

# ACEC / Missouri BUSINESS PRACTICE SEMINAR SURVEY

## -- RESULTS --

8/1/17

### 1. Seminar Topics -- Choose Five (5) Business Seminar Topics You Would Like Considered and Rank Them (1 to 5, with 1 being first choice):

<u>1</u>	Leadership Development & Practice / Coaching & Mentoring Your Staff	<u>6</u>	Management / Principles & Practice
<u>2</u>	Design-Build for Design Professionals	<u>7</u>	Compensation & Benefits
<u>3</u>	Business Plan Development	<u>8</u>	Financial Management / Profitability
<u>4</u>	Staff Quality / Recruiting / Training / Retaining	<u>9</u>	Cloud Computing
<u>5</u>	Strategic Planning	<u>10</u>	Marketing / Business Development

### 2. What are the three most pressing business practices issues facing your firm today?

- Agency Funding Problems
- Alternative delivery model vs. profitability
- Attracting and retaining quality talent
- Attracting high quality talent
- Attracting staff to a small market
- Branch consistency/operations
- Building Backlog to Support Consistent Utilization
- Business Development
- Business Development / Sales
- Business Development Plan
- Cash Flow Management
- Changes in technology
- Client/Agencies Dictating Maximum Multipliers
- Coaching & Mentoring Your Staff
- Commoditization of engineering services
- Compensation
- Compensation packages
- Competition from larger firms
- Consistent workload due to inadequate transportation funding
- Constant changes in IT tools
- Continuing Education
- Continuing to innovate digital workflows
- Contractual pay issues
- Controlling overhead
- Controlling overhead costs in general
- Cost of benefits
- D/B can shut out non-set aside mid-sized firms
- Delegation of Duties
- Developing office culture across multiple locations
- Developing young staff into project managers
- Effective political engagement and involvement
- Employee retention
- Executing a Sound QC Plan in a Hectic Design Environment
- Finding work
- Finding people
- Forecasting the next downturn
- Funding/market potential
- Growing our Business
- Growth and hiring
- Growth Planning
- Hard to find good people

- Having enough work
- Having the right balance of technical staff
- Health insurance cost and future planning for it
- High Overhead
- Hiring experienced staff
- Incorporating d/b into project activities
- Increasing level of design/build projects
- Internal pressure to stay highly billable
- IT Connectivity
- Lack of long-term planning
- Lack of mentoring and leadership
- Leadership development (3)
- Leadership succession
- Leveraging software in design processes
- Liability
- Lots of competition
- Managing growth
- Marketing/Business Development
- Meeting client's ever increasing expectations
- Need to expand through acquisition
- Operational Efficiency
- Owner transitions
- Ownership Succession (2)
- Ownership transition (2)
- Personnel Recruiting
- Pressure by clients to do more work at lower cost and shorter schedules
- Price based selections
- Profitability (2)
- Project and business management
- Project management (2)
- Project Management Practices
- Quality Hires
- Recruiting
- Recruiting strong talent
- Recruiting, Training, Retaining quality staff
- Recruitment & Retention
- Retaining quality employees
- Retention
- Rising IT costs
- Selling more engineering services
- Software Programs
- Staff too busy to focus on marketing
- Succession Planning
- Talent Identification and Recruitment
- Teaching engineering skills; passing on experiential knowledge
- Time management
- Training and personal development
- Uncertain future of government funding
- Unfriendly contracts
- Uninformed clients regarding level of service
- Writing Proposals to the Client's Preference

**Of these, which one would your firm be most likely to spend training budget to address?**

- Attracting staff to a small market
- Branch consistency/operations
- Business Development/ Sales
- Client/Agencies Dictating Maximum Multipliers
- Coaching & Mentoring Your Staff
- Consistent workload due to inadequate transportation funding
- Continuing to innovate digital workflows

- Controlling overhead costs in general
- Cost of benefits
- Design/Build - contractor/consultant agreements and expectations
- Developing young staff into project managers
- Efficient marketing
- Executing a Sound QC Plan in a Hectic Design Environment
- Hiring experienced staff
- How to compete in today's consulting market
- Leadership Development (2)
- Likely, none of them
- Managing growth
- Marketing
- Marketing - finding work
- Operational Efficiency
- Passing on experiential knowledge
- PM Practices
- Pressure by clients to do more work at lower cost and shorter schedules
- Profitability
- Project and business management
- Project management
- Recruitment & retention
- Selling more engineering services
- Succession Planning
- Training and personal development

**3. What type of professional would you most prefer to hear discuss the topics previously ranked?**

- 1   Business Leader – A/E Industry
- 2   Executive Coach
- 3   Business Leader – Non-A/E
- 4   Legislator/Politician

**4. What day of the week works best for ACEC/MO Seminars (rank your top 3 choices - number 1 thru 3; 1 being first choice)?**

- 1   Friday
- 2   Thursday
- 3   Wednesday
- 4   Tuesday
- 5   Saturday
- 6   Monday

**5. Preferred location:**

- 1   Jefferson City / Columbia
- 2   St. Louis
- 3   Kansas City
- 4   Springfield

**6. Your Programs & Seminars Committee is seeking your input regarding how to make its seminars program responsive to the needs of your firm. Please provide your suggestions as to how ACEC/MO can best serve your firm's business practices training needs.**

- Continue to focus on current industry challenges.
- Half day presentations on current topics.
- Identify small groups that have common interests or priorities for seminars. Also focus on topics/groups that don't have competing interests - participants need to be willing to share experiences, feedback, etc.

- Keep asking for input on topics.
- Keep programs to 2-3 hours and make them interactive.
- Offer business practice sessions at conferences such as TEAM, or offer them individually throughout the state.
- Offer on-line webinars.
- Provide a range of seminar topics that apply to various sized firms and work type.
- Provide more information on the ACEC Life/Health Trust to groups.
- Speakers that are industry experts less transportation focused topics CEO/COOs of high growth consulting firms.
- Two hour seminars in multiple locations are better than half day or full day in one location.
- When possible and/or feasible, provide offerings in multiple geographic locations.
- Would like to target a wider more diverse audience at the ACEC seminars. Good topics for middle level folks.

**7. Your Programs & Seminars Committee is seeking your input regarding identifying topics and/or specific speakers to present at ACEC/MO functions. Please provide your suggestions as to how ACEC/MO can best serve your interest in identifying topics or speakers to present at ACEC/MO functions.**

- Always looking for great speakers addressing leadership.
- Consider different topics that are of interest to large and small firms, separately, if needed.
- Follow-up on Business Practice surveys to seek more specific information to ensure that topics are consistent with needs. Previous survey summaries can be overly broad and don't identify specific action plans.
- I think this survey is a good way to solicit ideas on topics.
- It might be good to get perspectives from non-engineers on certain topics. A mix of A/E and non-A/E presenters might be valuable.
- Life/health Trust information and programing associated with it.
- Panel of client types to tell us what clients want today.
- Possibly we could get some forecasting on health insurance after Congress changes the rules.
- Provide speakers for the seminar topics selected above. The speakers should be good presenters and should have a firm understanding of the topic on which they are speaking.
- Recruiting methods for top talent.
- Speakers on Professional Ethics.
- The business survey is good for this.
- Until we can move the needle politically in Missouri and have a more substantial transportation program like what is happening in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Iowa, it will be difficult to get investment in local issues. This is why I suggested topics in effective political engagement and involvement from speakers that would be judged successful in moving their legislative issues forward.

**8. Your Programs & Seminars Committee is seeking your input regarding what seminars or speakers would be of great interest or value that your firm would encourage more members to attend. Please provide your suggestions.**

- A speaker from outside our industry that would cover how to navigate sea changes would be interesting.
- Communication and presentation skills.
- Differentiate between seminars/speakers that would be attractive to executives/management vs. those that would have broader interest for production staff.
- Getting millennials interested in career development How to make branch offices succeed Expanding your core services into branch offices.
- Leadership - Dan Oblinger would be great.
- Leadership and communications.
- Life/Health Trust.
- Offer on-line webinars.
- Project Management Topics.
- Seminar to address true client survey and feedback criteria.
- Topics covering pertinent changes in the economy.
- We seem to have good attendance from more senior staff in ACEC/MO. Younger staff seem to be more interested in the integration of technology both in the industry and in design and the potential implications for our practice. Maybe this would draw younger interest.