



**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Accountability: Challenges in a Remote Work Environment

Facilitator Name: Steve Wendland and Jason Stoops

Participants: 11

Discussion Points:

- Setting specific metrics for team member accountability
- How to deliver feedback when team members aren't meeting standards (phone, video, in-person)
- Are you allowing more leeway with remote situations?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- cameras are always on for zoom/teams calls
- we have incorporated 5 to 10 minute calls every morning for groups/departments to go through daily work load/anticipated billability to head off employees who are not producing
- being clear about what the utilization goal needs to be for all staff, especially for those working from home, to head of utilization issue
- if you are light on work, you are going to be in the office for non-billable tasks
- increased audits of project files
- providing negative feedback is still best done face to face, even in a virtual world, so that body language, tone can best be understood.
- virtual meeting/happy hour for employees without the supervisor to help build trust/camaraderie amongst peers
- associate/principal needs to be in the office to help facilitate mentoring/accountability
- need to define what the metrics are for being successful, and is that the same working from home or in the office.
- as professionals, be direct and ask what their quality of work is like working at home
- junior staff should send out note to supervisors that they are not busy and need billable work

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Often there is not a one size fits all policy, and managers really need to know their employees strengths/weaknesses and tailor their accountability/metrics (for example, virtual employees productivity/billability has suffered, so they will be required to return to work in the office)

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- Incorporating a 5 to 10 minute phone call every morning for groups/departments to go through everyone's daily work load to head off billability issues, and redirect work to staff that has capacity
- cameras should always on for zoom/teams calls is a best practice (unless driving)
- if you are light on work, you are going to be in the office for non-billable tasks
- providing negative feedback is still best done face to face, even in a virtual world, so that body language, tone can best be understood.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: DEI Adds Value
Facilitator Name: Kathryn Ekman
Participants: 3**

Discussion Points:

- Benefits of supporting diverse viewpoints in policymaking decisions
- How does diversity of opinions make us more profitable?
- Can diversity help attract and retain more talent to the industry?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- There is a small pool of diverse candidates in some locations – can feel constrained by who is available in your local area. May need to work harder to advertise to people you may not have before – perhaps from a different region, maybe a more diverse pool. How do you decide on spending to bring in people (e.g., intern from elsewhere who needs housing) and what the value is?
- It matters a lot to younger generations to at least show you are trying to progress. Younger people ask about social causes, outreach, sustainability – going to spend a lot of time at work, want to find a good culture.
- As a leader, you need to be able to accept criticism and listen to other perspectives – looking for other opinions is important.
- Training is needed for some on implicit bias because they do not understand why these initiatives are needed. Long-term benefit may not be seen (fear of change or what we do not understand).
- Adding “equity” is important because of the shift in meaning – if we are equitable and inclusive, diversity will naturally follow. The word “diversity” can sometimes cause a negative response because people think of quotas or a zero-sum situation.
- Upper management wants to stay competitive, which means having the best employees – it is not just about being a good person, it is also about profit and making more money. Clients are looking for different perspectives – having different people together breeds this environment that can lead to more profit.
- If people are isolated, they may not produce as well as they can – the more people can feel included and part of the team, the better they can produce and the better the company does.
- When the next recession comes, what will happen to these initiatives? The spending on training, etc. may drop. Flip side – good talent brought in will already be there.
- Recent experience example: looking for people who are not engineers, but have field experience (e.g., contractor experience) – fill a role and bring a totally different

perspective. Member firm added value by having a non-engineer woman fill a role, and had an added benefit of someone other women could come to with field issues. There is knowledge and experience to bring in that the traditional engineering types may not have. There was resistance to the idea initially (not the usual way to do things), but it has worked out very well.

- Example of lack of inclusion: a member firm changed their PTO arrangement, did not really discuss with the larger group, and it upset many people who rely on it for parental leave. A smaller group that is narrow in their perspective should have engaged others. Idea: "shadow board" of younger staff (e.g., Gen Z) to provide perspectives directly to senior management - they have good ideas and represent the next generation.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Training is needed for some on implicit bias because they do not understand why these initiatives are needed. Long-term benefit may not be seen (fear of change or what we do not understand).
- Upper management wants to stay competitive, which means having the best employees – it is not just about being a good person, it is also about profit and making more money. Clients are looking for different perspectives – having different people together breeds this environment that can lead to more profit. The more people can feel included and part of the team, the better they can produce and the better the company does.
- Two ideas: hiring non-engineers to fill roles where possible (opens pool of potential candidates up), and creating a "shadow board" of younger staff (e.g., Gen Z) to provide perspectives directly to senior management - they have good ideas and represent the next generation.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

In the CEO panel today, DEI was identified as a crucial issue for the survival of our industry, and yet the participation in the DEI roundtables are low relative to the other topics available. This is telling, and makes me wonder how we can drive more curiosity and engagement on DEI topics!

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: DEI Adds Value
Facilitator Name: Veronica De Freitas
Participants: 5**

Discussion Points:

- Benefits of supporting diverse viewpoints in policymaking decisions
- How does diversity of opinions make us more profitable?
- Can diversity help attract and retain more talent to the industry?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- When implementing policy it's important to have enough diversification as possible.
- When you have different perspectives you can create a policy that can be more effective and efficient.
- It may be worth having a good understanding of the company's demographics to make decisions taking into account the different cohorts of employees.
- Regardless of age and title, everyone needs to talk. There has to be an open discussion and a safe space to make policies that make sense from the board room to the field staff.
- Different ideas can lead to better ways to do things, be more efficient, and eventually be more profitable. People with the same background will have the same way to solve problems.
- DEI can help retain employees by providing a work environment where people feel comfortable working and feel seen. Example: Keith provided a different size car for different employees.
- The younger generation cares about DEI, and this can help attract more candidates and have a larger pool.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Take all perspectives into account when making decisions.
- Different ideas can lead to better ways to do things, be more efficient, and eventually be more profitable.
- The younger generation cares about DEI, and this can help attract more candidates and have a larger pool.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar



Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: DEI Adds Value
Facilitator Name: Veronica De Freitas
Participants: 7

Discussion Points:

- Benefits of supporting diverse viewpoints in policymaking decisions
- How does diversity of opinions make us more profitable?
- Can diversity help attract and retain more talent to the industry?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- It is important to have more diverse role models, so underrepresented groups can feel more represented and motivated. Allies can also help an underrepresented person feel recognized.
- Recognize all of our unconscious biases. Having an open mind, and being aware that you are biased is a big step.
- Females in the industry can't advance until males support them at home. I can be a mother and a mother and work. Why is the father not held to that same standard?
- For men, there is the pressure to work, not taking parental leave, not taking full advantage of the benefit because they will feel it will hurt their career.
- There is a strong generation shift and a completely different way of thinking. We need to keep up with generation shifts in order to continue to attract young and diverse talent.
- Create an environment where you want to go to work and do the same for others. Understanding people's backgrounds can make a great place to work. The fact you recognize your biases or maybe lack of awareness can foster better work relationships.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Recognize your bias and being aware that there needs to be a shift in DEI in order for the industry to grow and be successful.
- Men can also be affected negatively by unconscious bias. Often men don't get parental leave or an opportunity to take their kids to the doctors and are expected to work more hours even after having a family.
- We need to keep up with the generational change.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:



None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Employee Recognition Programs: Big and Small Firms

Facilitator Name: Fiorentino

Participants: 7

Discussion Points:

- Importance of a formal program
- How to show appreciation
- Encouraging the show of appreciation for performance
- How to get everyone involved
- Promoting recognition outside the immediate area of influence
- Recognition: Sharing with a larger audience or keeping it personal

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- About half of firms represented had what they considered formal recognition programs, while others were less formal.
- Most firms have the ability to give spot bonuses to employees as recognition. This could be money or gift cards.
- Many firms use their firms intranets to recognize employees in a public manner.
- Some firm have annual awards for individuals nominated by staff (can be nominated by individuals at any level in company) and awards presented at a company function.
- Recognition can be as simple as sending an email or card on an employees birthday or anniversary, with same or greater affect than monetary gifts.
- Reward departments or office for successes by having group dinners, outings, food trucks at office, etc.
- Consider providing recognition gifts that can be shared with the staff family members, especially if rewarding them for working above and beyond normal hours which may take away from family time.
- Engineers are not always "touchy-feely", so need to make effort to recognize staff more frequently.
- End of year buses are not considered recognition, but rather financial compensation.
- Don't overlook top performers and recognize them like you would individuals who do something extraordinary on occasion.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Make sure any recognition is in a timely manner. (i.e. do not reward someone at end of year for something done several months earlier)



- Understand the person who is being recognized and present any associated gifts/certificates/praise in the appropriate forum. Some people prefer to be recognized publicly while others prefer to be recognized privately.
- It is difficult to keep favoritism, politics, expectations, etc out of the recognition process.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

No

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Employee Recognition Programs: Big and Small Firms

Facilitator Name: Marty Taube

Participants: 5

Discussion Points:

- Importance of a formal program
- How to show appreciation
- Encouraging the show of appreciation for performance
- How to get everyone involved
- Promoting recognition outside the immediate area of influence
- Recognition: Sharing with a larger audience or keeping it personal

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- formal program should be genuine, formal for tenure/service (concern is 20 yrs not typical for young), formal/informal for performance, comment cards for anyone; formal program operated by HR, concerns over employee opinion, accessibility for events all types of employees (field vs office professionals) don't always measure results/impact b/c not always equal (formal system hard to be agile b/c of various markets, tasks; mind state of new generation, motivation or engagement
- recognition for certifications (monetary)
- peer to peer recognition (star, goodie bag, gift card)
- employee gets bank and spend on other employee (can spend at company store)
- birthday cards all signed; small office allows more intimate engagement
- picnic/party w/ travel included; employee shout-outs at end of meeting; employee of the year voted on by branch
- professional awards voted on by senior level for annual meeting
- legacy award
- empowered as employee to make decisions culturally over recognition or on personal preference
- managers showing appreciation
- formal program may not be necessary if great leaders but formal program is a fail safe/minimum
- community service days given to employee - can be given as a \$ value, or voluntary vs paid?
- employee only and employee & family events
- expectation management
- experience more memorable than gift item

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- large company has to rely on the small groups - not corporate responsibility

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- experiences/empowerment valued over monetary/gifts
- easier to administer in small firms than large
- formal recognition programs should not replace informal personal exchanges/recognition or simple thank you's (Don't let a certificate replace engagement).

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

maybe

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

Programs should be thoughtfully administered and not all employees will be motivated by the same programs. There are some people that do not at all like public recognition, but their reward for good performance is public recognition. Peer to peer recognition can be very valuable and a way to get all employees engaged and to build moral. Voting and nominating employees. Employees given accounts from which they can recognize colleagues and deposit money into their company swag store account Community service days given to employees

Round Table Summaries

2022 Spring Conference

Topic: Employee Recognition Programs: Big and Small Firms

Facilitator Name: Marty Taube

Participants: 9

Discussion Points:

- Importance of a formal program
- How to show appreciation
- Encouraging the show of appreciation for performance
- How to get everyone involved
- Promoting recognition outside the immediate area of influence
- Recognition: Sharing with a larger audience or keeping it personal

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Many companies do not have formal programs
- Many companies do recognize service (years employed)
- Spot bonuses are very valuable
- Individual awards can be too political
- Best to celebrate group accomplishments individual gifts with personalized note
- Can give peer badges for exhibiting certain values, goes on employee profile
- Send gift to spouse/family.
- Make sure to see people and help them with any problems they have
- Send people to training as recognition
- Career achievements/certifications
- Take to lunch or breakfast - one a week or month People are motivated by different things

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Its not the money, recognition must be customized - must get to know employees to know what the like and how they are motivated. Recognition can be difficult because it can get political, you can overlook steady performers, there can be favoritism
Recognize people with promotions and with added responsibility, added trusts

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Perhaps

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

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May be worth exploring further and bringing in an expert to present on best practices for employee recognition programs.

Round Table Summaries**2022 Spring Conference****Topic: Leveraging Technology: Improve Quality and Efficiency?****Facilitator Name: Ryan White****# Participants: 4****Discussion Points:**

- Using UAVs to more easily collect data or assess infrastructure
- Remote sensing devices for improved efficiency
- Harnessing the data: Collecting and storing
- Using AI

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- UAV - survey, construction inspection, infrastructure evaluation, Lidar collection
- What do you do with all that data? How do you file that data, data management? How do you process all that data?
- Younger generation excited about technology and new tools, working for contractors vs. consultants
- Mass grading uses gis/lasers. Density testing may be replaced by modulus testing?
- AI - could be used classify soils, develop subsurface conditions from database of existing data, but requires calibration and human quality control
- AI could be used to combine multiple data sources - surface (survey, UAV photogrammetry) and subsurface (drilling/sampling, CPT, geophysical).
- Institutional knowledge is disappearing - standardized, digital data, quality of data, sharing data, who is responsible/liable for the data.
- Software - programming mundane/repetitive tasks is becoming even more common.
- Cost - new technology is expensive, larger vs. smaller companies abilities invest, transitioning to "free" tools/software
- Physical sampling going away? No drilling? Fewer, confirmation explorations - Instrumentation - work smarter, not harder using sensors (getting cheaper), automation, AI with real-time monitoring
- AR modeling, can be relatively inexpensive, inform exploration

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Reduction in physical sampling drilling by using less intrusive methodologies such as geophysical testing, CPTs, sensors, existing data from databases.
- Cost - new technology is expensive. Do larger companies have an advantage? Actually lots of free tools available and universities are going away from proprietary tools and software. Becoming more affordable.

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- AR modeling, supplement traditional methodologies, efficient selection of exploration locations or areas of interest. "Show" clients.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

Round Table Summaries

2022 Spring Conference

Topic: Leveraging Technology: Improve Quality and Efficiency?

Facilitator Name: Ryan White

Participants: 4

Discussion Points:

- Using UAVs to more easily collect data or assess infrastructure
- Remote sensing devices for improved efficiency
- Harnessing the data: Collecting and storing
- Using AI

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- UAV - larger projects, limited access, quantities
- Changing an analogue system to a digital system
- Data - assimilating large volumes of data, collect in "digital" makes easier, convert from paper to digital
- Everything is a map - densities, subsurface conditions, concrete strengths... create a digital continuum
- Real-time, automated monitoring - as standalone, and IN equipment
- AI to scan, compile, digitize analogue data
- Better quality/efficiency in field using ipads, automate/compile reports
- Improved efficiency in materials by compiling and evaluating data

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Changing an analogue system to a digital system
- Everything is a map - densities, subsurface conditions, concrete strengths... create a digital continuum
- Real-time, automated monitoring - as standalone, and IN equipment

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

Round Table Summaries

2022 Spring Conference

Topic: Leveraging Technology: Improve Quality and Efficiency?

Facilitator Name: Tim Rodriguez

Participants: 4

Discussion Points:

- Using UAVs to more easily collect data or assess infrastructure
- Remote sensing devices for improved efficiency
- Harnessing the data: Collecting and storing
- Using AI

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- How can all disciplines use UAV's - lots of talk about it, what are the requirements and applications that can be leveraged. Applications and availability varies greatly between firms. There is general interest and exploration, but little that has become mainstream. In general the approach has been to sub work to firms specializing in UAV use and data collection.
- Obstacles are costs (money and time) and work efficiency.
- Instrumentation for remote sensing devices - good solution where the application is correct. Opportunities for larger projects where significant labor cost savings are possible. Also, opportunistic when the correct project / problem presents remote sensors as a good solution (Larger projects / critical items). Needs exposure, education, and reinforcement from proven work examples and industry acceptance (also standards organizations).
- AI - Robotics and AI are going to become more prevalent and available time progresses. Discussions about AI for proactive communications or improvements on efficiencies.
- Considerations of technology use largely comes down to cost and risk. More exposure and ongoing education is needed to stay on top or ahead of what is available.
- Still need to have engineer's who understand the core technical aspects of our work. Technology can extend and leverage the knowledge and abilities of professionals. However, trust in computers will present a challenge for engineers to remain the valued source of expertise.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Discussion was focused on the use of UAV's, remote sensing devices and the use of artificial intelligence.
- The use of all types of technology seem to be primarily opportunistic and driven by cost savings or efficiencies, and also for large or specialized projects. There is general

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interest, but its typically being outsourced to a specialized firm or group. Great solutions where the application is correct.

- Significant time investment is needed to stay apprised and in front of the solutions that are available for use. Because of this adoptions seems to improve over time as availability and acceptance of solutions becomes more available.
- Discussion around considerations of technology use, primarily opportunity, cost and risk. As AI is applied the need to have engineer's who understand the core technical aspects of our work. Technology can extend and leverage the knowledge and abilities of professionals. However, trust in computers will present a challenge for engineers to remain the valued source of expertise.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

An engineering/emerging technology committee that facilitates the delivery of presentations and webinars that educate membership on advances in technology and new applications could add value to the organization.

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Providing a Safe Place in a Culture of Change

Facilitator Name: Carrie Foulk

Participants: 5

Discussion Points:

- Implementing balanced policies after listening to all sides, including emerging voices
- Weighing the requests for activism support: When businesses should say no
- Discussing decisions openly: How to make your team feel heard, even if views don't align with company decisions

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Covid started a lot of change. Leadership started to understand that they need to over-communicate. Lean into the change. CEOs are feeling like if they made it through the last 2 years, you can lead during anything.
- People's personalities came out - anxiety about only being home or only being in the office. People afraid of change might leave. Personalities changed. People's personal lives caused them to be not be able to change. Businesses had to adapt to personal lives. Businesses took it one step at a time and then over-communicate.
- Animosity between employees who got to work from home and those that didn't. Gave gifts to make them feel appreciated and heard.
- Emerging voices which are perhaps young, aren't being heard by older voices. Forced to listen hard to everyone. So many unique concerns have come out.
- Resistance to change from the older people. example tablets.
- Adjustable schedules - need to explain the repercussions, education, explain benefits and risks and make an informed decision instead of knee-jerk reaction
- Listen to even seemingly silly ideas. No silly ideas or questions.
- Ask questions to understand why there is a resistance to change. Try to meet in the middle. What is your perspective. Help me understand.
- Be open to the fact that were defensive the first time around and be open the next time. It's ok to admit that you were wrong and show your staff that is ok to be wrong.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Over communicate about change.
- Listen to all voices and if all changes can't be accommodated, help people understand why and provide a plan to accommodate that change eventually. No idea is a silly idea. If you don't understand someone's point of view, ask them to help you understand their perspective and meet in the middle.

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- Model openness to change. If you are wrong, admit it. If you were defensive to change the first time around, try to be less resistant next time around. If you keep shooting down different ideas, people will stop coming to you with new ideas.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Providing a Safe Place in a Culture of Change

Facilitator Name: Carrie Foulk

Participants: 10

Discussion Points:

- Implementing balanced policies after listening to all sides, including emerging voices
- Weighing the requests for activism support: When businesses should say no
- Discussing decisions openly: How to make your team feel heard, even if views don't align with company decisions

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- We shouldn't be working for that client because of philosophical issues?
- Younger generation may be unhappy about working for companies than the older generation wouldn't worry about.
- Activism. Need a policy for dealing with activism so that you can keep your lights on.
- Hard to find balance for feedback but still need to be able to say no.
- Need to welcome people from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.
- Use uncomfortable discussions as teaching.
- Who deserves life safety.
- We can be supportive of activism but don't need to be part of it as a company. But we can provide support in the form of days off or resources. But it's ok to say no to contributions to radical causes.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

see above

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Maybe

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

Not a ton of people have this issue but could be a big problem if it becomes more of an issue.

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Private Equity
Facilitator Name: Mark Kramer
Participants: 5**

Discussion Points:

- What makes geoprofessional firms attractive to private equity?
- Is this a viable option for ownership succession?
- Expectations for capital investment
- How to choose the right private equity partner

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Be aware of concerns by employees just outside the room when transitioning or bringing in equity or new owners.
- Technology investments should be considered for scaling. Better to use off the shelf systems then developing internal systems.
- Aligning the interests of the PE firm, investors and the team. Provide ownership to employees for alignment. Equity may be better than retention bonus.
- Understand the time horizons of the fund and what there goals and financial expectations.
- Bring financial and professional management so you can focus on delivering work
- More disciplined and will hold you accountable while helping you succeed. But understand you are already being held accountable.
- Run your company well and like you want to sell and you will never want to sell.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Like any relationship need to find the right partner that fits your goals and culture.
- Consider all the people and key stakeholders in the transaction and get alignment quickly during and after any change in ownership.
- Pay attention to details and understand your goals and horizons and partners goals. Make sure you both understand what success looks like.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

No

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Private Equity
Facilitator Name: Guy Marcozzi
Participants: 7

Discussion Points:

- What makes geoprofessional firms attractive to private equity?
- Is this a viable option for ownership succession?
- Expectations for capital investment
- How to choose the right private equity partner

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

NA

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Right fit of selling firm and PE group is essential. Expectations for post close expectations of culture, autonomy, support, investment, professional support , financial performance, recapitalization timeline abs strategy, valuation, class A and B shares, debt limits and many others
- Where is Private Equity attractive relative to other ownership options ? Purchase price , ability to meaningfully engage in broader leadership and culture, enhanced expansion and resource capabilities, professional management help

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Let's monitor interest

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Soft Skills for Leaders
Facilitator Name: Kurt Fraese
Participants: 8**

Discussion Points:

- Are leadership development programs working in teaching soft skills? Not a lot of great soft skill leadership training.
- Emotional Intelligence: How do you teach leaders how to remain empathetic even if the news is bad.
- How do you help leaders understand different personality types and the benefits of personality diversity?
- People aren't numbers: How do you balance the people side of productivity goals?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Are soft skills (human skills) teachable? Yes
- However, there isn't a lot of great leadership training.
- Leadership has become more important
- You must be willing to open up and learn soft skills. You must be able to follow-through with what you learn.
- Personality trait programs are effective. In depth analysis and building blocks to strengthen good traits and how to communicate in ways that are effective with their personality.
- Business busyness can be a barrier to follow-through on programs.
- You must take about caring and empathy as part of the culture. Investing in this will transform careers.
- Empathy also is a critical factor in client relationships.
- Younger generation seems more empathetic. People care more about mental health now than years ago.
- When there is bad news, lead with your head implement with your heart.
- How genuine is the emphasis on caring and empathy in this current employee market, when it becomes an employer market will we go back to old ways of taking harder lines?
- Soft skills are a core competency of teamwork.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Soft skills are human skills. They can be taught. There are firms and resources that address soft skills well. The keys are willingness to engage and follow-through.



- They help define corporate cultures and are core competencies of highly effective teams. Younger generations value soft skills highly and seem to care more about mental health.
- Lead with your head, implement with your heart.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

- Corporate psychologists serve as effective resources and advisors for some firms.
- ACEC's highly regarded Senior Executives Course (SEI) focusses on soft skills as the core of their leadership program.

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Soft Skills for Leaders
Facilitator Name: Kurt Fraese
Participants: 12**

Discussion Points:

- Are leadership development programs working in teaching soft skills? Not a lot of great soft skill leadership training.
- Emotional Intelligence: How do you teach leaders how to remain empathetic even if the news is bad.
- How do you help leaders understand different personality types and the benefits of personality diversity?
- People aren't numbers: How do you balance the people side of productivity goals?

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- The soft (human) skills can be taught, but follow-through is difficult. They require self reflection and self awareness.
- Use buddy system.
- The soft skills programs are like drinking from a fire hose.
- These soft skills are life skills and can be used at home as well.
- Pick one thing work on it, drill it in, practice. They can't be turned on and off. it's a continuous learning process. Constant feedback is good.
- 360 review processes and personality assessments help.
- When delivering bad news. Use context and leverage the why. Be direct. Be genuine. If you actually care, you'll find the right words. And make sure you listen.
- Lead for the good of the people under you. - Daniel from Blackburn
- Find coachable moments.
- Must be done in person.
- A new form of empathy new skills needed in a virtual world?

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Empathy and other soft skills are most effective in person, so virtual meetings and mediums are impediments to effective use of soft skills.
- Pick one soft skill work on it, drill it in, practice. They can't be turned on and off. it's a continuous learning process. Constant feedback is good. Soft skill development is not just valuable in work, but these are life skills and can be used effectively at home as well.



- When delivering bad news. Use context and leverage the why. Be direct. Be genuine. If you actually care, you'll find the right words. And make sure you listen. Lead for the good of the people under you. Find coachable moments.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None



**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Staffing Up in a Competitive Market
Facilitator Name: Liz Brown
Participants: 7**

Discussion Points:

- Innovation in finding new entry level staff
- Strategies to attract talent: Bonuses, higher wages, extra PTO?
- Adding diversity while recruiting new talent
- Biggest struggles with adding staff

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Have an active recruiting group
- Employee referral bonus
- Go to the colleges
- Look at the high schools
- Offer moving expenses, signing bonus
- Offer more PTO or a bank of PTO to start with
- The field isn't sexy
- Work from home
- Culture
- Freedom

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Put more resources towards recruiting. (professional but also for field staff)
- Go to the schools.
- Pay attention if the candidate wants higher pay versus more benefits, PTO, schedule flexibility versus higher pay

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None



**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference
Topic: Staffing Up in a Competitive Market
Facilitator Name: Liz Brown
Participants: 9**

Discussion Points:

- Innovation in finding new entry level staff
- Strategies to attract talent: Bonuses, higher wages, extra PTO?
- Adding diversity while recruiting new talent
- Biggest struggles with adding staff

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Local universities
- Need brand recognition
- Update websites to be more appealing for recruiting
- Hire interns
- Look outside the typical or exact job description
- Keep existing staff engaged and onboard, clear career path

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Think/look outside the box.
- Hire for attitude/skill set.
- Make website more appealing for recruiting

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference and/or webinar

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

None

**Round Table Summaries
2022 Spring Conference**

Topic: Staffing Up in a Competitive Market

Facilitator Name: Paul Ridlen

Participants: 8

Discussion Points:

- Innovation in finding new entry level staff
- Strategies to attract talent:
- Adding diversity while recruiting new talent
- Biggest struggles with adding staff

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Geoprosessions are not sexy -- need to find ways to promote the brand. - Presenting to colleges on Geotechnical Engineering - Using Handshake to recruit on college campuses - Alumni staff enlisted to actively recruit at their alma mater - Push the longevity of career opportunities to help overcome pay gap - Make the profession more attractive overall - Use social media to draw attention to the industry - Focus on the more innovative aspects of our industry (geophysical methods, GIS, drone imagery, computer-based in-situ testing)
- University programs shrinking from geoprosessions – Civil programs focusing on design
- Immigration reform needed to simplify the visa process to attract foreign engineers. - Lobby via ACEC for easier H1B visa process
- Bonuses, higher wages, extra PTO? - Quarterly salary adjustments - Increases in wages –
- Focus "recruiting" efforts in community outreach toward elementary-middle school age students to drum up interest in the field - Lack of interest in or understanding of the field
- Salary inflation -- it's a reality and we have to deal with it. Not be afraid to raise rates. - Lower compensation than other engineering fields - Not perceived as a glamorous career
- Stress/work-life balance

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- Support efforts to reform immigration laws -- partner with ASCE/ACEC
- Support efforts to promote geoprosessions at the university level -- larger scholarship funds
- Actively partner with educational institutions -- middle school, high school, university (e.g., presentations, field trips, career days, adjunct professors)

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Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments:

I can provide additional notes at a later time.

Round Table Summaries

2022 Spring Conference

Topic: Staffing Up in a Competitive Market

Facilitator Name: Paul Ridlen

Participants: 7

Discussion Points:

- Innovation in finding new entry level staff
- Strategies to attract talent: Bonuses, higher wages, extra PTO?
- Adding diversity while recruiting new talent
- Biggest struggles with adding

Summarize 10 key points from the discussion, concerns expressed, advice given, solutions offered, lessons learned, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic and discussion points:

- Add community colleges to the outreach efforts (see session 1) - A lot of kids are looking to the future and trying to find a reassurance that they have stability in their careers. We aren't reassuring them. - Is a degree necessary?
- Too many people are leaving the profession for other opportunities. - The pendulum has swung to the advantage of the employees. There are so many options. Historically, leaving the profession translates to a reduction in income. People in the tech and manufacturing industries are getting significantly more pay. - What we do isn't glamorous. - Youtube channel?
- The overall shortage of labor -- low unemployment. Be forward leaning on benefits. staff - Provide higher quality benefits. One firm pays 100% of the employee's cost. Seems that PTO is a recent trend. They can accrue up to 300 hours up to 5 years. Then up to 400 hours.
- The Boy Scouts have modules on geology and mechanical engineering. Could we create one for civil/geotechnical engineering.
- In some cases, may be able to use Project Managers that aren't engineers to free up engineers to leverage their technical skills.
- Could GBA create a field staff bootcamp? This supports smaller firms in particular.

Summarize top 3 items from the discussion to share with GBA members:

- The question was posed whether there should be an education/recruiting/promoting geoprofession committee. Wasn't a consensus in the group but it was a posed question.

Should this topic be explored further at a future conference/webinar?

Yes, conference

Additional facilitator thoughts/comments: None

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