

# A/E MARKETING JOURNAL

[www.psmj.com](http://www.psmj.com)

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

**Making Marketing a Firm-Wide Effort**

- **Setting the Stage:**  
Don't Keep Marketing All To Yourself! .....1
- **Don't Lose Sight of the Basics When It Comes to Marketing.** .....1
- **Did You Know?** .....2
- **Go From 'Commodity Box' to 'Trusted Advisor'.** .....3
- **Marketing Tool of the Month:**  
Marketing - A Firm-Wide Initiative. ....3
- **New Laws Mean New Opportunities for the A/E/C Profession.** .....4
- **Is Your Organization Vertically Integrated With Your Clients? It Should Be!** .....4
- **Advice to Young Professionals Starting Out.** .....5
- **Important Roles for Non-BD Staff in the Sales Process.** .....6
- **Front Office Staff is a Key Part of Your Marketing Team.** .....6
- **Build Your Personal Brand.** .....7
- **Do You Have "Elephant Trainer Syndrome"?** .....7
- **Upcoming Industry Events.** .....7
- **Project Managers are Your Best Marketing Representatives.** .....8
- **AEMJ Toolbox: Staff Marketing Accountability.** .....8
- **Marketing Tips For Everyone:**  
How Do YOU Make Choices? .....9
- **Be A Problem Solver!** .....10
- **Survey Quick Hits/Demographics.** .....10
- **PSMJ Hot Books.** .....10
- **Industry Trend Spotlight:**  
Evidence of Firm-Wide Marketing Success. ....11
- **Keep Your Marketing Operation Sustainable.** .....11
- **Modeling Good Marketing Habits for the Next Generation.** .....12

**Setting the Stage:  
Don't Keep Marketing All To Yourself!**

*By Eric Snider, P.E.*

Marketing is one of those functions in an A/E/C firm that seems to get pigeonholed, similar to information technology or accounting. As with those disciplines, if it's not part of your primary job, then you typically don't know much about it or how it holds your firm together.

The trouble is, unlike IT and accounting, marketing and business development need to be a job assignment for everyone in your firm. From the initial contact with the receptionist up through the proposal and presentation, everyone plays a role in the "performance" that generates revenue.

This doesn't mean that your receptionist will go golfing with a valued

*(continued on page 2)*

**Don't Lose Sight of the Basics  
When It Comes to Marketing**

All businesses have something to sell, and they all have an audience to sell to. If you are selling groceries or cars or all-you-can-eat buffet meals—that is, products—the audience is customers. In businesses run by architects,engineers, construction professionals, and planners the product offered is a professional service, and the audience is referred to as our clients. But there are similarities between selling to a customer and servicing a client. Here are a few fundamentals:

- **Customers and clients have to be aware of your presence.** This very fact is the reason that your technical professionals go out to lunch or the occasional golf game with those in the client base or with a prospective client. Existing clients should hear from your firm on a regular basis. We call that a "client touch" and it can take many forms: a phone call, a personal note, an interesting article sent, a holiday card, recognition of the client's son's Eagle Scout award, or an invitation to a lunch-and-learn in your office. These remind the client or prospect that you are there, in business, and ready to work.

- **Prospective clients must get comfortable with you.** A prospective client is one for whom your firm has not yet performed project work, but through your business development program and marketing plan you have identified as a candidate with work similar to what you have done for others and for whom you would like to work. Surveys show that a prospect has to be "touched" about seven times before a sale happens. Think about it: When you decide to buy a new car, do you make one trip to the dealer and drive away with a new set of wheels? Most of us don't. Instead, we "window shop" to make a short list of dealers we are comfortable with and then narrow it down to one dealer. Then we visit several times to test drive different vehicles. Finally we make a

*(continued on page 2)*

## New Laws Mean New Opportunities for the A/E/C Profession

By Karen Compton, CPSM

It happens every year. New laws, legislation, and policies are enacted on January 1, affecting the way we live, work, play, and pay. While most of us bemoan the event, I look forward to it with great anticipation, as every good business development professional should. No matter how we feel about a piece of legislation, we must always be ready to look at its ability to create an opportunity (or a hurdle) for our firm to address.

Let's consider a Tale of Two States and examine the cause and effect on the A/E/C industry when states seek to address illegal immigration. In June 2001, the Alabama enacted the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, also known as HB 56. Among its numerous provisions, it blocked "landlords from renting property to illegal immigrants and prohibited "illegal immigrants from receiving any public benefits at either the state or local level including publicly-owned colleges or universities and required high, middle, and elementary public school officials to ascertain whether students are illegal immigrants." According to published reports, the law resulted in as much as a 30 percent decline in elementary school enrollment and a spike in residential vacancy rates as illegal immigrants fled Alabama for neighboring states. The ripple effect of this exodus has been reported to have had an inverse impact on neighboring states such as Georgia.

Alabama's actions followed those of Arizona, which had previously enacted Arizona Senate Bill 1070, Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. While the provisions have been equally as controversial, the effect has been an increase in the construction of prison and detention facilities as Arizona sought to hold and potentially deport immigrants. In both cases, facility demand was impacted. What is the lesson we can take away from this tale?

As we begin our New Year and our business development planning for next the fiscal year, it is critically important that we, as business development professionals:

- **Read and understand the planning, design and construction impact of state, local and federal legislative changes on your firm's design and construction forecast;**
- **Complete scenario analyses that consider both positive and negative facility changes as a result of legislative change;**
- **Engage in discussions with decision makers, legislators and others to inform the direction and or trending that may either present itself to your firm as an opportunity or a challenge;**

In this New Year, we can choose to respond to opportunities (i.e. RFPs) or to be ahead of them by developing a broader and deeper understanding of what is driving facility and infrastructure need. ■

**Karen Compton is principal of A3K Consulting (Glendale, CA), a business development and strategic planning firm specializing in the architecture, engineering and construction industries and Creative Director of Industry Speaks™. Contact her at [kcompton@psmj.com](mailto:kcompton@psmj.com).**

## Is Your Organization Vertically Integrated with Your Clients? It Should Be!

By Greg Goodwin.

Vertical Integration of Marketing, or VIM, as it's often called, can revolutionize the success in getting more of your firm's players engaged in the marketing activities with your best, active clients. Like its cousin, the "Zippered Approach to Marketing," VIM makes sure you have relationships, access, and input at all levels of your client's organization.

The VIM concept is straightforward and relatively easy to implement. The core of this initiative is to match people on your team with those in your client's organization. Like a tall building, your clients, both public and private, have many levels that we have to understand and build upon. From the first floor lobby, with receptionists and administrators, all the way to the oak-lined penthouse, your clients operate through a hierarchal structure, and it is imperative that you spend the time to understand your top clients and the players at each level.

For example, your accounting department should know who their counterparts are in the client's accounting department. This relationship can save time and money, knowing how the client likes to do business. From there, expand to project designers, knowing who reviews the designs, and understanding their expectations.

As you move up the food chain you need to identify who from your organization will be responsible for developing the personal and professional relationships with clients. A project manager will pair off with the client's project manager as you move through the milestones of each assignment. Often, long enduring relationships are created. Sometimes the personalities and styles don't allow these relationships to form. Moving upwards, Principals will pair up with Department Heads and Directors, developing clear lines of communications for both good and bad news. Without these relationships, you may never get the call from an unhappy client, and you'll wonder why you don't get the follow-up phase or next project they offer.

Top management and leaders also have to be engaged with the top levels of your clients. Directors, COO's, and especially CEO's, need to have several clients with whom they have personal connections. Everyone has a role in the VIM process in order to leverage all of the resources of your firm. No one gets a "hall pass" when it comes to client service and client relationships. Often times the highest levels of your client want and need to know that they have access and clear lines of communications all the way to the top of your organization.

As the marketing experts in your firm, you have the responsibility to make sure that the Vertical Integration of Marketing (VIM) is happening and that it is efficient and effective. A simple strategy session with your team that identifies each of these client levels and how they pair up is essential to sustained success in your marketplace. Once the plan is set, you need to make sure that everyone clearly knows their assignments and then executes the relationship building and the delivery of value that your clients expect. ■