

SMPS

pipeline

THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM SMPS CHICAGO

Spring 2016



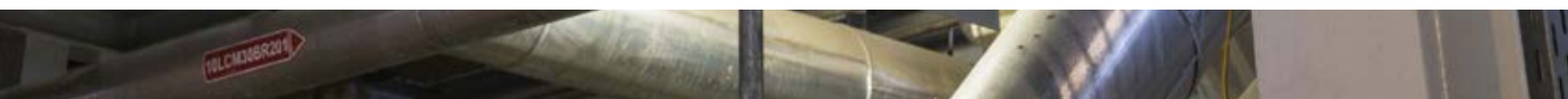
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SMPS





president's letter

Nikki Dvorak, President, SMPS Chicago Chapter

For our 2015-16 program year, this is what I want to bring back to SMPS Chicago; passion and excitement. This is an amazing organization. We are an impressive collection of knowledge, insights, and connections.

As I look back to when I was writing my first President's letter in August 2015, I can't help but smile at what we, your SMPS Chicago Board, have accomplished already, and yet we still have a few months to go. For anyone that has been to a luncheon, professional development event, or membership drive this year, I hope you're pleased with the amount of passion and excitement I promised to bring back to the chapter back in August. Our programs committee has been working on overdrive for our sell-out luncheons the past few months and has really established programs that meet the needs of the entire membership.

As your President, I have taken the approach to really set the vision; to empower and lead. I believe in letting our directors truly lead the committees they signed up for and serve our members. I sincerely believe that you get out of something what you put into it, and your directors have gone above and beyond to make this year something to remember. I've tried to serve as a resource to our membership regarding what SMPS is all about and how to get involved through one-on-one meetings and responsiveness to member, sponsor, and prospect needs. We've increased our committee members and assigned roles to everyone to execute throughout the year. I believe in holding people accountable for their actions; this isn't just me I have to think about this year, it is all 230 other members in this chapter that depend on chapter leadership to inspire and create foundations to succeed.

One of my goals this year was to renew the Chapter's focus on members. I started off the year with our member appreciation event that was executed with great success and received lots of positive feedback from the 64 members in attendance. The success of that event fueled our most recent event, A New Year Ahead, where our membership committee worked with our special events committee to create a membership drive. It brought over 50 non-members to an event to meet our members and see what we can offer them and their firm with 101 attendees in the room.

A huge portion of our chapter relies on sponsorship and I found it really important this year to make sure our sponsors were recognized often and properly. We couldn't do what we do without our sponsors and we really appreciate their support and commitment this year. This is another example of our committees joining forces and creating transparency in the way sponsorship helps programs lock down sponsors and put on their strategic hats to make sure each program is aligned with the right sponsors. I've also worked individually with our annual sponsors to make sure the package we have in place meets their needs and adjusted them accordingly.

One change this year that I believe members can truly see is in our leadership team. This board of amazingness came together this year and trust has built into friendships for life; I really believe that. Because of the trust that we've built, we worked as a unit – as a team. I can honestly say that 95 percent of the decisions that were made at the board level have actually been collective board decisions. Our board is not made up of one or two brains working together, it's 11 professionals united to make the best decisions we can for 230 members.

We've also increased transparency. As an off-shoot to focusing on our members, we've put in place some board-level changes to ensure communication and documentation standards are met and Chapter bylaws are being followed. This improved efficiency and responsiveness to member needs. We've also started to cross promote SMPS events within other chapters; a lot of us do business development in other states and I love the idea of making other programs accessible to our members.

I hope you can see now why I'm smiling as I write this. We, as your 2015-16 SMPS Chicago Board, have done amazing things and we still have four months to go! Thank you for taking this journey with me this year. I've grown as a leader, listener, and friend. I also want to thank my company, DLR Group, for supporting me in this endeavor. I truly believe I'm a better employee because of SMPS Chicago. As promised, I will continue to bring back passion and excitement to this amazing organization and hopefully it continues into the coming years.

Nikki Dvorak
Business Development Leader
DLR Group

CHICAGO CHAPTER

new members

Welcome to SMPS Chicago!



Mandy Angotti

Marketing Technologist, Stanley Consultants

Christine Blevins

Marketing Director, Blinderman Construction

Carly Calkins

Senior Marketing Coordinator, Skender Construction

Steve Carroll

Regional Director, Sensory Technologies

Ann David

Marketing Coordinator, FGM Architects

Bridget Davis

Executive Assistant, Berglund Construction

Crystal Fencke

Copy Editor, Lochner

Caroline Ferguson

Senior Marketing Coordinator, OKW

Karen Halverson

Business Development Manager-AEC, Best Imaging Solutions

Wendy Hubbard

Senior Proposal Coordinator, Knight E/A, Inc.

Becky Hurley

Senior Land Use Advisor, The Lakota Group

Leah Johnson

Marketing Specialist, MWH Global

Meaghan Kaupe

Marketing Manager, Norcon, Inc.

Elizabeth Kersjes

Marketing Coordinator, Skender Construction

Kelly Kolpak

Marketing Specialist II, HR Green, Inc.

Kathleen Logan

Client Development Manager, Terracon

Stacy Lucier

Director of Marketing, Microdesk

Lauren Moeller

Marketing Coordinator, Bulley & Andrews

Katie Morris

Business Development Coordinator, Primera Engineers

Phoebe Peterson

Proposal Coordinator, D'Escoto Inc.

Heather Posey

A & D Specialist, Kimball Office

Kyler Queen

Marketing Manager, Perkins+Will

Andy Rees

Dir. of Sales & Business Development, Silver Leaf Construction & Renovation

Rebecca Rozsa

Marketing Coordinator, Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects

Missy Ruminski

Marketing Manager, Tuschall Engineering

Molly Ruppel

Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Whitney Architects

Daniel Solera

Marketing Strategist, Gary Lee Partners

Angela Timmons

Communications Director, Environmental Design International Inc.

Sue Traeder

Marketing Director, Graycor Construction Company Inc.

Ariel Upton

Marketing Manager, Sonoma Partners

Dawn Williams

Global Marketing & Communications Manager, United Conveyor Corporation

Vicki Zak

Marketing Coordinator, Terracon Consultants, Inc.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Three Things You Might Be Missing in Your 2016 Marketing Plan

by The Pepper Group



See if you have good answers to these three important questions on areas that many marketers overlook.

Are you re-purposing enough content?

According to MarketingProfs, the number one marketing challenge is producing engaging content. So instead of creating original content every time, re-purpose more often. For example, let's say you have a customer success story (a type of content). You might make it into a one-page PDF, but that same content can also take other forms including a video, infographic, short testimonials, a slide deck, etc. Plus, it can be distributed on multiple platforms. There is a solution, and if you're interested, The Pepper Group can show you their Content Matrix™. It's a great tool to help you identify 16 types of content, and then decide how to re-purpose each into 16 formats, and then distribute each over 16 channels—more than 4,000 combinations. It's a tremendous way to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of your content efforts.

Are you marketing to employees and recruits?

CEOs agree that the number one priority is attracting and retaining top talent. Why? It's the most important source of competitive advantage today! Marketing to employees and prospective employees requires the same skill set as marketing to customers and prospective customers, and both are strategically important to the business and its success. Smart companies know this and HR and Marketing combine their skills. This can include things like identifying and communicating core values, positioning the company as a great place to work, enhancing internal communications, driving community outreach and creating powerful marketing tools to showcase the great career opportunities at your company. It also includes making sure that your offices and physical environments reinforce, support and enhance your internal brand and positioning. Look around. Do they?

Are your value propositions on target?

Sometimes what might make perfect sense to you as an expert doesn't translate to others. In *Made to Stick*, Chip Heath and Dan Heath call this, "The Curse of Knowledge." Think about your prospects. Do they truly understand the value you can deliver when they see your marketing? Moreover, is your marketing differentiating you or is it all pretty generic? Perhaps you can replace your logo with your competitor's logo and it would still make sense. If so, you might need to consider refining your messages and finding your voice. Lastly, think about what your employees would say about your offerings. Do they know your company's real value and how to articulate it, or will they each say something different?

**If you've got these three areas
100 percent nailed, way to go!
If not, it doesn't hurt to ask
for help.**

Contact: Tim Padgett tim@peppergroup.com



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Matt Dvorak

Director of Marketing and Communications, Primera Engineers, Ltd.

What are your main responsibilities at Primera Engineers?

I'm responsible for the development, management and execution of Primera's corporate marketing and communications program. I lead all areas of marketing outside of BD and proposal work.

Why did you get involved with SMPS?

My sister, Nikki Dvorak, is an SMPS rock star. She's proof that you can get a great deal of out of your membership if you put a great deal into it.

How did you get your start in the A/E/C industry and any advice to those just starting in the industry?

I got the opportunity to intern with Pepper Construction because my dad works there. I worked hard and was invited to join full-time after graduation. Thirteen years and two firms later, I'm still grateful for that opportunity. As for advice, hard work pays off. Get immersed in proposals, but don't lose sight of the big picture. A solid understanding of how to put together winning proposals provides a foundation for almost any marketing or BD role in the AEC industry.

What do you like to do for fun when you're not working?

I like to run, shop, eat, and travel. Give me the opportunity to run, shop, and eat my way through a new city, and I'm a pretty happy camper.

If you were a super hero, what super power would you like to have?

I'll skip the super powers if I can get access to all of Batman's toys.

What is your favorite place to eat in Chicago or the suburbs?

Everywhere is an appropriate answer, right? One of the main reasons I love Chicago is the never-ending list of excellent restaurants. My two Bucktown staples are Irazu, and the recently-opened, Pork & Mindy's. Beyond quick or casual in my area, Presidio never disappoints.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

The Pepper Group

responses by Tim Padgett, CEO



peppergroup.com

What value has SMPS brought to your firm and you personally?

Pepper Group joined SMPS in February of 2001 after being asked by Walker Parking, a client at the time, to be a speaker. I thought we might be able to bring value to the group and also find a few companies that might want a little spice in their marketing initiatives.

We have worked with over a dozen SMPS companies over the years, but I've also made great friends and have had the pleasure to mentor a few members in advancing their knowledge and careers.

What is the best part of being an SMPS sponsor and what do you find most valuable?

For us it's the ability to help out and the potential to be considered as a strong partner for firms that want to grow their businesses.

Tell us briefly about your company and what you do:

I started Pepper Group ("not that Pepper...") 22 years ago as a design firm and now we're a 20-person B2B full-service marketing communication firm. We work with Fortune 1000 companies to help them with complex marketing initiatives (think new product or service launches), as well as mid-market firms where we are a strong partner in an Agency of Record relationship.

As a footnote, we also have Teer1, a premier Employee Volunteering Program (EVP) system. It officially launched in January 2015 and is catching on quickly—our first client was 3M. The biggest ROI is in talent acquisition and employee retention, but there are five other areas that really provide value for the company, employees and our communities.

What is the biggest challenge you are facing in your position right now?

Let me share one big picture challenge and one tactical. Through the recession, companies cut back on their marketing (though the opposite is the smart play), and since then they have been working their way back—mainly because they know they're not getting the inbound opportunities they were used to.

While email marketing has been a very inexpensively dispensed tactic, without great returns, in the B2B world there are many more effective ways to get solid conversions. Some of the direct marketing we've been doing with dimensional mail get 25-30 percent response rates.

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