step is to request the general contractor’s bonding information, which it is required to provide. Bond claims must typically be initiated within 90 days of the last day on which the subcontractor provided labor or materials to the job. When determining the last day of work, warranty work, such as defect repair, is not considered. Only days on which the last bit of labor and materials were provided to complete the contract may be considered when determining this critical date. Lastly, the subcontractor must file suit against the bond within one year from the last day of work.

If the owner of the property is a private entity, not the government, then the next step is likely to be the pursuit of a mechanic’s lien. This strategy also has strict deadlines, and failure to comply with these deadlines will be fatal to your claim. First, you must serve the owner of the property with a notice within 120 days of the last day of work. The notice must strictly comply with the statute by including some specific details about the project and your claim. Next, the petition for a mechanic’s lien must be filed in the Circuit Court of Maryland within 180 days of the last day of work.

General contractors may provide a variety of different explanations for non-payment to subcontractors. No explanation is good enough to allow a critical deadline to pass.

Both bond claims and mechanic’s liens claims allow the subcontractor to circumvent the general contractor and pursue a higher authority for payment. This often puts additional pressure on the general contractor and motivates them to pay. If a subcontractor shows that a general contractor failed to pay in bad faith, there are additional statutory remedies that the subcontractor may pursue in order to recover attorneys’ fees.

I do not present you with this information in order to provide you with an encyclopedic rendition of Maryland construction law. I do so in order to illustrate the importance of experienced legal counsel on the front lines of your business. I recommend that you speak to an attorney whenever a major item for collection becomes more than 60 days late. That allows counsel at least 30 days to collect information from you, and draft and serve the required notice.

It is important to have legal counsel who is familiar with your business, who is available and willing to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you and your team. Construction disputes are inevitable, and having an attorney that knows your business inside and out is just as critical as the advice coming from your other advisors. An attorney that already knows your business will spend fewer hours on a litigation matter than a brand new lawyer that you have newly engaged.

Kate Lawrence is a construction lawyer and owner of Lawrence Law, LLC. Kate represents clients during contract review and negotiations as well as commercial litigation. This article is presented for informational purposes only. Lawrence Law, LLC makes no warranties or representations as to the accuracy of the information provided.
Architect’s Corner

Rx.change

: the model
: the experience
: the lifestyle

Healthcare Reform has changed the vocabulary, the value and even the nature of services that contribute directly toward favorable patient outcomes. So, too, has it changed the treatment model. What started out as a relocation to renovated quarters morphed quickly into a transformation of purpose, process and prognosis to change mindsets, not just facilities.

Symptoms: Aching, undersized square feet. Towson University’s Health and Counseling Centers were located in separate, less than ideal settings. While the student population had more than doubled in size, the facilities had not.

Specialists: The architect’s core design team included experts in medical facilities design and LEAN workflow strategies who could speak the same language as Towson University’s staff of doctors, dieticians, health educators, nurses, psychiatrists and holistic medicine educators.

Together the team synchronized workflows, resolved ways to share common resources, and articulated a rational approach to creating opportunities for interdisciplinary program development. Staging a wellness forum would result in a win/win solution for students, both medical groups and the campus.

Treatment Plan: Relocate, co-locate, expand, and modernize clinical health and counseling services to operate efficiently and affordably in a high profile, LEED Gold (pending) university setting.

Transplant: By reviving two mid-century former dormitory buildings the university could cure functional obsolescence within budget and give new life to the buildings.

Prognosis: Wellness by choice. By transforming the experience of seeking treatment among a community of academic peers, a lifelong “habit” could form. A successful outcome would depend upon being able to learn about wellness in a setting that ensures privacy, but within which one never feels alone - and once there - to discover that wellness is a decision and a journey, not an appointment and not a pill.

Beyond treatment for common illnesses, sports related injuries and crisis intervention, treatment programs include holistic wellness, acupuncture, meditation, yoga, sleep analysis, and classes addressing sexual and reproductive health, stress management, nutrition, smoking cessation and disease prevention. Spaces for informal group sessions and conference rooms for workshops and presentations are woven into the spatial layout.

Marshall Craft Associates (MCA) is a top ranking, award-winning Architecture / Planning / Interior Design firm with offices in Maryland and Pennsylvania. While we maintain a national and international practice, having completed projects in Africa and the Middle East, the majority of our services are provided in the mid-Atlantic region for high profile academic, healthcare, government and corporate clients.

www.marshallcraft.com
A Solution for Government Contractors Required To Pay "Prevailing Union Wages": Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan

The Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan has been causing a buzz lately, as companies look for ways to decrease their tax liability. This plan is valuable to Government Contractors who are required to pay workers at the "prevailing union wage."

History of the Davis-Bacon Act

The Davis-Bacon Act dates back to 1931 when it was passed by Congress requiring all contractors or subcontractors who performed work on Federal Government projects over $2,000 to be paid the "prevailing wage" which corresponds directly to the local union wage. This Congressional Act was passed with the specific intent of keeping non-unionized and unskilled laborers from competing with skilled and unionized works during the Depression when jobs were scarce.

Prevailing Wage

The Prevailing Wage can be broken down into two parts - the prevailing hourly wage and the prevailing hourly fringe benefit amount. The Prevailing Wage is established by the Department of Labor and must be paid to employees working on Federal / State projects. The Prevailing Fringe Benefit Amount (life / health insurance, pension, vacation, holidays, sick leave, etc.) can be paid as cash or this amount can be put into a Davis-Bacon Pension Plan.

What is a Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan?

An IRS Approved Retirement Program designed to allow an Employer to pay the fringe benefit portion of the Prevailing Wage as a contribution into the Plan instead of outright to the employees. Contributions must be made at least quarterly and provide for immediate eligibility and full and immediate vesting. The Plan can be designed to allow loans and hardship withdrawals.

Benefits / Drawbacks of a Davis Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan

The benefit of making contributions to a Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan, which is a qualified retirement plan, as opposed to paying the Fringe Benefit in the form of wages, is a significant tax savings. The Fringe Benefit paid into a Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan is NOT subject to FICA taxes, workers compensation premiums and liability insurance.

Possible drawbacks lie in the ability to attract workers who want to receive the Fringe Benefit in the form of a paycheck. Another drawback may lie in the work and time required to institute, maintain, test and document. The Prosperity Consulting Group, LLC, can help further explain the benefits, requirements and intricacies of the Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Retirement Plan. We have helped employers save an immense amount in taxes every year through their contributions to the plan. These same employers have also given a wonderful asset to their employees, the prospect of a brighter retirement.

By: Lauren M. Rebbe, CFP® and Donald N. Hoffman, MS, CPA. Donald N. Hoffman, MS is a partner at Hertzbach & Company, P.A. Hertzbach is a certified public accounting and consulting firm with offices located in the Baltimore, Greater Washington D.C. and Northern Virginia areas. Mr. Hoffman can be reached at (410) 363-3200 or by emailing dhoffman@hertzbach.com.
Checking Up On Your Construction Company’s Estimates

How do construction businesses lose money? One typical and often-overlooked way is a drastically faulty or even slightly inaccurate estimate. Although estimating is no doubt one of your “bread and butter” skills, accuracy can slip over time if you don’t occasionally check up on this mission-critical process.

**Methodical review**

The first thing to review when looking at your estimates is how they’re being generated. Estimating methods tend to fall into two categories: fixed price and approximate.

Because they incorporate detailed information, fixed-price estimates are typically the most reliable method. Of course, as you well know, the contractor bears a bigger portion of the risk than the owner does because the job is set at a fixed price — even if costs rise higher than expected.

Many construction companies prepare fixed-price estimates on a lump-sum basis. That is, estimators compile a job’s price after closely analyzing drawings, specifications and other bidding documents. They then calculate the costs of material, labor, equipment, subcontractors, overhead and other job-related expenses before applying a markup to the total cost to obtain a lump-sum estimate.

You may also produce fixed-price estimates on a unit-price basis. Here, you submit the bid based on the individual line items. As with a lump-sum estimate, the result determines the total project cost. Your estimator, however, segregates expenses according to each line item’s unit price.

The second method — an approximate estimate — is a shortcut that gives you only a rough idea of a project’s cost. Estimators primarily look at expenses derived from previous jobs, refining their figures as they learn more project specifics.

**Beneficial software**

Estimates are math — and the more complex the calculation, the more likely it will account for the many variables involved. Failing to apply an evolving profit margin calculation algorithm can reduce the value of jobs over time.

For example, if you estimate profitability on a flat, 10% sales price across most projects, you could lose money as changes and delays occur. Breaking down costs more specifically can prevent such losses. And there’s no better way to do so than with today’s estimating software.

Construction-specific estimating applications reduce errors and create a historical database to help you refine procedures and generate more accurate data for future projects. They can also relieve much of the drudgery associated with routine, repetitive and time-consuming calculations. So make sure your software is up to date.

**The people factor**

Your first and last line of defense in generating accurate estimates is the people doing the job. When reviewing estimators’ performance or when hiring new ones, make sure you’re employing professionals who can visualize project phases in great detail. They should also have:

- Good organizational and communication skills,
- A thorough knowledge of construction materials, processes and software, and
- The ability to understand today’s more detailed drawings and specification documents.

Continued On Page 24
Contact us today to see how we can work together to help your business gain the advantages necessary to prosper and grow in this competitive industry.

We can help your company reach its maximum profit potential by providing the expert guidance, support and resources many contractors lack within their own organizations. Services we provide to construction industry firms include: Accounting and Auditing, Tax Planning and Preparation, Business Advisory Services, Surety and Bonding Assistance and Cost Segregation Services.

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Owner’s Rep Repertoire

For many owners contemplating commercial construction, the design/construction process can be daunting. For owners who are not familiar with the process or who simply do not have the time to devote to it, hiring an owner’s representative is often the best solution.

The three goals of every owner about to embark on the design/construction roller coaster should be to 1) meet or better the budget, 2) finish on time and 3) obtain quality that meets his expectations. Sound management of the design/construction process is the key to realizing these goals. To determine whether an owner needs help managing the process, he needs to thoroughly understand it before embarking on a project.

Three early, critical decisions will heavily influence the success of the project. Number one is the selection of the architect. The owner must gather names of architects particularly well suited to her type of project, draft a detailed Request for Proposal and conduct interviews. How does one determine the pool of candidates? What are the criteria for the competition? What part, if any, should the architect’s fee play in the selection? These are only a few of the many important questions to pose and answer during the architect selection process.

The second and third critical decisions are related. What delivery method for construction should an owner choose, and how does he go about selecting the right contractor for his project using the delivery method he selected. There are three basic delivery methods. The stipulated or lump sum approach involves competitive bidding by general contractors on drawings and specifications completed by the architect. Typically the owner accepts the low price, and the project lurches forward. This is known as design-bid-build.

Construction management at risk is a delivery method where selection of the construction manager (“CM”) is not based solely on price, but includes a number of factors. Here, the CM is selected early in the design process to work closely with the owner and the design team providing current market pricing and other services. The relationship between the owner and CM is based on a certain level of trust which unfortunately can be somewhat uncomfortable in the construction world.

Not all contractors are comfortable with this approach.

The third delivery method is design-build which is where the owner contracts directly with a design-builder for both design and construction services. Each of these three delivery methods has its strengths and weaknesses, and an owner must understand them in order to match his project with the best delivery method.

Once a delivery method is selected, contractor selection is the next critical decision. A poor choice here can be expensive. Careful research is imperative before identifying contractors for the competition. Are estimating skills important? Is price the sole criteria for selection or are schedule and quality also important? Is the lowest price the best price? What is the background of the superintendent being proposed? What is the experience of each contractor with the delivery method that has been chosen?

With this very brief overview of the early stages of the process, an inexperienced owner must decide if he is comfortable making all of the important decisions without assistance or should he hire an owner’s representative to assist. Not only will an experienced owner’s representative provide guidance in the selection of the design team, delivery method and contractor, but he will assist with the everyday, tough, nitty gritty issues that invariably arise on construction projects.

Without question, there is a cost associated with an owner’s rep; however, the cost is more than recovered if the project runs smoothly. Doing it right the first time always costs less. Making the wrong choice of architect, contractor or delivery method can result in cost overruns, delays and poor quality.

The risks associated with the design/construction process are substantial for an owner who is not experienced in this field. Before assuming the responsibility for self-managing the design/construction, the inexperienced owner should carefully consider the benefits of an experienced owner’s representative.

Bob Prout
Prout Consulting, LLC
443-844-1277
Meet & Greet

A Full Service Site Development Contractor

The Bowen & Kron story begins twenty years ago; then and now we are a family of qualified experts. Founded in 1993 by Eric Bowen and Eric Kron, the company began as an excavating contractor and has grown to provide a wide range of site development services; specializing in structural demolition, clearing, earthwork, soil modification, and utilities. We service the Baltimore-Washington Metro area from our Baltimore headquarters.

Demolition - Bowen & Kron provides total structure demolition services; completing the demolition of single story and multi-story structure as well as general site demolition. In addition, we provide the necessary services for our clients to reach their desired level of LEED certification. Specializing in asphalt and concrete crushing and recycling, Bowen & Kron has the processes in place to help our clients and customers maximize the amount of material that can be recycled and reused both onsite and offsite.

Soil Modification - As a leader in the utilization of chemicals to modify and stabilize problem soils, Bowen & Kron can help to minimize the costly effects of removing and replacing poor soils on a project. Schedule impacts can be effectively managed and/or eliminated through the use of soil modification or stabilization. The incorporation of lime, Portland cement, calciment, or other chemicals into existing soils allows those soils to be used to complete the necessary earthwork. Bowen & Kron works with our clients, and their soil engineers, to create the best strategy available to achieve desired product results.

Earthwork - Bowen & Kron provides the expertise, equipment, and manpower to complete project excavation, grading, and storm water management services. Your site will be properly prepared for commercial, industrial, or residential building.

Combining our experience, and the latest GPS & Modeling Technology, Bowen & Kron will work with you and your design engineer to create a successful earthwork strategy. A plan will be developed which will allow you to effectively manage your project while minimizing risks associated with the project’s earthwork scope of work.

Clearing - Bowen & Kron self performs all of its land clearing operations. Having completed thousands of acres of land clearing throughout the Baltimore-Washington area; we have the equipment and experience required to successfully complete any project.

GPS & Modeling - To insure the utmost accuracy, Bowen & Kron uses a 3-D Modeling & GPS Process which ultimately saves our clients time and money. Our project team utilizes real-time topographic data and 3-D Modeling to help eliminate potentially costly earthwork miscalculations. From pre-construction through project completion; Bowen & Kron will provide a total turn-key site work solution. Allow our team to show you the benefits of using state-of-the art technology to help guarantee a successful project.

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Commercial Construction Is Increasing; Are Banks Keeping Up?

Construction starts are steadily making their way back to pre-recession levels, and pipelines are filling up with projects. However, some clients and contractors are reporting continuing hesitancy on the part of banks to provide financing. Why is this, and how can you find a bank that will work with you, your customer and your sub-contractors?

According to the American Institute of Architects (AIA), overall commercial and industrial facilities construction will increase by 10 percent during 2014 and will see even higher growth in 2015.

Yet some banks are still wary of the cyclical nature of major construction financing, and many contractors report that this is especially true of large banks. Stung by recession-fueled losses and underwriting errors, larger banks are looking for less volatile industries in which to invest.

Not all banks are this standoffish however. Clients are increasingly working with mid-level regional banks, some of whom take a more personal approach to commercial construction customers than large banks are willing to, yet are capitalized sufficiently to meet the increasing demand—often more so than smaller community banks.

What should you look for while seeking a banking partner to finance your growth? How can you avoid dead ends in your capitalization search?

First, look for flexibility. Does your prospective lender take a big-picture view of you, your industry and your customer? You will want a bank that will work with you over the long term and through the expected—and unexpected—ebb and flow of your business in your market. The “cookie-cutter” approach to commercial construction financing evident in large banks is unlikely to meet the needs of a large number of projects.

Secondly, how experienced is your lender with commercial construction financing? Some banks, especially those whose strengths lie elsewhere, generalize construction financing as a higher risk challenge, and shy away because of a lack of personalized long-term experience. Conversely, banks with more construction financing experience are likely to understand your proposals and your company more clearly and could therefore be more ready to get your project off the ground.

The third aspect you should look for is capitalization. While small banks may feel more flexible, restrictions in capital may be a roadblock when it comes to your project, or indeed forming a long-term lending relationship as your business grows.

A well-capitalized, mid-size bank with extensive construction lending experience is the go-to source in 2014 and beyond: more flexible than large banks, yet better capitalized than smaller banks. Add considerable understanding of construction financing and you can be sure you are well on your way to finding a reliable long-term lender ready and willing to grow with you as your portfolio of projects is finally filling back up.

About the authors: John Byrne and Roger Lee are commercial and industrial lenders with Essex Bank, a growing regional bank with 23 locations across Maryland and Virginia and over $1 billion in assets. They can be reached at (410) 573-3304.
Why You Need a FOMO on LinkedIn Mindset

FOMO?

Yes, fear of missing out. You need a fear of missing out on LinkedIn mindset. Why?

There are currently 2+ people joining LinkedIn per second. Everyday the network becomes more valuable. LinkedIn is a key to your business success short and long term and drives more traffic and lead generation than other platforms. It’s time to get serious about it and it doesn’t matter that you don’t like it (sorry). It’s business and you need to be open-minded.

The other day during a LinkedIn workshop someone asked if CEOs and business owners were using LinkedIn. He mentioned that he thought a lot of CEOs had incomplete and less than stellar profiles. He made a great point, one I completely agree. There are a lot of poor profiles on LinkedIn and many of them are owners, CEOs, CFO, presidents. Why? Perhaps one or more of the following come into play.

- They signed up a while back and then forgot about it.
- They don’t understand social media.
- They are interested in understanding social media.
- They are busy.
- They have more important things to worry about.
- They don’t have time.

These are all legitimate reasons, no doubt. They all make sense and are all understandable. Now, let’s think about why, even though they are all real reasons, they are not reason enough to not engage in LinkedIn.

You are the face of the organization. As leaders, chief cheerleaders, eminent business developer and forward-thinking evangelists you need to present yourself to the business world, well.

LinkedIn is a great leveler. By the way, we don’t consider LinkedIn social media. It’s a business tool. Today thought leadership and intellectual capital rule, developed over time by strategic-thinking leaders who understand how to engage their internal and external audiences. Showing your work builds digital influence, expertise and the search engines love it (always helpful).

You propel your brand. Once again, you are the face of your company and are responsible for increasing your reach and online engagement. In the B2B world, LinkedIn is the best place to do that. Whether it’s blogging, a strong profile, tweeting, your messages influence revenue.

You have the potential to influence and create sales opportunities. In today’s economy, that is critical. Everyone, across the organization, needs to be in
business development mode. By virtue of your roles and access, you are able to introduce your salespeople to other key decision makers. LinkedIn provides visibility into these potential relationships. You will see where you can connect-the-dots.

**Business is happening locally, regionally, nationally and internationally** on LinkedIn and you can choose to join in, build-out your profile, create a presence and connect or not. If you don’t, just know, your competitors are.

**Let’s look at five ways, you, as a member of your organization can amp up your presence on LinkedIn:**

1. **Set aside a few hours to finish your profile.**
   - A headline [who you are and what you do]; not your title (think keywords)
   - Your Summary
   - Your specialties
   - Create a succinct and keyword rich narrative for your current and past positions; include all past positions [it helps LinkedIn suggest people you may know]
   - Add your education
   - Upload a current photo
   - Projects (show your work in progress, does it get better than that?)
   - Need more detail, read more

2. **Make sure you map to your LinkedIn Company Page**

3. **Decide who you want in your professional network.**
   - C-Level professionals
   - Your employees? [Perhaps, not]
   - Referral sources
   - Clients

4. **Once you have decided, connect and begin to create a highly engaged network.** The number of connections is less important than the level of activity and engagement within it.

5. **Check LinkedIn three to five times a week; read your activity feed and comment where appropriate.**

   If you have ten+ years of experience set aside five to seven hours; under ten hours of experience set aside three to five.

   Even if you don’t check your page everyday or want to connect, set your settings to say you are not accepting new invitations or inmail, [go to the email section of your settings and select appropriately] that’s ok. At least your profile represents a level of professionalism that matches your position and title.

   At the very least, ask someone in your marketing department to complete it for you...let them interview you first to capture your tone and style. Your LinkedIn profile should also reflect you as a business professional and leader. If you are a great communicator, that should come across. You get the idea.

   Take it seriously because when you do, your marketing and sales teams will as well. Set the tone, lead the activity, watch and engage and measure how well connected your company becomes. Want some success stories, I have lots of them, just ask.

   How are you using LinkedIn today? How could you use LinkedIn? Answer those questions, and fill in the gap, today.

**Colleen McKenna**, Principal of Intero Advisory, helps individuals and companies navigate LinkedIn for business development, recruiting and branding. Over the last 3+ years she and her team have worked with more than 6500 professionals in a wide range of industries. Visit her [LinkedIn profile](#) to learn more about her and Intero Advisory.
Association Partner - AIABaltimore

The American Institute of Architects, Baltimore Chapter

Founded in 1871, AIABaltimore is the third oldest chapter of The American Institute of Architects in the country. AIA serves as the voice of the architecture profession in the Baltimore metropolitan area through advocacy, leadership, knowledge, and community. However, AIABaltimore is not just for architects! Our chapter consists of over 1100 members, who include architects and allied industry representatives united to demonstrate the value of architecture and design to communities across our region. We invite all AEC professionals to become involved in AIABaltimore’s continuing education, networking, and outreach programs.

You may know AIA through the AIA Contract Documents, which indeed set the industry standard. AIA Contract Documents are the most widely used standard form documents in the design and construction industry. AIABaltimore offers sales of AIA Contract Documents through the AIA Bookstore, as well as education and training sessions designed to help you develop your knowledge of AIA contract documents, expand your software skills and keep you current on industry trends.

AIABaltimore has over 300 Allied Professional members. Allied Members are engaged in fields that provide services directly related to making the vision of architects a reality, ranging from engineering and construction to architectural illustration and photography. If you are in any field related to architecture, engineering, and construction, you are invited to become an Allied Professional Member of AIABaltimore. Our Allied Members Committee meets monthly at various architecture firms, and hosts educational, community service, and networking events, including an ongoing series of AIA Firm Happy Hours held at various architecture and allied member firms to bring together the design and construction community for fellowship and networking. These happy hours are free-of-charge, and are a great way to meet our members, hear about current projects, and learn more about the activities of AIA committees.

AIABaltimore hosts numerous project tours throughout the year to highlight the recent work of our architects and allied members. We invite you to join us at a tour and networking event on June 5th at the John & Frances Angelos Law Center, in conjunction with MCN and USGBC Maryland.

A very special event sponsored by the Allied Members Committee this fall will be an exclusive talk by legendary Baltimore movie director, John Waters on November 20th at the newly-restored Senator Theatre. John Waters will spend an evening with AIA regaling us with wry and entertaining stories of his life spent living in, and directing films set in Baltimore. He will talk about how his movie locations, buildings, and backgrounds create a ‘sense of place’ that reflects the unique identity of Baltimore and its residents. Don’t miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet a Baltimore icon!

AIABaltimore offers numerous committees for our members to plan programs and share knowledge on specialized areas of practice. These include: Committee on the Environment, Design Awards Committee, Disaster Assistance Committee, Diversity/Women in Architecture Committee, Healthcare Architecture Committee, Historic Resources Committee, Lecture Series Committee, Technology in Practice Committee, Urban Design Committee. A new Building Enclosure Council has recently formed to bring together building professionals across a wide spectrum of disciplines for sharing ideas and experiences on building science. A new Committee on Architecture for Education is also being created to share knowledge on the design of K-12 and higher education learning environments.

Association Partner - AIABaltimore

AIABALTIMORE

The American Institute of Architects, Baltimore Chapter

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Our Emerging Professionals Committee is a social and professional network of design and building industry professionals. We invite young professionals of all disciplines to join their monthly meetings, project tours, hands-on workshops, mentoring, networking, and community service events.

As the future of our profession is extremely important, our Future Architects Resources (FAR) Committee provides outreach and education on careers in architecture and the construction industry to middle and high school students. We are always seeking volunteers for FAR outreach programs!

For golfers: AIABaltimore and the Baltimore Architecture Foundation (BAF) offer two annual golf outings: the Baltimore Architecture Foundation Golf and Auto Classic is a day of golfing AND a historic car show with cocktails held at the Elkridge Club on June 23rd. The AIABaltimore Annual Golf Outing will be held on August 15th at Rocky Point in Essex.

A highlight of our year is the Annual Design Excellence Awards Celebration. Mark your calendar for this year’s Celebration on October 10th at the new Performing Arts and Humanities Building at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Learn more about AIABaltimore on our website at www.aiabalt.com.

Kathleen L. Lane, Assoc. AIA,
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Executive Director
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Established Incident Reporting Procedures

These are just a few of the steps to establishing an effective Security Plan and minimizing unplanned costs during project development. The key to effective security planning and cost savings is looking at security planning as another line item in the budgeting and proposal process. Approaching it this way gives Contractors a predictable mechanism to utilize during project planning and cost analysis.

Steve Schrimpf is the President of GCS Security Services LLC, an international risk mitigation firm specializing in a wide array of security, consultancy and risk advisory services. Since 1986, Mr. Schrimpf has highly specialized training and experience in physical security and counter-terrorism operations. He has experience conducting large scale investigations and security vulnerability, criticality and threat assessments for some of our nation’s most critical assets and facilities.

He is currently a Vice Chairman for the American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS) International and a certified Terrorism Liaison Officer working within the national fusion center framework. He is also an active member of Infragard, an FBI led coalition of public and private security professionals dedicated to the protection of critical infrastructure components. He is a graduate of Security Engineering and Design Course (USACE) and holds a B.S. degree in Organizational Management and a Master’s degree in Human Resource Management.

Continued From Page 1

• Conduct pre-construction assessments.
  • Criticality Assessment (CA). The CA prioritizes your most critical assets at the site and identifies the qualitative and quantitative impact of those assets being lost or compromised.
  • Threat Assessment (TA). The TA involves in-depth analysis to determine the specific threats to your assets based on crime trends, historical data, and predictive intelligence.
  • Physical Security Vulnerability Assessment. Based on the threats, the priority of your assets, and the location and layout of the site, determine what physical security vulnerabilities exist and develop a comprehensive mitigation plan.

• Establish a Site Security Plan. The plan should be based on the identified threats and vulnerabilities to your assets. The plan should also address how to deter internal and external threats. As a minimum consider the following.
  • Adequate Lighting
  • Perimeter Fencing/Barriers
  • Entry/Access Control Procedures (Limited Entries/Exits, Vehicle & Personnel Screening)
  • Secure Storage Areas
  • Inventory and Equipment Control Procedures
  • Physical Security Enhancements – Guards, Cameras, Alarms
  • Suspicious Activity Awareness & Crime Prevention Training for On-Site Employees

Continued From Page 14

No matter how skilled your estimators or what methods they use to prepare bids, it doesn’t hurt to have another party occasionally check their work for accuracy. This person could be you, a project manager or even an outside consultant. When reviewing estimates, verify that the projected gross profit of each job is in line with your profitability objectives and the current bid market. To help ensure accurate reviews of estimates, encourage estimators to work transparently. No matter how experienced the estimator or accurate the estimate, you must know how he or she arrived at the quoted job price.

Balancing act

Construction estimates are a tricky balancing act. Your estimators need to account for the company’s need to generate profits while respecting each customer’s desire to pay a reasonable price. Regularly reviewing and, if necessary, adjusting your estimating process is an important risk management task.

Rivka Bier, CPA, MST is a manager at Hertzbach & Company, P.A. in Owings Mills, Maryland, Rockville, Maryland and Arlington, Virginia. She can be reached at (410) 363-3200 or by emailing rbier@hertzbach.com.
Gilbane Building Company, a privately-held, family-owned firm, provides full construction management consulting and facilities-related services.
Where’s The Work?

It’s a question all of us ask on a continual basis. MCN is very pleased to announce Howard County Executive Ken Ulman will be on hand Tuesday, July 29th to provide insight for upcoming public work in Howard County and all over the State of Maryland. Don’t miss this opportunity to obtain first-hand information on upcoming projects that may be of interest to your company.

However, this “Learn To Know - Learn To Grow” seminar does not end with a simple identification of upcoming projects. Following Executive Ulman’s presentation, Charles Yumkas, Esq. will take the stage to identify the “Strategic Clauses In Construction Contracts” every contractor needs to consider, understand, and examine before you sign on the dotted line.

The program is being held at the Maple Lawn offices of our event sponsor, Offit|Kurman Attorneys At Law - 8171 Maple Lawn Blvd., Suite 100, Fulton, MD 20759.

Check-in and breakfast begins at 7:00 a.m. with the presentations commencing at 7:45 a.m. Our “Learn To Know - Learn To Grow” program should conclude at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Get a headstart on your competition by attending this great presentation. There is ample free parking available for all attendees. Please make your registration early as space is limited!

The registration flyer and link to our registration page is available by following this link.

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¹ The Corporate Membership Rewards program is for eligible Commercial Card Clients. Terms, conditions and restrictions apply; for a copy or for more details, call 1-888-900-4554.

² Actual float time will vary based on the date of the charge, the billing cycle cutoff date and the payment date.

³ The number of checks cut will be based on converting suppliers to card payments.

For more information on this effective and efficient member benefit, contact MCN’s Verna Regler at 443-982-7329 or at verna@mdconstructionnet.net.
Why MCN?

One of the most frequently asked questions Verna and I receive as we continue our work to expand the reach of Maryland Construction Network is, “Why another association?” Almost all construction associations have a very specific reason for their existence. Government advocacy, apprenticeship training, and continuing education are among a few examples of note. All of these are good, valid reasons for people to be involved.

However, if a group is organized to provide education, then that is what it should do. If it exists to train a workforce, that should be what is accomplished. If an association fights for government advocacy to benefit its particular point-of-view, then the work should be geared to that end. As such, the dues and fees charged for those services should be all that is needed for the association to continue and flourish.

But along the way, associations become machines and their noble virtues are muddled. The machine becomes a living, breathing beast. For most associations, the tail now wags the dog and the success of the association trumps the success of its members.

Endless fundraisers and meetings that barely cover expenses but take up the valuable time of its members, excess employees to manage the litany of programs, and expensive offices that few people except board and committee members ever visit have become the norm. Most associations cost too much but they cannot change because of the bureaucracy and mind-set that was built along the way.

I came to this realization about ten years ago. I only wish I had read the following quote earlier. The quote is one Verna found and she is currently using in her e-mail signature. It would have saved me many years of postponing the inevitable - the creation of Maryland Construction Network.

“*You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”*  
~ Richard Buckminster Fuller

MCN is the new model for construction associations. There is a singular purpose in our work - to help every member of the construction industry we connect with enhance their opportunity for success. Everything we do is designed to achieve that goal.

MCN networking events are designed so you meet new people in the industry to generate new opportunities and sources of business. Our seminars, podcasts, and even this newsletter are designed to provide information to help you navigate the business side of construction. Advertising opportunities within MCN give your company real exposure to people from all reaches of Maryland’s construction industry, and beyond.

Most importantly, Maryland Construction Network is affordable for any company and every company is treated the same. No one gets special treatment because they pay more in dues, contribute more to fundraisers, or spend time volunteering on committees. Unlike other groups, every penny you spend with MCN is done so in the promotion of your company’s goods and services.

MCN events are priced to cover the cost of attendance. Room rental, catering fees, processing fees. That’s it! You pay for what you get.

I am pleased to report the new association model MCN has pioneered is working - thanks to you. MCN’s membership grew to 200 member companies in 13 months. Already, MCN is one of the largest company based construction associations in the state. However, I believe MCN is simply in its infancy. I firmly believe MCN is destined to count its members by the thousands instead of the hundreds.

With that, I hope you have a little better understanding of “Why MCN?” Perhaps you will help by spreading a good word about your experience with MCN? After all, as MCN grows, so does your network!

Rob Bertazon  
Founder  
Maryland Construction Network
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*Offer good for qualifying customers from March 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014 on select new models at participating Cat Dealers. Flexible payment terms available. Offer excludes Caterpillar Telehandlers. Offer is available to customers in the USA and Canada only and cannot be combined with any other offers. Financing and published rate are subject to credit approval through Cat Financial. Offer subject to machine availability. Offer may change without prior notice and additional terms and conditions may apply.

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Saving Money With Workers Compensation Nurse Case Management

A n employee gets injured for the first time. The injured employee (IE) fills out an incident report documenting what happened and what body part was injured. The co-worker’s account of the injury was the same or not exactly the same. The IE goes for treatment and is not severely injured. He goes back to work but the next day, he is now complaining of more pain and other injuries and can no longer function as his current job requires. You need a nurse case manager.

An employee gets seriously injured and is now at Shock Trauma. The injury and outcome is unknown. You need a nurse case manager.

A newly hired employee gets injured. It is unwitnessed. The mechanism of injury does not substantiate the complaints. You need a nurse case manager.

These are just a few of the hundreds of different scenarios that can occur when an employee gets injured on the job. Regardless of the cause and nature of the injury, workers compensation claims cost companies millions of dollars every year. By placing a case manager on the case, employers can save on lost work time, liability and overall cost of the claim.

“In December 2012, American Airlines performed a pilot study which proved that automatically assigning workers compensation nurse case managers to all lost-time claims significantly reduced injured workers’ time away from the job. Previously, case managers were assigned only when it was judged that doing so would help a workers medical condition improve or when client directives instructed them to, such as when workers needed surgery, suffered multiple injuries to the same body part, or suffered from a co-morbid condition affecting their work-injury recovery. Now, case managers are placed immediately on any injury resulting in lost work time.

By doing this, they have proven:
• A reduction of 34% in off-work days
• A reduction in medical and litigation spending

American Airlines now places a nurse case manager on every lost work time workers compensation injury case.” *

Workers Compensation Case Managers perform the following services:
• Assist employers in cost-containment by decreasing workers compensation and health care costs
• Reduce out of work claims
• Ensuring quality care is being delivered
• Monitoring overall medical care and injury related treatment
• Coordinate injured workers return back to work by acting as a liaison between the injured worker, physician, employer and insured
• Identifying rehabilitation or work hardening/work conditioning needs
• Monitoring status and progress
• Ensuring compliance
• Serve as a resource of information for the injured worker and employer
• Establish continuity and best practices are being maintained by all entities
• Ongoing communication is vital to successful case management
• Provide ongoing updates and detailed reports to the employer and insured

Nurse case managers are advocates of the injured worker and are instrumental in ensuring quality care, coordinating the activities of medical professionals, community resources, funding sources, client and family for the ultimate goal of achieving maximum functional outcomes and optimal return to work capabilities.

Comprehensive workers compensation case management focuses on all levels of prevention. The goals for prevention are decreasing the risk of job injury, preparing for early intervention in injury events and to assist injured employees regain maximum health. Effective case management evaluates customer satisfaction, process, outcome and cost effectiveness. Statistically, delays in referring injured workers immediately to case management have been found to increase medical costs by up to 60%.
“A pilot study was performed by the federal government that demonstrated contract nurse case managers proved effective in federal workers compensation programs. The pilot study examined whether contract case managers are cost-effective in reducing workers’ compensation costs and preventing injuries. The results were case managers cost $1.25 million and they generated $4.4 million in savings for a 3.52 return on investment. The conclusion of the study of medical case managers demonstrates they reduce workers compensation costs.”

References:
*Ceniceros, Roberto; American Airlines Expands Workers Comp Nurse Case Manager Use; Dec 23, 2012; www.businessinsurance.com/article/2021223

Jen Nussbaum is the President/CEO of ProActive Medical Consultants, LLC. She has over 15 years experience in the workers compensation industry. ProActive Medical Consultants, LLC is a workers compensation case management company based in Maryland. Established in 2010, they provide experienced and credentialed workers compensation case managers all across the United States specializing in workers compensation catastrophic, multi-injury and long-term cases. Put Your Best Case Forward is our motto and our goal. She can be reached at 410-465-7548 or 866-603-5911 or email at jennussbaum@proactivemedicalconsultants.com

Random Thoughts

“Be genuinely interested in everyone you meet and everyone you meet will be genuinely interested in you.”

~ Rasheed Ogunlaru

“Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.”

~ Albert Einstein
principals for the first time, at least early in the cycle. We will continue to be very aggressive and bullish now, again early in the cycle; He sees the next downturn coming in 2019 or 2020. Rates are also still historically low, so borrowing long-term now is a good plan. We are also bullish on spec development in the industrial sector and are working with some clients to make sure they are on the early part of that wave, which has only really just begun again.”

“This business has always been about working smart,” says Whitney. “We really scrutinize our potential listings and buyers and tenants.” In fact, he adds, his firm uses a “numeral” acronym: needs, urgency, motivation, expectations, ability to make a decision, and the loyalty they have to you. “Is this someone who really needs to do a deal, or are they just shopping around? Does it matter if they do it this year or in three years?” he poses. “Sometimes, even if their needs are urgent they may not have the motivation to price it right.” If any one of these variables is skewed, he says, “I look real hard at if I want to take the deal. Then I combine it with the math – will you go to work all week for $500 vs. $50,000? You only have so much time to give.” By working smart, he adds, “I have people in this company who make more money in bad times than in good times.”

“Our market was one of the first out of the gate with speculative product in 2010,” says Jeppesen. “Looking at past cycles it may be reasonable to believe we are half way in to a historic growth cycle. Therefore land sale activity and new construction will continue for a time, and leasing activity will follow, but begin to taper off in the next 24 –36 months. At our firm, we are focused on all aspects of the activity curve – from helping developers acquire attractive land opportunities for new projects, to assisting operating companies in reducing occupancy costs and formulating long-term leasing or acquisition strategy. We also focus on investment sales. A stabilized and well-positioned product will continue to trade to investors at historic high levels. Investors, whether individual or institutional, have been the most stable influence in our market through the good times and the bad. Since it takes longer for deals to get done and with the amount of competition for deals, we are throwing more and more on the wall to see what sticks.”

“This is kind of the new reality some people talk about,” Whitney adds. “We’ll be lucky this year if we do 50 percent of what we did in the peaks. Going forward, we will not necessarily stay at this level. I do think it will take a long time for prices to get back to where they were. Companies are very motivated to use less real estate; more employees are in work stations or working from home, so you have smaller showrooms, and just-in-time approaches in cheaper warehouses. These are challenging factors – you have to do more deals to make the same amount of money – but as far as coming out of this, my feeling is we will.”

In conclusion, Silverstein says things will change for the better in 2014, but not by as much as previously projected. Recovery in real estate has also been slower to move to tertiary markets, or in office, even to secondary markets. Transportation and distribution markets for industrial space are active - and have been increasingly so for two years. Good retail markets are booming, but without a housing market expansion, they aren't just chasing rooftops another exit at a time anymore; it's very focused on larger markets and infill locations.”

The article above was submitted by Allan Riorda of Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estate Services. Allan thought it would be of interest to MCN members and subscribers. The article, written by Steve Lewis, appeared in the most recent Society of Industrial and Office Realtor’s quarterly periodical Professional Report and has been reprinted with permission of the author.

Every edition of “Networked & Connected” is delivered via e-mail to 3,900+ construction industry professionals and archived on MCN’s website for access to visitors from all reaches of the world-wide-web. It’s Time For Your Company To Get Noticed! Learn more about all the affordable and effective MCN advertising programs by contacting Verna at 443.982.7329.
J. Vinton Schafer Leadership Transition

Long-term Succession Plan Empowers J. Vinton Schafer & Sons to Execute Seamless Transition

Vinton Schafer & Sons, Inc., a Quandel Enterprises Company, has announced that Ronald E. Knowles, P.E., who has served as president of the firm for 20 years, has transitioned to chairman and CEO, and the company has appointed Warren L. Hamilton as its new president.

Knowles will serve as chairman and CEO until September 2015. He will retire from the firm at that time.

“For our customers, these changes will be seamless. Great work and great service have defined our organization, and that will continue under Warren’s leadership,” Knowles said. “Today’s announcement is the culmination of years of planning and preparation. It’s just another step in the process of aligning Schafer for future success.”

Hamilton’s passion for the business and his diverse experience made him the obvious choice to become Schafer’s next president, according to Knowles.

“Warren has worked in more roles within our company than anyone else,” Knowles said. “He came into Schafer on the operations side and has had hands-on experience across the entire breadth of our organization. He is uniquely qualified to lead Schafer and grow it for future success.”

Hamilton joined Schafer in 1980. Over the course of his 34 years with the company, he worked as a project manager and then organized the firm’s business development efforts. Most recently, he was a senior vice president and business development manager.

“When someone asks me, ‘what are you going to do as the new president of Schafer,’ I reply ‘more of the same,’” Hamilton said. “We’re going to stay true to the same guiding principles that have made Schafer a successful company. Integrity, reliability, quality and customer focus will continue to define how we go about our business.”

“Our customers can rest assured Schafer will remain entrepreneurial and continue to evolve as an industry leader, just as we always have,” Hamilton emphasized. “We’ll continue to leverage new technologies. We’ll innovate to ensure excellence in our work and in the way we service our customers, and we’ll invest in continuing education so our employees bring the latest expertise in construction trends and regulatory compliance to every one of our projects.”

Knowles began gradually transitioning leadership responsibilities to Hamilton and other Schafer executives as part of a carefully orchestrated succession plan that the company’s leadership team began developing eight years ago.

“When I became a sole proprietor of Schafer 10 years ago, I started thinking about my future and my eventual retirement. I wanted to create a smooth transition. We have a strong core group of people here, and I wanted to make them part of planning this transition,” Knowles said. “We invested a great deal of time in succession planning and executing that plan. It has paid off with a seamless transition for our employees and our customers.”

The success of Schafer’s leadership transition puts the finishing touches on Knowles’ highly successful career with the company.


Over the past 37 years with Schafer, Ron Knowles advanced from assistant operations manager to operations manager. He became president of Schafer in 1994.

Among his achievements as president, Knowles transformed Schafer from a general contracting company to one of the largest construction management
firms in Maryland. He focused Schafer on quality work and an ability to execute complex projects.

Under Knowles’ leadership the company completed many high-profile projects throughout the region, including the American Visionary Art Museum, University of Maryland’s School of Journalism and Anne Arundel Medical Center’s Acute Care Center Hospital Pavilion North.

“Today, we’re working with sophisticated construction clients with complex needs. Universities, hospitals, school systems; clients that rely on us to help guide their capital improvement programs,” Hamilton said. “It is an exciting time in our organization. Ron has put us in a strong position to move forward.”

J. Vinton Schafer & Sons of Abingdon, MD, is a full-service construction management firm. Founded 95 years ago, Schafer provides predesign, design, pre-construction and post-construction services on comprehensive projects throughout Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia and Pennsylvania. The company has completed a diverse range of private- and public-sector projects and has specialized expertise in education and healthcare. Schafer is owned by Quandel Enterprises headquartered in Harrisburg, PA. Quandel was established in 1882 and today is one of the largest construction and construction management companies in the US.

A Member Said It

Nothing makes the long hours of work more rewarding than a compliment or testimonial from someone who benefits from your efforts. The following e-mail put a big smile on our face. The only alteration to the e-mail was to remove any personally identifying information.

Verna / Rob,

Just wanted to say thanks for all the work you guys do. I went to the Learn to Know, Learn to Grow, “How to Run a Profitable Business” Seminar last month. I really went to the seminar to learn something, not to network. Just by chance, I sat next to two members from one of MCN’s general contractor firms. At the end of the seminar I talked with them a few minutes and gave them a business card. To make a long story short, I just received a $25,000 contract with them for a project in Baltimore. By the way, I did learn a few things.

Prior to that, I was in negotiations with a different general contractor member for another project. Verna introduced me to their senior estimator at a network event. Three weeks later I signed an $84,000 contract with them. I may have been awarded the contract anyway, but Verna’s introduction definitely helped seal the deal.

Not a bad return on my $150.00 annual membership.

Again, I can’t thank you guys enough for the awesome events you host.

That’s the kind of success story we like to hear at MCN. The example illustrates the power of creating and enhancing relationships and quality opportunities arising from face-to-face networking. It is also why Maryland Construction Network makes the effort to offer a wide variety of programs across an ever expanding geographical area so our members have the opportunity to meet new people and make new connections in Maryland’s construction industry.

If you have a similar story to share, please send it to us. We would love to hear from you.
Classifieds

Carpenter - Summit Contracting
Commercial Door and Hardware installer to work in the Maryland and DC area. Experience a plus but will train right applicant. Valid drivers license and own transportation a must.
Pay Rate/Range - To be determined.
Contact Person and Information - Tony Cullum @ tcullum@summitcontracting.biz.

Project Manager - Premier Concrete
Work closely with estimators, field superintendent, project coordinator:
Organize and manage projects
• Initiate and monitor schedules
• Provide weekly job reports
• Process change orders
• Initiate RFIs and RFPs
• Manage project correspondence
Qualifications/Certifications Needed for this Position:
5 yrs experience, strong concrete background, excellent communication abilities, proficient with MS Word & Excel, organized, creative, independent, flexible.
Pay Rate/Range
We offer competitive salary, good benefits and an excellent work environment.
Contact Person and Information - Steve Workmeister Vice President @ (410) 344-1604 Ext. 26.

Communications Coordinator - Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation, Inc. (MCCEI)
MCCEI is looking for an entry level candidate to provide key support in marketing and communications efforts. Development, design and creation of collateral, materials, publications and technical writing. Coordination of MCCEI Website, Databases and Social Media Presence. Plan, coordinate and manage all MCCEI events, logistics and meetings. Coordinate MCCEI press coverage, media relations, and advertising.
Qualifications/Certifications Needed for this Position:
Bachelor's degree in marketing or communications. .5 to 2 years of professional experience. Proficiency in using Microsoft Office Suite. Working knowledge of Photoshop.
Pay Rate/Range - To be determined.
Contact Person and Information - Robert Aydukovic @ baydukovic@mccei.org.

Coming Soon

Wednesday, July 23rd – Direct Connect
Rolling Road Country Club
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Sponsors: Allstate Leasing
ARC Construction Services
Hertzbach & Company, P.A.

Tuesday, July 29th – Educational Seminar
“Where’s The Work & Strategic Clauses In Construction Contracts”
Offit | Kurman’s Maple Lawn Office
7:00 – 9:00 a.m.
Sponsor: Offit | Kurman, Attorneys At Law

Tuesday, August 26th – Educational Seminar
Pessin Katz’s Towson Office
7:00 – 9:00 a.m.
Details To Follow
Sponsor: Pessin Katz Law, P.A.

Thursday, September 11th – Direct Connect
Educational Seminar & Direct Connect
Rommel Cranston Construction Office
Seminar – 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
“LinkedIn As A Business Tool”
Direct Connect Networking 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Sponsors: Allstate Leasing
EBL Engineers
Rommel Cranston Construction
Safway Scaffold

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