

Relationships – A Staple for Effective Business Development Results

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How many times have you heard, "...people do business with people they know?" This is so true!

So, what will you do to convert those business cards you will drop into your suit pocket during the ACEC Indiana Diversity Networking Fair and other events into relationships that will ultimately yield business opportunity. I'm glad you asked. Let's start with a purpose:

Have a Plan – You cannot effectively cultivate relationships without having focus and direction. Your plan should be based on the markets identified in your business plan to laser in on the space you play well in, and the people you need to know in that space. If it is a list of five ACEC members, establish and implement tactics to get to know those firms better and ultimately build a sustainable relationship with them.

Build relationships before you need them – It is a lot easier to obtain intel about future business

opportunities from someone who already knows you and the work your firm can do than making a cold call. In fact, that relationship might result in the client calling you to negotiate work vs. your having to chase the work. And, it never hurts to have someone on the inside, an influencer, a decision-maker who can personally vouch for your credibility.

Make random "hello" calls – Flip through your business card collection periodically. Each time I do this I am reminded of something about the person I met, and I usually reach out to them. These are agenda-less calls – nothing premeditated. Invite them for coffee, lunch or something to start the process of getting acquainted or reacquainted. Eventually you always get to the age old question – how's business.

Remember, you are less than **six degrees of separation** from someone who knows someone you might want to know. So, peel back the onion as many times as you can to get to know those you want to establish and/or grow your network

of relationships with.

Here are a few tips for building and maintaining relationships:

- > Provide genuine assistance to others assist first, sell later
- > Listen more than you talk – ask questions and then actually listen to the answers
- > Be open minded – find out what someone needs and then provide it
- > Remember personal details – write it down!
- > Respect cultural differences
- > Research people and companies. Know their goals and interests
- > Build relationships at multiple levels within a company or organization – treat the mid-level and entry-level employees with the same respect that you show to the company leaders
- > Reciprocate kindness with kindness
- > Look for opportunities to make introductions
- > Nurture your relationships and the benefits will be perpetual



ACEC Indiana presents
MBE/ WBE/ VBE/ DBE
Networking Fair and Luncheon

DIVERSITY & OPPORTUNITY

Thursday Aug. 20
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Marriott East Indianapolis

Kickoff Speaker: Mayor Greg Ballard, City of Indianapolis

10 to 1 this is the best opportunity to connect with minority, womens and veterans firms and form relationships to help achieve the goals of your clients in **3 hours and get lunch!**

ECONOMIC BAIL OUT SPECIAL!

Exhibitor: was \$150, **NOW \$120**

includes 6 ft. exhibit table and lunch for one person; additional exhibit staff \$60/ person

Attendee: was \$75, **NOW \$60**

Visit ACEC Indiana's Web site at www.acecindiana.org for more details or call (317) 637-3563.

NOW is the time to join ACEC Indiana

Apply for membership and take advantage of an incentive payment plan! Pay only 1/3 of dues for the first year (*firms that were members within the past 3 years are not eligible.*)

Call (317) 637-3563 or e-mail staff@acecindiana.org for more information.



What has ACEC Indiana done for you?

> Hosted the Annual Scholarship Golf Outing to raise funds to support Hoosier students who uphold the value of engineering for a better quality of life for future generations. The outing, held at Maple Creek Golf Club, raised about \$13,000 for the scholarship program.

> Hosted the Annual Awards Luncheon, which recognized members of the 2008-2009 Board of Directors; the Engineering Leadership Program graduates; Sagamore of ACEC Indiana Jim Reid; Public Servant of the Year Bob McCullough, Ph.D., P.E.; and Consulting Engineer of the Year E. Scott Sondles, P.E.