BX News

A publication of the
Builders Exchange Network

FEBRUARY 2014

Nashville or Bust

By Kristin Loney, Executive Director

Join us in Nashville, Tennessee for what promises to be a memorable Annual Meeting for BXNET! Starting Wednesday, June 18, the Board of Directors will meet at the OMNI, and members of BXNET are welcome to attend. The afternoon will be open for registrants to enjoy of variety of activities that Music City has to offer. Some of those adventures may include visiting Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Ryman Auditorium, Fontanel Mansion, Grand Ole Opry, Johnny Cash Museum, Edwin and Percy Warner Parks, Lane Motor Museum, Country Music Hall of Fame, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and the Belle Meade Plantation, just to name a few. You may also use your free time to take a distillery tour or choose from over 50 southern barbeque joints right in the city. But don't pig out because we hope that you will join us that evening for our casual reception where members and their guests can enjoy hors d'oeuvres, open bar while networking with fellow BXNET members.

Thursday and Friday will be full of learning, sharing and even a little bragging. In continuing with our new tradition we will also plan a very entertaining group outing on Thursday evening. As this issue goes to the print the board of directors and I are busy putting together a program worth attending. Some of the topics that members and professional speakers might address are Membership Retention, Marketing, Communications, Social Media, Database Management, Plan Room Competition and Lean Construction. We are also planning an open forum session for attendees to share successes with their peers. We like to call this the "brag table."

While we are in the planning process we encourage you to contact me (kloney@ssmgt.com or 855-719-0733) or any of the BXNET board to request additional topics as well as potential speakers.

I hope to hear from you soon and look forward to seeing you in Nashville!

BXNet
Builders Exchange Network

BX News is published by the Builders Exchange Network as a service to members.

Our website is IBEEonline.com

Submissions, articles and other information for content is compiled from members of the organization.

Suggestions or submissions can be sent to:
info@ibeeonline.com
or 1-855-719-0733

Call for Nominations

MANAGEMENT AWARD

This award recognizes exemplary skill, vision and leadership in managing the individual's own organization. The winner is required to accept the award in person at the Annual Convention. Eligibility is limited to BXNET Members. Staff and self-nominations are encouraged. Awards are given on the basis of merit, and may not be given every year.

The following points contribute to eligibility for the Management Award:

- Developing an effective solution to a challenging situation or problem.
- Developing a program or process that significantly improves the operation or services of the managed organization.
- Demonstrating exemplary management skills, including insight, vision, creativity and foresight through the achievement of a specific goal.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: MARCH 30, 2014

For a copy of the nomination form please visit www.ibeeonline.com or contact Kristin Loney at the Executive Office by telephone at 855-719-0733 or by email at kloney@ssmgt.com.

NO BOUNDARIES AWARD

This award recognizes an individual who has consistently demonstrated boldness, creativity, vision and a willingness to challenge perceived limitations. Awards are given on the basis of merit, and may not be given every year.

Eligibility is limited to BXNET members and their employees and other individuals of merit. Nominations must be initiated by a third-party (no self-nominations) and winners will be selected at the sole discretion of the three most recent winners by unanimous agreement.

The following are examples of characteristics that might be considered in nominating a recipient for the No Boundaries Award:

- Exemplifying initiative, vision, creativity, and "out of the box" thinking.
- Approaching challenges in a way which inspires others to push the envelope of accepted belief.
- Developing programs and/or processes which now serve as a model for implementation by other individuals or organizations.

SEND NOMINATIONS TO:
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Motivating and Engaging Young Employees

By Janet Dean, Author/Consultant

"Hey dude, that report you drew up for me is sweet!"

If this is how you communicate with your organization's young employees, you are probably having no trouble adjusting to the challenges of today's diverse workforce. If the thought of communicating like this sets you on edge, read on. There are many other things you can do to more effectively recruit, motivate and manage youryounger staff.

Young employees fall into two groups: Generation X, born between 1965-80, and Generation Y, born between 1980-94. Each generation has a distinct set of values, view of authority and sense of loyalty and must be *motivated* as well as managed differently. Since most of today's managers are Veterans and Boomers (yes, two different, older generations), there can be a communication gap that feels as wide as the Grand Canyon.

Managing staff by their generation's needs is the secret to keeping your young employees motivated, engaged and retained. A warning though: X-ers and Y-ers are much more different than their closeness in age indicates. For example, when you need your young staff to work late, X-ers may resent doing so if they know it only benefits their boss. Y-ers may not put in the *time* if it conflicts with their personal schedules. Differences like this need to be reflected in your management approach. How did they get that way?

The difference in expectation, attitudes and performance of different generations was first noticed when Boomers entered the workforce. This generation experienced the same social and economic environments, so commonalities were easily identified. In fact, generational commonalities were more common than gender or diversity similarities.

Commonalities exist with Generations X and Y even though they are fewer in number than Boomers. These similarities originate from how they were parented and the economic realities present when they reached working age. For example, entry into the workforce was competitive for X-ers, so they are aggressive. This was the first demographic group to largely be parented "in absentia," which led to increased developments of independence and self-direction.

Y-ers developed a reputation for being less motivated than previous generations because when they began entering the workforce there were more jobs than people. There was simply less need to prove themselves in order to get hired. Y-ers were also parented by a generation of working parents as well as older first-time parents who valued relationships over activities. These parents exposed Y-ers to more new experiences than previous generations, making this group harder to "wow."

To create a workplace that attracts and retains X-ers and Y-ers:

- Encourage goal-setting and create and pay for learning opportunities.
- These generations are mobile so if your organization has multiple offices, advertise openings at each location.
- Encourage lateral moves within your firm so that employees are less likely to become bored and leave. Help them have their "career changes" within your organization.
- Create flexible jobs that parallel an employee's development and lifestyle.
- Forget managing – coach! X-ers prosper with frequent guidance; Y-ers prefer the freedom to be creative and like constructive feedback.
- Ensure leaders "walk the walk." Young employees will not tolerate inauthentic leadership. X-ers will leave under poor leadership; Y-ers will identify and challenge inauthenticity, then leave.

These young employees' commitment and loyalty are far more determined by their feelings than by rational and deductive thought. Engage them by investing in their development and creating an emotional bond.

Young employees will stay if they feel valued and see room for advancement as well as opportunities to reach their personal goals. When high expectations are set for them, they deliver. When expectations are unclear, they flounder.

We worked with one client to design an in-house learning program specifically targeted to Generations X and Y. The Boomer boss wanted stand-and-deliver and lecture-driven courses, but we helped him see that his younger staff needed experiential, just-in-time learning events where training is tied directly to an immediate learning need. This training also dealt with their specific challenges using interactive and fun methods.

The boss wanted heavy content too, but X-ers and Y-ers are information age learners and don't buy in to experts just because they stand at the front of the room and recite their credentials. They need externally referenced sources they can take away and validate themselves. By having us change its staff training model, the client dramatically improved the amount of learning transferred back into the workplace after the training and had more positive and supportive staff!

The X Factor

Generation X-ers seek recognition and are drawn to opportunities to ***learn*** and enjoy their work. Since X-ers ***value*** workplace environment and culture, employers should create a light and lively learning culture. Be honest and unafraid of conflict when providing feedback. X-ers seek responsibility: create a career ladder or promotion plan for them.

X-ers love technology and toys; equip them with the latest office technology. They also work to live lives full of the best and the biggest; therefore give them perks that are personal.

In return, expect a strong work ethic and an amazing ability to multi-task. X-ers will commit to you if they feel you have committed to them.

Ask Y

Generation Y employees are adaptable, innovative and efficient, so don't be afraid to give them challenging projects. Motivate them by providing educational and personal skill-building; give them time to take online courses. But let Y-ers choose the courses because they don't respond well to being told what's good for them. They are also self-focused and demanding – they want to be asked their opinion and set their own work plans. They have a strong desire to fit in, so learn their personal and career goals, discuss how they fit with the company's and then help them accomplish their goals.

As a result, they will impress you with their energy and creativity. They will refer you to their ***friends*** and work with a fury.

Are you sure you really want these employees if they are this much work? You may need them! Just remember they can, and will, weigh their options and compare your firm with other potential organizations. These employees are not just the future, they are your future. Engaging and motivating your young employees will create a culture and reputation that will attract and help you retain the best and brightest of Generations X, Y and beyond, ensuring your continued success in this changing time.

Author: Janet Dean. Author and consultant, Janet Dean is a unique and distinctive authority in the field of personal, professional and organizational optimal performance - and the maximizing of people power! Janet

Rules of Effective Newsletters

By Dr. Ugur Akinci

1. Stick to a firm schedule. You can publish your newsletter on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. But whichever frequency you choose, publish and deliver your print or ezine newsletter regularly. Haphazard and sporadic newsletters create an image of amateurism.

2. Keep your newsletter format as simple as possible – unless you're publishing a newsletter on cutting-edge razzle-dazzle graphic design techniques. People follow newsletters for the useful, fresh and relevant information they contain. Give your readers what they want instead of what you think they should want.

3. Provide simple and correct navigational links and/or a Table of Contents to help your readers easily find what they're looking for. A front-page sidebar is the perfect location for such navigational aids.

4. Provide an Executive Summary for all articles over 300 words. People are busy and they usually skim over long articles. By supplying them with a summary of long articles you'll help them absorb the material quickly. They'll be thanking you for it.

5. Avoid the "we/us/our" language and replace it with a "you/your" orientation. YOU (together with FREE) is the most magical word in the copywriting universe. Use it liberally in all pages of your newsletter. Your newsletter readers are there not to read about you but to find solutions to their problems. Provide them with answers to THEIR problems by maintaining a "You Posture."

6. Don't forget to provide your contact information on every page of your newsletter. At a minimum, you should supply your readers with your web address, email address, and your phone number. Footers and headers are perfect for that purpose. If you are pitching a product or service through your newsletter, keep in mind that an 800 Toll-Free phone number can increase the response rate by an average of 15%.

7. Provide a simple way or link (for ezine newsletters) to unsubscribe from your newsletter and another link to subscribe to it. According to the U.S. laws, you also need to provide a physical mailing address. Most commercial email delivery companies refuse to deliver ezine newsletters without the physical address of the publisher.

Ugur Akinci, Ph.D. is a senior writer and web content consultant with 20 years of experience.

Group outing attendees enjoying Mariachi music during the Tacos, Tequila and Tombstones tour.

Looking Back at the Mid-Year Meeting

A message from the Executive Office

BXNET delegates met January 15-17 at the U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego, California for a completely open-forum style meeting. Topics of discussion included operational challenges, staff recruitment, retention and training, database management, financial management, marketing and communications. Lengthy conversations were held on each topic and attendees shared their stories of successes and challenges with their peers. There was also time for attendees to bring up topics not on the agenda that they had questions about.

Attendees left feeling refreshed, motivated and ready to implement ideas they learned over the course of the meeting. When asked we received very positive feedback from the attendees.

"I liked the open forum format of the meetings. I feel that it allowed for some topics to be discussed that otherwise didn't fit onto the agenda."

"I also liked the group outing and dinner. It served to bring me closer to my fellow attendees than any meeting could."

"The round table discussion with input from all the members was very helpful."

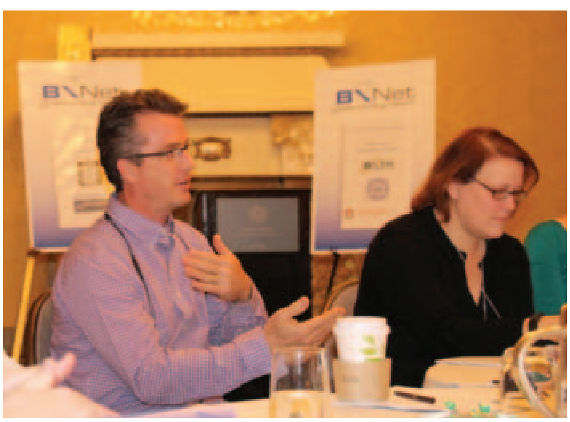
"Good networking session."

A special thanks to our member sponsors who helped make this meeting possible: Barryhund Administrators, Builders Exchange of Tennessee, Builders and Contractors Exchange, Inc., Calgary Construction Association, Ottawa Construction Association and Spokane Regional Plan Center.

From left to right: Dave Smith of Calgary Construction Association, Ron Hambley of Winnipeg Construction Association and Jason Stefanik of Del Communications.

From left to right: Dick Heldenbrand, Sheila Erickson of LaCrosse Builders Exchange, Amy Harper of Builders Exchange of Wisconsin, Inc. and Rita Heldenbrand of Spokane Regional Plan Center.

The attendees sharing their thoughts and ideas.



Rex Klein of Barryhund Administrators addressing the group.

From left to right: Barbara Davenport, Phil Davenport of Builders and Contractors Exchange, Inc. and Amy Smith of Calgary Construction Association.

Group discussion during the open forum sessions.

The BXNET would like to say a special thanks to all the Member Sponsors of this meeting:

Barryhund Administrators
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Calgary Construction Association
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Ottawa Construction Association
Silver Member Sponsor

The Spokane Regional Plan Center
Bronze Member Sponsor

CHOICE CHANNELS

The Platforms that Matter in Social Media Marketing Services

By Alleli Aspil

In an increasingly "social" world, having the right communication channel for your company is more important than ever, and the list of social media platforms grows longer. The choices seem endless: Tumblr, Twitter, Facebook, Blogger, YouTube. These are just some of the channels dominating social media marketing services.

But which ones should you choose?

While any social media channel will be an extremely useful tool in your company's inbound marketing strategy, there are a few broad trends you should be aware of. The type of social media solutions your company will want to use depends on the depth of your brand messaging and the demographics of the group being targeted. The latter can be a bit tricky, so analyzing the age, interests, and other characteristics of a company's target market is an important first step in determining which social media channel to use.

A young, hip student is likely to spend more time checking out new content on Tumblr or Pinterest, and exploring predetermined pages on YouTube or Facebook. A more mature audience, however, is likely to be found on LinkedIn Groups and Google+ Communities.

Online publishing platforms like Blogger or Wordpress work particularly well for B2B businesses. They allow companies to highlight their own expertise and knowledge, establishing credibility and exclusivity of content. A firm's insight into the world of financial investment, for example, is communicated much more effectively through a whole blog post than in 140 characters on Twitter. If a B2B business wants to utilize Twitter, they would be better off using this particular social media solution to promote blog posts or news, rather than communicating entire company ideals.

Twitter, though fast becoming part of the suite of B2B social media marketing services, is really more of a B2C communication channel. B2C firms that seek to communicate directly with customers often find many advantages to platforms that allow them to monitor customers' reactions real-time, the way Twitter does. Twitter also offers companies the opportunity to reply directly to potential or returning customers, without having to search for contact information or sales data. Establishing a corporate Twitter account has the advantage of being extremely quick and easy to update. Instead of spending weeks creating advertisements and sending them out via e-mail marketing and the like, companies can now update customers on promotions and sales within minutes, spreading the business's message farther and more quickly.

If your company is social media savvy, YouTube is also among the top social media solutions for content marketing. While compelling YouTube videos require more work, they are more effective in capturing the attention of a broader audience.

Now what if you're all for social media, but don't have the bandwidth to take them on? Like with any other business process, outsourcing this type of marketing is a cost-effective way of ensuring you receive premium social media solutions. Knowing which channel to use and how to use them requires expertise and experience – why not leave your company's social media venture in the capable hands of professionals?

Subcontracting social media marketing services doesn't mean a company is disowning its brand. An article on outsourcing, published just recently, explains why outsourcing actually enhances the brand experience.

In the end, finding the right social media solutions for your business is tricky and time-consuming, but the work will be all worth it, because when done right, social media marketing gives great rewards.

Alleli Aspili is a Strategic Solutions Specialist in Infinit Outsourcing, Inc. (Infinit-O).

Here are helpful tips for preventing employee issues relating to employee use of the internet at work to access social media sites. These tips may help you to think about how to begin to craft your own internet usage policy which could encompass areas such as social media, and employee internet use.

- Get familiar with Facebook, Linked In or other sites that are popular with your employees.
- Update current company policies.
- Consider whether your company environment needs a specific social media policy.
- Prohibit use of the employee's company e-mail address.
- Discourage your managers from "friending" their subordinate employees.
- Immediately get a copy of any post that is the subject of a complaint.
- Only use social media for employment screening in a consistent way.
- Warn managers to follow standard policies for recommendations on Linked In or other professional sites.
- Be aware of possible protected, concerted activity.
- Above all, use common sense.

Board Education and Orientation

By Robert C. Harris, CAE

After many board meetings I hear the staff say, "they loaded me up with all sorts of new projects." One way to ease the volunteers from unloading on staff is to educate leaders about their roles and responsibilities, strategic goals, resources and committees.

Starting with Nominations

The education process starts with the nominating committee explaining the expectations and qualifications required of leadership. The purpose of nominations is not simply identifying potential leaders

By having the committee, inform candidates of their responsibilities, the message has the power of coming from their peers and not staff. Don't be afraid of asking the nominating committee to require a *written pledge* of nominees that they will fulfill their duties.

The committee should inform nominees of the time and financial expectations, plus discuss the added requirements for committee participation, fund-raising, etc. Nominees' skills should complement the strategic goals. (This is also the time to advise leaders they are expected to open their e-mail at least weekly, including attachments!)

Orienting the Board

After elections, an orientation is key to a successful year. Many organizations disregard it because the board or chairperson thinks it isn't important or there isn't enough time.

Orientation is the opportunity for staff to explain board responsibilities, the board-staff relationship and organizational goals. A well-planned orientation takes 2 to 3 hours and makes a lasting impact. It should not be something squeezed into the coffee break at a meeting!

Orientation Manuals

An orientation manual transfers knowledge to volunteers. Give them the information and tools they need to be good leaders early in their term.

Few volunteers understand the *mechanics* of boardmanship. While each director may be good at running a business or the best in his or her profession, they may feel uneasy with agendas, rules of order, nonprofit finances and governance.

Once you create a manual it is easy to update annually. Stress to leaders that the manual has the answers needed for good governance and can reduce calls to the staff with questions that can be answered by its contents.

Here are some items to include in your manual.

— Bylaws
— Calendar of Events
— Board, Staff Rosters
— Committees, Chapters
— Budget
— Mission Statement
— History-Fact Sheet
— Strategic Plan
— Forms
— Rules of Order
— Member Benefits/Services
— Policies

The most common format for an orientation manual is a three-ring binder. (The table of contents can serve as the orientation agenda.) Other formats include a virtual manual hosted on a website or a CD-ROM with all contents.

The Orientation Agenda

Boards think of orientation as a static presentation about the organization's history and purpose. They spend 100% of the time listening and never discuss leader responsibilities.

Orientation discussion should be allocated to include discussions of 30% history, purpose and operations; 30% board roles and responsibilities; 15% on board risks, and 25% goals and how to achieve them.

Barriers

There are barriers to governance that should be discussed at orientation.

Sacred Cows – Anything that is regarded as being untouchable. For example, a board member who never shows up but has been on the board for a year. Or a pet project that has cost the organization time and money with minimal return, but is favored by a small group.

Size Matters – The average board size is 19 persons. Larger boards can be unwieldy and costly. Nonprofit boards are downsizing to expedite decision-making.

Personal Agendas – Ask leaders to check personal agendas at the door. The actions of the board are for the well-being of the organization and must be supported by everyone, no matter whether they voted for or against motions.

Finances Count – Spend extra time with the elected treasurer to build their confidence in understanding and presenting financial reports. You want a treasurer that can satisfy the leadership that safeguards exist and he or she has the complete picture of assets.

Respect for Chair and Agenda – All discussion and motions go through the chairperson who maintains order and runs a fair and efficient meeting. The purpose of an agenda is to focus on important matters and to avoid sidebar chats that create antitrust or libel risks, for instance.

Run Like a Business – Successful nonprofits are complex, even becoming management companies themselves. Many boards oversee a combination of foundations, political action committees and for-profit companies. (Remember the term "not-for-profit" is only a classification and does not mean the organization should not make a profit or build reserves!)

Be Futurists – The board's role is not micromanagement but rather setting the course to guide the organization to best serve the trade or profession. Keep the leadership focused on the future; help them monitor trends and provide reports to anticipate and make assumptions about members' needs.

Obsession – If there is one obsession at the board table, it should be on the mission, vision and value. Work and resources should be directed at the goals in the strategic plan. The plan is your organization's roadmap.

In summary, an effective orientation improves the understanding and work of volunteers. It clarifies roles for leaders and keeps them on track to achieve the organization's mission.

Robert C. Harris, CAE, conducts association strategic planning and leadership development. He can be contacted at bob@rchcae.com or 850/570-6000 in Tallahassee, FL. Additional information about board orientation is posted on his website at www.nonprofitcenter.com.

Along with the convenience of only having one card and supplier, fleet fuel cards implement and develop controls with the fleet fuel industry in mind!

MOMENTUM GROUPS

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TOP 5 REASONS TO HAVE FLEET FUEL CARD:

Momentum Groups wants you to know the advantages of using a fleet fuel card. While the reasons are endless, we have narrowed it into five categories: Improved Level III Data, Further Control, Functionality as an Expense Management Tool, Offered Discounts, and Security. **Improved Level III Data**: You can now access data such as odometer reading, unit number, card number, PIN or driver ID number, driver name, number of gallons, cost per gallon, fuel grade, time of day, and day of week. **Further Control**: Fleet fuel cards now offer limits on number of transactions, times of day, days of week, transaction's dollar amounts, and product codes. **Expense Management Tool**: With a fleet fuel card, the days of paper expense reports for employee reimbursements are gone! **Offered Discounts**: Using one comprehensive report, fleet managers can track fuel purchase types, times, and amounts. **Security**: Fuel card providers are developing systems for authorization prompts, making it nearly impossible for unauthorized persons to use the card or for the card to be used on a non-company vehicle. These improvements give fleet fuel cards an industry-specific advantage that corporate purchasing cards cannot rival.

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BXNET members that wish to participate in this affinity program are entitled to obtain discounted shipping services through UPS and an annual 1% rebate, based on total shipping volume, to increase non-dues revenue stream. Members of BXNET receive 36% off all air shipments and 8% on ground.

Convenience and Time-savings:

- Single point of contact for all your shipping needs, a single website for all shipment tracking, a single invoice for all shipping costs.
- Get freight quotes, book shipments, create waybills, order supplies, track shipments from multiple carriers, view, edit and void shipments from your desktop.
- Store shipping preferences & 90 days of history.
- Print reports, download data, and select billing options that suit your needs.

Individual Solutions Save U Money: Unishippers consultants will assess specific needs for free and create a complete, individualized solution by analyzing your recent shipping trends.

To participate, you must be an active member of the BXNET and have an account set up with Unishippers/UPS. To set up an account, go to: http://www.unishippers.com/shipping-services/IBEE_Form.htm.