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Celebrating the Work of the Folds of Honor Foundation

The pages of the calendar are turning from September to October and it seems like just yesterday we were sweltering in numerous 100 degree days. That may be because I was sweating thru several of those days on my bike as a member of Team ABC participating in RAGBRAI XL. This year’s ride was another great opportunity to connect with ABC of Iowa members, but more importantly raise precious dollars for the Folds of Honor Foundation. I am sure you will enjoy the pictures and the commentary by our team members in this edition of Building Iowa. And, it’s never too late to contribute to Folds, so look for the information on how to contribute in the article on pages 10 and 14.

Fall also means the start of the apprenticeship school year for ABC of Iowa. This year the beginning of the school year has been marked with exciting changes and grand plans! Effective in July, ABC of Iowa transitioned our apprenticeship training program to our long-existing Apprenticeship Trust Fund. While the transition was mostly invisible to our members and our apprentices, it helped set the stage for the Construction Education Center. In dealing with this project, my anthem has become the “The Long and Winding Road” the title of a song made popular by the Beatles.

As you read this edition of Building Iowa, our long and winding road has led us to a signed agreement by the Apprenticeship Trust to purchase the former Gillotti Companies office building in Grimes and submission to the City of Grimes our plans for building a 8,200 square foot addition that will house our hands-on training labs and two additional classrooms. Our plans for the existing two-story building call for remodeling the first floor into four classrooms, a computer lab, and office space for our education staff. The second floor will be remodeled for chapter staff and conference rooms for our Apprenticeship Trustees, Chapter Board of Directors, committees and councils, and membership networking events.

In the Spring edition of Building Iowa last March, I wrote about the membership awards our chapter had won for our membership efforts in 2011. It is time to take our hats off again to Membership Director Ginny Shindelar, the Member Services Committee and the Board of Directors as our chapter has again surpassed 90% member retention and have officially grown our membership from where we ended 2011!! This is exciting news and a strong indicator that ABC of Iowa is the association of choice for Iowa’s construction industry. Thank you to all of our members for your continued strong support of ABC of Iowa!

This edition of Building Iowa’s “Garrison Report” discusses reliability and how improving reliability in your project performance equals increased profits. In another article, John Allen of the Fringe Benefit Group focuses on the importance of using the fringe portion of prevailing wage jobs to help provide medical coverage for employees. Informative, leading edge articles and technology tips, safety reminders, and news on community service projects are just moments away from you in this edition of Building Iowa. Thanks for reading!

Greg Spenner
PRESIDENT & CEO
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We all network, but we don’t all do it effectively. In fact, most of us are really bad at it. That’s very odd, as almost all of us are out there schmoozing and connecting with people.
I have become better at networking over the years. What I’m truly surprised by are all the common sense elements of networking that are completely lost on people. Here are 10 things that most people should be doing—or doing better.

1. **Press the flesh.**
The core to networking is meeting people face to face. Except for rare occasions, such as long-distance online romances, all the friends and business colleagues that we trust, we’ve met in person. If you think you can be an effective networker solely by engaging in social media, you’re sorely wrong. You have to get out and press the flesh.

2. **Stop staring at your phone.**
The worst offenders are people working a booth at a tradeshow. Nothing screams, “I don’t want to talk with you, and I’m too scared to talk with anyone,” more than staring at your phone. You’re blowing an amazing opportunity every time you stare at your phone at an event where you could make a true connection with someone walking by. Stop doing it.

3. **Always have business cards.**
This should be as basic as remembering to bring your driver’s license, credit cards and money in your wallet. Make sure you always have business cards, especially if you’re attending a conference or tradeshow. Bring more than you think you’ll need. I am always stunned when I go to a conference and someone doesn’t have business cards. How do you expect someone to follow up with you? You can’t, because they won’t. But that’s often not an issue, given the next technique.

4. **Always follow up.**
This is the core of all networking: following up. If you don’t do it, you might as well never have met the person. I would estimate that one out of 20 people I hand my business card to follows up. Collecting business cards without following up is a wasted engagement. It only takes days for the person to completely forget meeting you. If you follow up with some level of context of your meeting it increases the value and impact of the meeting. To remember that meeting, take notes on the business card.

When you do follow up, be specific about your follow-up. Don’t just say, “Nice to have met you,” or, “We should meet for coffee sometime,” because that now puts the onus on the other person to set up the meeting and discuss its purpose. That’s quite a burden. If you want that to happen, you need to set the place, time and purpose of the discussion.

5. **Add to your address book/CRM program.**
If you’re going to follow up with someone, you must capture them in your contact manager or, better, in your customer relationship management (CRM) program, whose main function is to help you manage connections and follow up with those connections.

6. **Respond when someone follows up.**
Similar to the above, I’m always astonished when I send a follow-up email to someone I just met the day...
before and they don’t even respond. I would say that at best one out of four people respond to a personal follow-up email. The lack of response is a slap in the face. It would be the equivalent of walking away from a conversation midsentence. We never do that, because it’s rude. It’s also rude if you don’t respond to a follow-up email.

7. Listen.
Yes, it’s good to be directed about what you’re doing and have focus, but you’ll be a far more effective networker and make better connections if you simply listen to others. If someone else isn’t as much a talker as you are, then ask questions. Pull them out of their shell; that will let you to listen to them. Networking is not an opportunity for you to spout out marketing copy that you hope someone else will absorb. Your job is to listen and create a relationship first.

8. Get people to like you.
This should be your top priority. Any objective or goal you may have can be extremely simplified if you just get people to like you. If people don’t know you, don’t trust you, or, worse, don’t like you, then making a true connection or selling them anything will be an uphill battle.

9. Follow on social media.
Social media affords us the ability to maintain connections with hundreds if not thousands of people through ambient intimacy. That’s the ability to know and converse with someone through a general open social conversation, most notably through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The only way you can continue this social conversation is to follow people in all these social spaces. Offer your links to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, and ask for theirs in return.

10. Follow up – again.
Though you can’t keep following up with everyone, the point of networking is to maintain those relationships. Social media will probably be the most effective and efficient way to do this. That means you need to actually respond to people’s Facebook posts, Tweets, and LinkedIn questions. But once again, if you want to make true relationships you need to go back to step 1 and press the flesh.

Conclusion: Networking takes work, but it pays off.
Networking is hard work, and though I admit that I make mistakes with some of the above techniques, I have adhered to them as solidly as possible for six years. The payoff for me has been tremendous. It will pay off for you as well. And if you do it right, it’s actually a lot of fun. What’s not to like about schmoozing and meeting new people?

This article was originally a report published by Spark Media Solutions’ David Spark (@dspark) for Media’s Ingaged Blog, makers and distributors of the KNCTR and Ortsbo.
BIKING ACROSS IOWA FOR FOLDS OF HONOR
On July 22-28, a team of ABC leadership, members and supporters biked 521 miles across the state of Iowa to raise money for the Folds of Honor Foundation. Individuals can still contribute by visiting www.foldsofhonor.org.

The bike ride was part of the Des Moines Register’s Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, RAGBRAI, a seven-day event that is held in July. Team ABC included ABC of Iowa Chapter President and CEO Greg Spenner; 2009 ABC National Chairman Jerry Gorski; former ABC National President & CEO Kirk Pickerel; and Nick Mavrick, formerly of Volvo Rents. In addition, ABC members Larry Den Herder of Interstates Companies, and Jeremy and Kristin Price of Price Industrial Electric, joined the team for part of the ride. The ABC team was hosted by members and friends of members who graciously offered accommodations along the route.

“We decided this would be a great opportunity not only to visit with ABC members in the communities the route passes through, but also to raise funds for the Folds of Honor Foundation,” said Spenner.

Folds of Honor helps military families by providing scholarships for dependents and spouses of servicemembers that have been killed or disabled as a result of military service. Last year, Spenner and Gorski raised $25,000 for the foundation during the same event. “Folds of Honor is such a great organization and we are glad to have the chance to offer our support,” said Gorski.

For those who are still interested in supporting Folds of Honor, they are still taking donations. Here’s how to donate:

- Go to www.foldsofhonor.org.
- Click on “Donate” on the top menu bar.
- Click on the red “Donate online now” button.
- Fill out all of your required information.
- Type “RAGBRAI” in both “Company/Organization” AND the “Comments” box so we can track the success of our bike ride.
- Contributors who would rather send a check can make it out to “Folds of Honor Foundation” and mail it to ABC of Iowa, 475 SE Alices Road, Suite A, Waukee, Iowa by October 31, 2012. Contributions to Folds of Honor are tax deductible.

THANK YOU to the members who hosted Team ABC along the route:

- **SIoux Center** Eric and Rachel Moerman, Interstates Companies - Arranged by Larry and Sharee Den Herder
- **Cherokee** Jim and Susan Haselhoff home - Arranged by Larry and Sharee Den Herder
- **Lakeview** Roger and Joyce Lee lake home - Parents of friends of the Spenner’s
- **Webster City** Steve and Diane Doering of D & B Agro-Systems, Ltd.
- **Marshalltown** Shon and Steph Smith, Proctor Mechanical Corp.
- **Cedar Rapids** Jeremy and Kristin Price, Price Industrial Electric, Inc.
- **Anamosa** Jeremy and Kristin Price, Price Industrial Electric, Inc.
Team ABC members (left to right - Nick Mavrick, Kirk Pickerel, Jerry Gorski, Greg Spenner) finish the 521st mile of the ride at the Mississippi River in Clinton. Note: Spenner thought the ride was so exhilarating he turned his bike around as if he was ready to head westward back across the state … NOT!

Team ABC with ABC of Iowa member Steve Doering of D & B Agro-Systems. Thank you to Steve and Diane Doering for hosting Team ABC!

Team ABC (left to right - Greg Spenner, Jeremy Price, Kristin Price, Kirk Pickerel, Jerry Gorski) gears up in Price Industrial Electric and ABC of Iowa logo t-shirts for day 6 of RAGBRAI (Cedar Rapids to Anamosa). This was the one really truly comfortable day of the ride, both from a weather standpoint and length of the day – just 42 miles.
FROM NICK'S VIEW

“RAGBRAI was truly a ‘great bike ride across Iowa’ and a wonderful, life-time experience. In a nutshell, what amazed me the most was the wonderful, heartfelt generosity of the people of Iowa. I have had the blessing of knowing ABC and its membership for several years – so you will know that which I am referring. With ABC members, there is an incredible spirit of openness and giving, generosity, integrity, thought leadership and patriotism that runs across the organization, and through its members. This culture is nurtured, protected and passed on.

With thanks to Greg Spenner who embodies the greatness of ABC, I had the humble good fortune to experience the ABC culture, but on a much more personal level from folks who were kind enough to open up their hearts and homes to our riding team: Eric and Rachel Moerman arranged by Larry and Sharee Den Herder, Jim and Susan Haselhoff, Roger and Joyce Lee, Shon and Steph Smith, Steve and Diane Doering, and Jeremy and Kristin Price. All Patriots, all committed to ABC and all incredible families, individuals and hosts.

All of the folks we met were so genuinely supportive of the Folds of Honor and RAGBRAI, I was absolutely blown away. The ride was physically challenging, but 100 times more rewarding. As Sally Singer from ABC of Oklahoma says, the giver’s gift is truly a gift to oneself. I remain very thankful to Greg, Kirk and Jerry for the invitation to join Team ABC for RAGBRAI. With thanks to all involved, several families of deceased and injured servicemembers will receive scholarships from Folds of Honor.”

Thank you to ABC and the great people of Iowa! God Bless

Nick Mavrick, formerly with Volvo Rents

FROM JERRY'S VIEW

RAGBRAI 2012 – A 4 “H” Ride!

HEAT A high temperature of 106 degrees; no need to say more!

HEADWINDS Two straight days with headwinds of 10 to 25 mph!

HOSPITALITY Just completely blown away by our hosts who welcomed us into their homes!

HONOR What an honor to ride with great friends for a great cause!

Jerry Gorski, 2009 ABC National

FROM KIRK’S VIEW

“RAGBRAI was an experience that I will never forget. First of all, it was a physical challenge that I was especially happy to be able to complete during the month that I turned 60 years old! Secondly, I met some of the nicest people imaginable; many of them members of ABC of Iowa. I especially appreciated our host families, who so generously took us into their homes. It was also an honor to do this ride with Jerry, Greg and Nick. They are three of the finest guys I know. Finally, I am very pleased that so many have supported my team and me in raising funds and awareness for Folds of Honor. Far too many of the men and women who serve our country have made the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow countrymen. It is so gratifying to give something back to their families.”

Kirk Pickerel, former ABC National President & CEO

FROM GREG’S VIEW

I had a great week of riding with Team ABC (anyone who tells you Iowa is flat has never ridden a bike for any distance in this state!) and by staying with members, we forged stronger relationships for the chapter, National and our members.

Greg Spenner, President & CEO, Associated Builders & Contractors of Iowa

Thank you to ABC and the great people of Iowa! God Bless
Over 700,000 soldiers have been killed or disabled in the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan – Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn. These servicemembers’ families exceed the national average of 2.5 dependents per household. As of January 1, 2012, over one million dependents have been adversely affected by multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 87 percent of the dependents affected by the recent wars do not qualify for federal scholarship assistance. While the federal government provides some support for these families, it cannot succeed alone without proactive civilian organizations to assist.

The need is great, and, to paraphrase the words of Patrick Henry, their battle is ours. As Americans, we feel a collective duty to honor those who have sacrificed by serving the families they leave behind.
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*Business Insurance, July 2011
Improved Reliability Is the Key to Increased Profits

By Ted Garrison

Construction management efforts typically focus on productivity to control costs. However, the problem is reliability, not production.
Studies reveal that more than 90 percent of the tasks performed on projects finish within the duration assigned to them at the beginning of the project. In contrast, more than 50 percent of the tasks assigned on any given week are finished late. The number one reason is that the task couldn’t start when it was scheduled.

When you can’t start on schedule because the team in front of you has not finished on time, it demonstrates unreliability, which is a killer because it causes significant waste. When contractors can’t start assigned work when scheduled, the contractor ends up with people not working at full capacity. Since this has been an ongoing problem for years, unit prices reflect this situation; therefore, many don’t even realize the magnitude of this waste. Now that the project is behind schedule, the contractors need to speed up. This results in either working overtime or adding people to the project. Both of these situations are likely to add extra costs for the contractor, and those costs don’t include the lost time while waiting to start the task.

Ed Anderson, one of my NCS Radio guests on my New Construction Strategies program, talks about the underlying problem. He calls the waste Chase Up©. Chase Up is the time you spend chasing people or being chased to ensure everyone does what he or she is supposed to do when it is supposed to be done. The problem is that despite construction supervisors at all levels complaining about spending as much as 50 percent on Chase Up activities, it doesn’t seem to eliminate the late deliveries. The reason is that chasing people doesn’t address the root cause of the problem. It’s like using an aspirin to cure a headache without worrying about why you have the headache. While late delivery is a headache, it’s not the cause of the problem. To listen to Anderson’s interview on Chase Up, go to: www.jackstreet.com/jackstreet/WCON. And rsonE2.cfm.

To protect themselves from this situation, contractors build contingency into their prices because typically they can’t get a change order for these internal project delays. Over time, this contingency has become part of their standard unit costs. Since contractors believe their true costs are reflected by the job cost reports, they don’t even realize they have inserted a contingency for this waste. After all, this waste occurs on every project, so isn’t this expense a direct cost? The result is it’s difficult or even impossible to get contractors to lower their estimated costs because under current practices, they need the contingency. However, when they learn how to remove this waste, they can decrease their contingency and lower their unit costs. This results in higher profits.

The problem is virtually no one monitors reliability. The focus is on productivity. However, just monitoring productivity can provide misleading information. For example, a plumber is scheduled to finish all under-slab work by the close of business on Thursday so the slab can be placed early on Friday morning. The plumber is 95 percent complete at the close of business, which isn’t too bad from his perspective. However, the slab now can’t be placed on Friday. This has a major impact on all the trades involved with placing the concrete. In this case, the plumber’s productivity is 95 percent, but his reliability is zero. Reliable means you are 100 percent complete when you are supposed to be, or you are not reliable. It’s black and white with no gray area.

Imagine if contractors were paid based on reliability, not production. What if they got paid for a task only when it is on schedule?

Over time, contractor prices have been squeezed to the breaking point. In response, the contractors schedule their work the most efficient way for themselves to minimize their costs. This is without regard to reliability or its impact on the other contractors. Poor reliability increases everyone’s cost and even prevents improvements in productivity. Increased reliability is the solution because it would lower costs and provide more accurate cost figures. Almost a hundred years ago, Henry Ford said the best way to increase business is to decrease costs. There is no better way to reduce costs than eliminate waste. The result would be greater contractor profits.

This requires measuring the reliability of all the project’s contractors. If you select contractors with high reliability, project costs will be lower through the elimination of waste. Further, when supervisors can spend less time chasing people because they are more reliable, they can focus on other, more productive activities.

How to Increase Reliability

When reliability is measured and everyone is held accountable for his or her own reliability, total project reliability improves. The use of techniques such as pull-planning or Last Planner© provide the tools to improve contractor reliability. Collaboration and communication among the people actually performing the work gives those in the trenches an understanding of not only what’s needed from them but also when it’s needed and why. When the individual contractors realize how much time and labor costs they can save by working with other contractors to improve everyone’s reliability, they typically embrace the process with enthusiasm. Those contractors that don’t want to participate in this process should not be allowed to participate on projects because they hurt everyone.

Pull-planning techniques have appeared under several names, such as the six-week look-ahead scheduling and Last Planner©, to name a couple. Implementing these techniques along with measuring reliability will result in a significant improvement in performance and profitability. If you would like to learn more about this concept, please feel free to contact me for more information.

Ted Garrison, president of Garrison Associates, is a catalyst for change. As a consultant, author, and speaker he provides breakthrough strategies for the construction industry by focusing on critical issues in leadership, project management, strategic thinking, strategic alliances and marketing. Contact Ted at 800-861-0874 or Growing@TedGarrison.com. Further information can be found at www.TedGarrison.com.
IS YOUR COMPANY PUTTING SAFETY FIRST?

ABC of Iowa offers services to assist you in keeping your employees safe. For more information, contact Scott Telford at 515.681.1542 or Sarah Freiburger at 319.640.7347.

Safety Facts

1. The average back injury can cost more than $10,000 in direct costs and anywhere from $30,000 to $100,000 in indirect costs!

   The average back injury costs employers more than $10,000 in direct costs, according to NSC statistics. Unfortunately, such direct costs are just "the tip of the iceberg." Indirect cost multipliers for work-related injuries range from 3 to 10 times as much as direct costs. Indirect costs include costs of employees who assist injured workers, equipment repairs, lost production, administrative time, overtime costs, training costs and much more.

2. According to NIOSH’s National Occupational Research Agenda, male construction laborers, carpenters and truck and tractor operators are nearly twice as likely to experience a low back disorder than all other male workers.


4. The annual costs of cardiovascular disease to employers exceed those of any other single category of illness – $127 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity.

5. About 29 million workdays a year are lost due to cardiovascular disease-related illness. This translates into $1.5 billion in earnings lost to American business.

6. Ten times as many employees die from cardiovascular disease than from industrial accidents.

7. Absenteeism rates for smokers are approximately 50 percent higher than for nonsmokers. The number of job-related accidents among smokers is twice that among nonsmokers.

8. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 459 workers were killed while working in manufacturing jobs in 2004.

9. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 1,224 workers were killed while working in the construction field in 2004.

10. One out of four occupational injuries in 2004 was the result of a motor vehicle crash. (NSC magazine, January 2006)

11. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, many construction workers were killed by coming into contact with “floors or ground surfaces.” In other words, slips, trips and falls caused 352 fatalities and 32,460 injuries in 2003. (extrapolated from 2005-2006 NSC Injury Facts, p. 70)

12. Somewhere in the nation, during the five minutes it takes for you to present a Safety Meeting, one person will be killed by accident and 220 will suffer an accidental disabling injury. (extrapolated from 2005-2006 NSC Injury Facts, p. 31)
Safety Sayings and Slogans

There are a lot of sayings in safety. Some of them are catchy; some are not. We all use sayings and clichés because they put important information—in this case safety information—into a form that is easy to remember. Since you have to know or remember safety rules in order to work safely, sometimes having a memorable saying or expression will actually help people avoid accidents and injuries. Feel free to use and copy any of the sayings on this page. They’re here so you can use them.

A Clean Jobsite is a Safe Jobsite.

Better safe than sorry.

What goes up must come down — you choose whether or not it hurts.

A heart attack really is “as serious as a heart attack.”

Tie off or Die off.

P.A.S.S.

Take five for safety; review the JSA before you start working.

Stop accidents before they stop you.

Seat Belts Save Lives.

Short cuts lead to short lives or sometimes just short fingers.

It’s not the fall that kills you; it’s the sudden stop at the bottom.

Safety is no accident.

The Safety Officer’s job is not over until all employees have gone home safely.

John G., Quanta Wireless Solutions

Jose T., Cerritos, CA

P.A.S.S.

Pull Aim Squeeze Sweep

John G., Quanta Wireless Solutions

It’s not the fall that kills you; it’s the sudden stop at the bottom.

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John G., Quanta Wireless Solutions
What Does PPACA Mean for Government Contractors?

By John G. Allen

With the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent decision to uphold the federal health care reform bill, it makes more sense than ever for companies bidding and working on government contracts to use the fringe portion of the prevailing wage to provide major medical coverage for their employees.

For contractors working on projects subject to prevailing wage, the funds to purchase coverage for employees are right there – included in the fringe. Starting in 2014, employers with more than 50 full-time employees will be required to provide health insurance for their workers. Companies that fail to comply will face penalties.

In other words, paying the fringe as additional cash wages will soon carry even more serious negative financial consequences. Fringe dollars used to provide bona fide benefits are not subject to payroll assessments such as FICA, FUTA, SUTA and, in some states, workers’ compensation. Employers who choose to pay the fringe as additional cash wages miss out on these savings, which are significant over the life of a contract. Starting in 2014, employers who do not provide health insurance for their workers will also be penalized. That’s a huge double whammy, and it makes the decision to use the fringe portion of the wage to provide benefits for workers even more compelling.

Even though penalties don’t kick in until 2014, the time to start working toward complying with health reform is now. The longer companies wait to find coverage for their workers, the harder it will be to find.

Even prevailing wage contractors with fewer than 50 employees should seriously consider using the fringe to provide health insurance for their hourly workers. The savings on payroll burden can be passed on as leaner, more competitive bids – and that means increased chances of winning contracts. Choosing to offer health insurance also makes sense from an employee relations standpoint. Your employees won’t have to seek insurance from an exchange, which will be a relief for many. And, it also means your employees avoid being penalized on an individual basis if they do not have health insurance. In 2014, the fee is $285 per family or 1 percent of income, whichever is greater. By 2016, it increases to $2,085 per family or 2.5 percent of income, whichever is greater. Individuals will pay penalties of $95 in 2014, and that amount will climb to $625 in 2016.

The Contractors Plan (www.contractorsplan.com), powered by Fringe Benefit Group, has specialized in providing quality benefits for prevailing wage workers for more than 30 years. We’re prepared to help government contractors with their health insurance needs, and we welcome your questions.

John G. Allen, CRPS, is a regional vice president for Fringe Benefit Group, which has been helping government contractors design and administer fringe benefit programs since 1983. He can be reached at 800-635-6912 or jallen@fibi.com.
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What Does PPACA Mean for Government Contractors?
by John G. Allen
Training Foundations: Embracing the Future

By Wayne T. Belanger
Have you prepared for the future? Here is an exercise that might help put things in perspective. Put a load of your favorite dress clothes in a washing machine. Then throw in a couple of uncapped pens. You can also use oil, acid, wine, too much bleach – your choice.

When the load is done, place everything in the dryer. If you followed the procedure correctly, you will ruin a lot of good clothes, and will no longer be able to wear them in public. To know exactly where this is heading, you have to do one more thing.

Replace the clothes all at once. Just run out to the nearest clothing store and buy new versions of everything that was lost. Forget about sales or discounts. Just replace everything immediately. Now comes the fun part.

Look at the bill. It is at this moment you will realize the value of a washer full of clothes. Trust me, it is a lot more than you might expect.

The point is, you most likely acquired your clothes over time, never really thinking about the value of just one washload. Now, let’s take this to the company level. Instead of clothes, think about the skilled construction employees. Over the years, they gained knowledge and abilities member companies have relied on. They were always there, literally building our industry.

Unfortunately, the economic downturn of the past few years has thrown plenty of ink into our wash. An aging and underemployed skilled workforce has retired or has found other careers, leaving our industry completely unprepared for recovery. The truth is, they are not coming back. It’s easy to ignore the facts because the next great construction boom seems so far away. Right now, the construction workforce is handling the reduced workload just fine. So do we really have to worry about the future? It just seems so far away.

In reality, the future always seems to arrive faster than anyone is ready for. Right now, the problem is the lack of work. It won’t be long before an even bigger problem will be too much work made worse by a severe shortage of skilled workers. Those who want to capitalize on future growth opportunities in our industry need to start addressing tomorrow’s problems today, and there are three steps that should be taken:

**Promote the Industry as a Career Choice**
There are countless ways and opportunities to reach the next generation. The key to promoting construction careers is to start early and to do it often. Position your member companies and the industry as a great career opportunity. If you don’t, other industries, including the military, will. Contact your local high schools to meet with students in technical education programs. Open a dialogue with math teachers and career counselors. Bring in photos of projects or even blueprints. Attend career fairs. Help with SkillsUSA competitions. Bring in one of your younger workers, preferably an apprentice or a graduate apprentice, to tell his/her story. A great resource for you to use is the NCCER’s “Build Your Future” DVD, which is available to all ABC chapters. Just contact your field manager to obtain copies.

**Train and Keep Training**
Training is the only way to replenish the pool of skilled workers. Training must be part of our industry’s culture at all levels. Apprenticeship Training, Safety Training, Upgrade Training, Supervisory Training and Management Training all have to be an accepted part of every contractor’s corporate culture. There simply is no time to do it the “way we have always done it.”

**Embrace Diversity and Provide Career Paths**
The face of the available workforce pool is changing, and the industry needs to change with it. In addition to building a diverse workforce, there must be clearly defined and attainable avenues for advancement, regardless of race or gender.

The three steps suggested in this article will not magically solve the predicted shortage of skilled workers, but, taken as a whole, they are a proactive approach to the huge talent void the industry is facing. Failure to act will be like owning just one wash load of clothes. If something happens to that load, you will be faced with excessive replacement costs. Have a plan in place to replenish and grow the skilled workforce gradually, so we will not be faced with a crisis that may be too costly to solve. Those who plan ahead are better prepared to embrace the future. Those who don’t think about it simply become victims.

Wayne T. Belanger is the Director of Education for ABC Wisconsin Chapter. For more information, contact Wayne at wbelanger@abcwi.org. Copyright October, 2012 Wayne T. Belanger.
Five Ways Employees’ Smartphones Can Cause Trouble

By D. Albert Brannen

Every day, construction employers are finding new ways to use smartphones to increase their employees’ efficiency and effectiveness. While the devices may be great for users, they present a myriad of potential problems for construction employers. Here are five of the most common potential employment problems caused by employees’ smartphones.

1. Smartphones Can Be Used to Record or Steal Trade Secrets or Confidential Information

A company’s information and trade secrets constitute some of its most valuable assets. After all, no construction employer wants its competitors to know contact information for its customers, vendors, subcontractors or prospects; its marketing strategies; or the details behind its bids. Yet, with a smartphone an employee can copy, record, distribute or damage such information easily and quickly.

Employers should have “acceptable use” policies, non-disclosure agreements and other policies in place to discourage or prevent such adverse actions. Employers also should maintain adequate software programs or systems to detect the leakage or interrupt the downloading of sensitive information.

2. Smartphones Can Be Used for “Textual Harassment”

Using smartphones to send offensive messages or images can be evidence of discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of Title VII, as well as other state and federal laws. Under Title VII alone, punitive damages can be up to $300,000 for the largest employers. Thus, employers should adopt equal employment, harassment and cell phone policies, as well as train employees on the proper use of their smartphones and other electronic devices.

3. Smartphones Can Be Used to Raise Protected Complaints or Grievances

The National Labor Relations Act gives employees the right to engage in “concerted activities” for their “mutual aid and protection.” “Facebook firings” recently have drawn national attention because the National Labor Relations Board has applied longstanding language to protect employees who use social media to complain about issues or to share information about their workplaces. In fact, the board’s acting general counsel recently identified the use of social media as a “hot topic” and prepared two comprehensive reports outlining the types of employee conduct that will be protected.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce prepared its own analysis of the emerging law with respect to employee use of social media. To avoid violating these rules, employers need to update their social media and acceptable uses policies, as well as train employees on the proper use of such devices.

4. Smartphones Can Be Used to Prove Wage and Hour Violations

Wage and hour claims have increased more than 325 percent during the past 10 years and are among the fastest growing labor and employment law claims across the country. Smartphone applications allow employees to track their hours worked and to identify possible wage and hour violations. The Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Enforcement Division made it clear in a recent news release that it will utilize its own application as evidence of wage and hour violations.

To prevent wage and hour claims, employers should review their payroll and recordkeeping practices. Non-exempt employees should maintain accurate records of their hours worked and earn at least the applicable minimum wage and overtime at the rate of time and one-half of their regular rate.

5. Use of Smartphones While Driving Can Violate State and Federal Laws

Last January, the U.S. Department of Transportation implemented a new rule that prohibits the use of handheld phones and devices by drivers of commercial motor vehicles. California, Georgia, Louisiana and other states have adopted similar laws prohibiting drivers from texting, emailing or using cell phones while driving. Similar laws are expected across the country. Moreover, if employees who use smartphones while driving are involved in motor vehicle accidents, employers can be liable for huge monetary damages for negligence and other causes of action.

D. Albert “Bert” Brannen is a partner and team manager at Atlanta-based Fisher & Phillips LLP. For more information, email dabrannen@laborlawyers.com.

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Six things we can all agree you need, right now:

1. Maximized Workforce Productivity
2. Reduced SUTA / Unemployment Costs
3. Minimized Workers’ Comp Exposure
4. Defense Against Rising Benefits Costs
5. Less HR / Administrative Costs
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Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Iowa has experienced significant growth in their apprenticeship program over the past several years with new programs, new locations and increased enrollment.

On June 22, 2012, the chapter graduated the largest apprenticeship class ever, walking 169 apprentices across the stage to receive their diploma. ABC of Iowa graduated apprentices from six trades including electrical, heavy equipment operator, HVAC, mechanical insulation, plumbing and sheet metal. Member companies, instructors, family and friends were on hand to celebrate the hard work put forth by the graduating apprentices as they were recognized for their accomplishments throughout the four-year program. Awards were presented for craft champions, outstanding graduates, perfect attendance and instructor milestones.

The ABC of Iowa apprenticeship program is the cornerstone for apprentices wishing to become state of Iowa licensed journeymen and provides over 600 hours of classroom and laboratory instruction throughout the four years. For additional information on the ABC of Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program, please contact Tom Fulcher, education director at tom.fulcher@abciowa.org.

The 2012 Best of the Corridor winners were announced, in part, in the July 16 issue of the Corridor Business Journal.

Best Accounting Firm for a start-up business
First place: McGladrey

Best Philanthropic Company (small)
First place: Van Meter
ACI Mechanical, Inc. began their Charity Golf Tournament in 2008 when one of their employees mentioned he was sponsoring a 3 year old little girl with cancer. On the spur of the moment, they raised nearly four thousand dollars with only 40 participants. The generosity shown during that event has evolved into a full-fledged yearly charity golf event. Following the tournament ACI made the decision to sponsor child-based charities which would naturally hit home with their employees and sponsors.

When Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Iowa became involved with the Erika Kate Foundation and given ACI’s involvement and support of ABC, it was only natural that ACI take up the charge on sponsoring the Erika Kate Foundation this year.

Each year following the initial event, ACI has set consecutive fundraising records raising a total of $6,500.00 this year with nearly 70 participants, they surpassed last year’s amount by nearly $1000, bringing their total to over $25,000 dollars raised since the tournaments inception in 2008. This event has became an important part of who ACI is as a company and allows their employees and sponsors the honor of giving a little bit back to the community and their state.

The mission of the Erika Kate Foundation is to help ease the emotional, spiritual and financial burdens borne by parents of children with life-threatening heart disease.

The vision is to provide short-term assistance to families in the midst of medical crisis, working with social workers in pediatric heart centers nationwide to bridge the gap for those whose short-term needs exceed available resources.

Erik’s Story

From the time of her very first smile, Erika Kate Maynard could light up a room with her joy.

She loved to swing in her backyard, and the colors pink and purple. She adored her sparkly pink flip-flops, the rock band U2 and goldfish crackers.

Erika Kate never knew how sick she was.

When she was just 3 ½ years old, doctors discovered a heart and lung problem called restrictive cardiomyopathy and secondary pulmonary hypertension. Her family’s world came crashing down around them.

The doctors gave Erika’s parents four choices for their critically ill little girl: do nothing and let nature take its course, seek palliative treatment to prolong her life as long as possible with limited medications, get aggressive with intravenous medications to help her lungs so she could get a heart transplant, or pursue a heart-lung transplant.

For the next 13 months, Rich and Traci Maynard sought the best-possible treatment for Erika Kate. Countless doctors and hospital stays later, the journey took them to a New York City hospital with a world-renowned specialist in treating children with Erika’s condition. The recommendation: that Erika undergo a heart transplant at Columbia University Medical Center.

After two weeks of waiting in the pediatric cardiac intensive care unit at Children’s Hospital of New York, a thousand miles from home, Erika got a heart.

But Erika’s body did not respond well to the transplant. She died on June 14, 2006.

From her diagnosis to her passing, and all the medications, doctor’s appointments and hospitalizations in between, the experience overwhelmed the Maynards. They endured a great deal of emotional, physical and financial stress. They were struck by the lack of resources available to help families cope with the difficulties of a situation like Erika’s.

Today, their daughter’s legacy is the Erika Kate Foundation. She would be nine years old now.

“To me, EKF is about taking a heart-wrenching tragedy and turning it into something amazingly beautiful and meaningful,” Traci Maynard said. “It is about entering into the lives of those who are suffering, helping to bear their burden and offering them care and comfort. We want others to know they are not alone in their journey of pain, that we care for them and that God loves them, even though He has allowed this circumstance to unfold in their lives.”

www.erikakate.org
The Beam Club, established in 1966, recognizes ABC’s most committed members. Beam Club members have made ABC the world’s largest association of merit shop contractors. Their pride in ABC enlivens and strengthens our organization.

To join the Beam Club, you need to recruit five new ABC members. When you’ve recruited these members, your local ABC chapter automatically enrolls you in the Beam Club. The more companies you recruit, the more recognition you receive for being an ABC Beam Club Member.

ABC of Iowa Membership Director Ginny Shindelar presents Jeremy Price, Price Industrial Electric, Inc., with a plaque and lapel pin for his Merit Silver Level Beam Club Award for recruiting 15 new members to ABC of Iowa.

ABC of Iowa Membership Director Ginny Shindelar presents Dave Petersen, Garling Construction, Inc., with a plaque and lapel pin for his Merit Silver Level Beam Club Award for recruiting 15 new members to ABC of Iowa.
Plan to Attend

March 27, 2013

7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. - Seminars
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Trade Show

The Meadows Events & Conference Center
Prairie Meadows - Altoona, Iowa

Questions? Contact Maggie Fulton at 515.987.3790 ext. 229
or by email at maggie.fulton@abcioa.org

Your go to Green Building Resource

www.GreenConstructionAtWork.com
Anti-competitive PLAs are special interest schemes that end open, fair and competitive bidding on public works projects. PLAs drive up the cost of construction by reducing competition and effectively excluding merit shop contractors and their skilled employees, such as yourself, from building projects paid for by their own tax dollars.

**ABC of Iowa** offers all of the necessary classes to assist members in meeting the continuing education requirements of the Iowa Electrical Examining Board as well as the Iowa Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Board. If you work for an ABC of Iowa member, you are able to take advantage of the very competitive rates offered only to members.

**ABC of Iowa** provides exam prep courses, medical gas installer’s certification, lead safe renovator certification, leadership training and several other topics.

*For more information, visit www.abciowa.org*
Round 3 (Question for this issue)
Imagine you are in a sinking rowboat surrounded by sharks. How would you survive?

The first 5 people to contact Hollie Dugan with the correct answer will receive a voucher for 25% off of any ABC of Iowa event!

You can get your answers to Hollie by:
Email: hollie.dugan@abciowa.org
Phone: (515) 987-3790 extension 1
FAX: (515) 987-3798

Round 2 Question
How far can you walk into the woods?

Round 2 Answer
Halfway. After that, you are walking out of the woods.

Congratulations to the Round 2 Trivia Winners:
Chad Price, DePenning & Associates, Inc.
Dave Welder, NAI Electrical Contractors

Do you belong to a civic club or organization that features monthly speakers?
ABC of Iowa President & CEO Greg Spenner is available to speak at your monthly meetings. For more information, contact Greg at 515-987-3790 ext. 222

What is merit shop?
Merit shop is a way of doing business in which companies reward employees based on performance and encourage them to reach their highest level of achievement, and in which contracts are awarded based on safety, quality and value, regardless of labor affiliation.
ABC of Iowa
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
2012

OCTOBER 5
Fishing Tournament
Mahaffey Boat Ramp
Coralville Reservoir

NOVEMBER 1
Excellence in Construction Awards Banquet
Hy-Vee Conference Center
West Des Moines, Iowa

JANUARY 23, 2013
Craft Championships Competition
Jacobson Center
Iowa State Fairgrounds
Des Moines, Iowa

JANUARY 23, 2013
Celebrate ABC
Jacobson Center

MARCH 27, 2013
Construction Trades & Safety Expo
The Meadows Events & Conference Center
Altoona, Iowa

:: 2010 Top Mechanical Project in the Nation awarded by ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors)

:: Firestone Master Roofing Contractor (Top 100 in Nation)

:: ABC National Accredited Quality Contractor (AQC) 2000-2012 (Top 2% of ABC Contractors in Nation)

Design and installation professionals striving to keep your project on time and under budget. Realize financial savings by utilizing our innovative GREEN building technology. Let our team help on your next renovation or new building project.

• HVAC & Sheet Metal
• Plumbing & Piping
• Roofing & Siding