



Millennials “enter the workforce in a deficit”

Simon Sinek discusses the challenges the new generation of workers faces. See page 8

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear fellow BXNet executive,

This newsletter introduces Angela Tristram and James Raiswell as the new husband and wife management team for BXNet.

Full disclosure here: I was the one who encouraged them to respond to the BXNet request for proposals several months back. Angela and James had previously put in several years at the Ottawa Construction Association before establishing their own communications business. Not wanting to lose their skills, energy and construction knowledge, I engaged them as contractors undertaking the OCA's monthly magazine, social media and event planning.

Last April, the BXNet board met in Chicago to interview four proponents for the BXNet management role. Angela and James were the consensus selection hands-down. BXNet as an organization will reap the benefits of this younger, more energetic and construction-knowledgeable team. You'll see evidence of that as you read the contents of this newsletter.

One thing I know about these two is that they are not afraid to pick up the phone. You will see in the articles that there are several builders exchanges interviewed for input. In my experience, that didn't happen at all with the previous management team.

This newsletter is also going to be more regular. We are going to issue it six times a year instead of four. The goal is to provide you with meaningful content throughout the year in order to further prove your investment in a BXNet membership. By the way, you will also notice that we lowered the annual membership fee to \$750 as part of an overall plan to recruit more members.

The Simon Sinek article is one I highly recommend that you read. Look for his talk on YouTube. Laura Regan of Eastern Contractors Association introduced the BXNet conference audience to the video last January and I for one was affected by the key messages. I came back from that conference and put in place a "No Smart Phone On Your Desk" policy right after. I knew I had an issue on my team. Seeing the video crystalized the problem for me and I had to act.

The piece on "What's Your Biggest Challenge" builds on the quick survey I sent out by email. We recruited three of the smartest exchange managers in the business to give their responses. I know some of you will take issue with the topic of having to pay for project plans and specifications, but check out Gregg Mazurek's insight. We do pay for subscriptions here in Ottawa.

The final article is about document naming software or rather it is really about how efficient can you make the project loading process. I am one of those managers that has a team of four doing everything, so I am guilty of being out of touch with the day-to-day project processing. Having said that, with a recent staff change I did jump in for a day and got caught up on the nitty gritty of receiving a project, renaming files and uploading. Speed and accuracy is paramount, and the little tricks and aids such as naming software can shave lots of administration time.

We also report on two new BXNet members: John Mollenhauer of the Toronto Construction Association and former IBEE member Jim Lyons of the Windsor Construction Association. Both are in Ontario, Canada. We have a few new American based Builders Exchanges filling out membership applications as we speak and they will featured in the next issue—just in case you were wondering if there is a Canadian take-over happening.

I write this on the eve of heading out for two weeks to our family cottage, so I'll sign off by wishing all of you a great summer.

John A. DeVries
President

SAVE THE DATE

**BXNet's 2018 Annual
General Meeting**

**February 6–8, 2018
San Antonio, TX**

**Watch for conference
details soon!**

Nice to meet you!



We are Angela Tristram and James Raiswell, the new managers of the Builders Exchange Network. We own a communications and management company called ALTRnetiv Media Group here in Ottawa, Canada and, as of June 1, assumed the contract to run the day-to-day operations of BXNet.

If you're wondering what a media company has to do with construction, let me explain. It's a fair question. James and I have been working in and around the construction industry for more than 20 years. He's a writer and I'm a project manager. Together, we've served local and national construction associations in Canada and in the US with a variety of communications, management and admin products and services: magazine articles, management consulting, event management, plans and specifications scanning and printing, event front-desk service. We've seen and done just about every job there is to do in a construction association or builder exchange. We speak construction's language, and we're delighted to bring that experience, knowledge and enthusiasm into BXNet.

We're excited about the job in front of us. BXNet is a great organization that is supported by enthusiastic members and a strong board of directors. We want to help make it even better. And we've got some ideas in mind: an updated, clear value statement for the network, more frequent communications to members, an enhanced presence on social media, a targeted campaign to bring in more new members (and bring former members back into the fold), and a suite of first-class speakers and events for next February's annual conference in San Antonio—you are registered, aren't you?). Stay tuned for information on these as they develop.



Change is wonderful, but some things should stay the same. BXNet members have always enjoyed service from managers that are organized, available and responsive. We're promising nothing less. Whatever you need, whenever you need it, let us know and we'll help. You can always call us on the BXNet main line at 855-719-0733 or send us an email at info@bx-net.org.

In the months ahead, we're going to reach out to as many of you as possible to introduce ourselves and hear a bit about what you like about being a BXNet member and how we might be able to help you improve the way you do business and serve your members. If you have any questions or comments between now and then, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We're looking forward to working with you!

REPORTER TRAINING — coming this fall

By popular demand, BXNet is bringing back reporter training this fall. The session is perfect for employees who need to learn more about how their exchanges work, how to speak the language of construction, how to mine sources for leads, how to report on pre-bid and how to verify and defend leads.

Watch for dates and location information soon!



What are this year's top tech trends?

Find out by completing the 2017 Construction Technology Survey. Those who do will receive a complimentary copy of the survey report when it's released, and get valuable insight about the top construction technology trends among thousands of builders in 2017.

The survey takes 10 to 25 minutes to complete, depending on your role and experience. By completing the survey, you'll be the first to receive a complimentary copy of the full results and report. Thousands of builders around the world rely on the survey and resulting report to benchmark their company's technology usage and strategy every year.



WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

You told us, and your fellow BXNet members responded.

Challenge

Finding larger commercial projects to post (most big ones, chains stores, hospitals) are privately bid and owners don't want them in plan rooms as they feel they lose control over who bids. Also, a lot of cities, villages, etc. are putting their projects on sites where plan rooms are no longer allowed access. The officials putting the projects on these sites are often not aware that these sites are limiting access.

— Ruth Nunnelley, Builders Exchange of NW Michigan, Traverse City, MI

Response

We have been very successful in obtaining these kinds of projects through two formats. First is by forming relationships with invited general contractors and granting them a service level we call "Overview" so they can monitor bid activity (only) on the projects they provided. The key to these projects is inviting the GCs, not the owners. Second, we have bilateral integration with SmartBid, which allows GCs to send us private work from their SmartBid account. We are averaging about fifteen new projects a day from that integration.

As for self-directed plan rooms, these sites are static and one dimensional. Subs loathe them. Officials are putting projects on these sites to increase their efficiency and avoid 20 plan rooms asking for the same set of docs. We ask officials for access to pull projects off and repost on our site. However, staff have to understand how to make the case for that access.

— Brenda Romano,
Virtual Builders Exchange,
San Antonio, TX



Challenge

My biggest challenge is trying to obtain the actual plans and specs for projects. I feel that we don't have a problem finding the projects. It's just that everyone wants to charge money to obtain the plans and specs even though we are a plan room.

— Rhonda Gutknecht, Lincoln Builders Bureau, Lincoln, NE

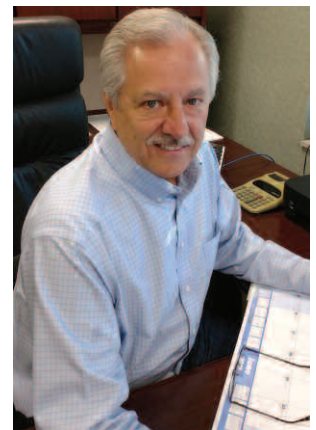
Response

We report on about 14,000 projects a year throughout the state of Ohio and surrounding counties. We have multiple reporters checking a variety of websites, planning commission minutes, GC websites, etc. Finding the projects is not a problem. Getting documents can be.

Years ago, we decided to buy every project that was not given to us. I sign about 15 checks each day to buy projects. Our budget for this year was \$90,000. Most exchanges shudder when we discuss our policy with them. However, about 88 percent of our projects have documents. The remainder are unavailable to us, even to purchase. By comparison, Dodge for Ohio averages about 33 percent. If you were comparing reporting services, which one would you buy? Our membership dues average about \$1,000 per member and I assume that we have more than 90 members who are here because of our high percentage of documents.

In addition, we give non-members access to every project on which we report through a pay-per-view option. That helps to offset the cost of drawings to some degree.

— Gregg Mazurek,
The Builders Exchange, Inc.,
Cleveland, OH





Challenge

Trying to get private tenders and how to find out about them.

— Alison Smith, Barrie Construction Association,
Barrie ON, Canada

Response

A local construction association or builder exchange has a number of options to develop that sense of market awareness that's really needed to find and track private projects. The first is to be involved in the community. We get a lot of our private-project information from reading local newspapers, reading city council reports, and checking through development permit applications. That helps you get a better sense of the bigger picture that's out there.

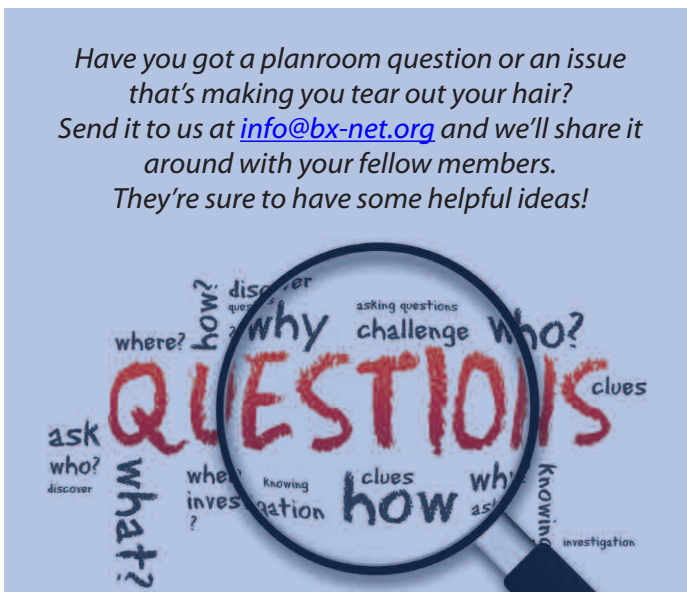
Through those channels, you get a better sense of who the major players are in the private land-development space. You'll want to then take that information—project data, company names and contacts—and input it into a tracking system that helps you keep on top of the leads.

The biggest thing is to simply pick up the phone and call your local architects and engineers. Ask them what they're working on. That's where the relationship-building part of the job comes into play. You have to know these people and have to feel comfortable with them. Once you develop a good relationship with them, they'll be willing to take your call a few times each year and give you a sense of what's coming down the pipe.

The tricky thing with finding and tracking private-sector jobs is timing. Once a project is out for tender or under construction, you're too late. Your information needs to be a year or so ahead of the curve to be of value to your members.

The last thing I'll say is that finding and tracking private projects is a long-term game. It's about relationship building and creating trust. That takes time and it's best done in person and over the phone. Email isn't the answer.

— Ron Hambley, Winnipeg
Construction Association,
Winnipeg MB, Canada



What's in a name?

Document naming software can save your plan room staff a ton of time. But the technology is far from perfect.

Prepping project plans for posting in an electronic plan room can be a long and drawn-out task for plan room staff. Some spend hours of their week sorting through hundreds of pages of structural, mechanical, electrical and other drawings, and giving each suitable names. There has to be a better way.

In fact, there is. A number of BXNet members have discovered drawing naming software tools: applications that enable them to sort through hundreds of pages of scanned drawings and give them all names that make sense. The best part is that these tools get that job done with a high degree of accuracy in minutes rather than hours.

Judy Ploof, planroom manager at the Eastern Contractors Association in Albany NY, says her association's new naming software has cut naming time in half—if not more.

"One all the drawings are imported, the software allows us to draw a box around the name or number of the drawing—like A1 or S1—and then push a button to have the rest of the drawings in the set named automatically."

The output is a series of drawings named, for example, A1, A2, A3, etc., and staff have the opportunity to go back through the named files to ensure the output is 100 percent correct before uploading to the planroom site.

"Generally, the output is very good. We maybe have to make two or three corrections on a set of 100 drawings," says Ploof. "That said, it's not perfect. It has some trouble with certain fonts, so we're a bit at the mercy of what we get from the architects or engineers."

The best news is that projects of 100 or more documents that used to take an hour or more to name now take closer to 15 minutes—or less—to name.

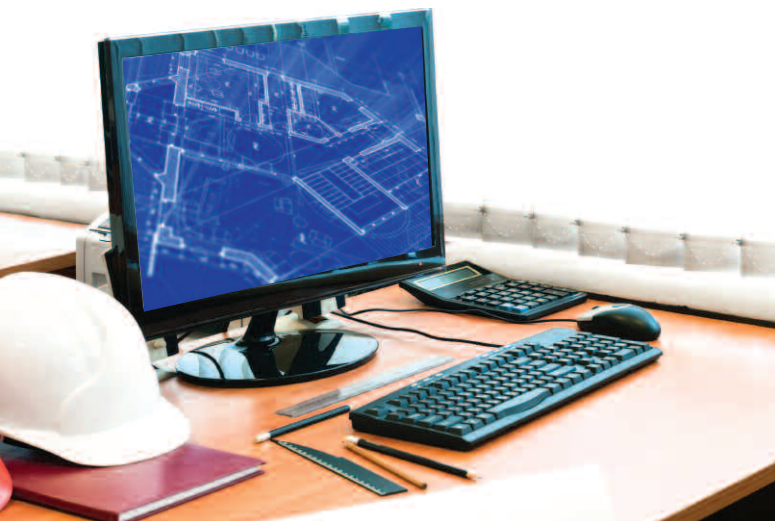
Gunner Webb, systems and operations manager at the Spokane Regional Plan Center in Spokane, WA, says much the same thing. In his experience, the plan room team can name a 300-page set of drawings in 15 or 20 minutes—when it would have taken them as long as an hour and a half via the manual method.

"We're using a QuickEye product that integrates with IPIN, which makes things even easier," says Webb. "The cost is about \$400 per year for three licenses, which is a great investment to make."

Aaron Thomas, director of operations at The Builders Exchange of Kentucky in Louisville, says his exchange follows a two-step process that involves scanning the plans and specifications documents, sorting them by Construction Specification Institute codes, and naming each individually. The output for members is a complete set of, for example, mechanical drawing and specs, as well as individual drawings. All are uploaded to the exchange's IPIN platform.

Rex Hund of BarryHund Administrators says the software solutions are all about expediency. Exchanges need to streamline largely administrative processes such as document naming so they can focus their attention on serving members as best possible.

"Naming software is very much the way forward for exchanges and although the software is in its infancy, it has the potential to save tons of time for plan room staff," he says.



Welcome

to our newest members!

Toronto Construction Association

The Toronto Construction Association (TCA) is one of Canada's oldest and largest associations of industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) practitioners with over 1,800 member companies across the Greater Toronto Area. For over 150 years, TCA has been committed to promoting and upholding the highest standards of industry professionalism and has grown to become the uniting voice of Toronto's ICI industry.



Our mission is to create opportunities for our members to grow their individual businesses and build connections with other ICI practitioners to help boost the growth and quality of Toronto's construction industry as a whole.

Our value:

- Supporting members through up-to-date industry information, political advocacy, financial savings and more.
- Connecting likeminded industry professionals through events, community involvement, advertising opportunities and more.
- Generating new business for our members through municipal, provincial and private project opportunities, workspace, job postings and more.
- Contributing to industry professionalism through The Construction Institute of Canada courses, workshops, educational events and more.

Windsor Construction Association

The Windsor Construction Association was established in 1908, and is a mixed trade association, representing approximately 325 members such as general contractors, trade contractors, suppliers, manufacturers, architects and engineers.



Our members have access to in-house and electronic plans rooms, as well as access to plan and bidders lists, addenda, low bids and awards. We provide our members with a weekly electronic plans list and newsletter. Additionally, we host a web-based Membership Directory.

Advice and perhaps a solution are available with our labour relations services, as well as our provincial and municipal representation and lobbying.

We also offer our members free use of a meeting room, and a Commissioner for Taking Affidavits. We offer a wide variety of other services including contract documents for purchase, a library of reference material, a group insurance plan, a fuel discount program, a variety of educational programs, services and seminars. Additionally, whether you prefer golf, hockey, soccer or a barbeque, the WCA provides a large number of social events and meetings to allow members to network.

"As a returning member of this organization, I look forward to getting up to date with colleagues from the past, and I look forward to meeting new BXNet members.

— Jim Lyons, executive director, WCA

Millennials

“enter the workforce in a deficit”



Author and thinker Simon Sinek has some interesting ideas about why millennials are the way they are, and what workplaces must do to accommodate a generation of people that have nearly no social coping skills.

Simon Sinek is an author and motivational speaker who has written a series of books on leadership. He's also well known for his views on millennials on the workplace. In particular, he shares some interesting ideas about the trends in life that have led up to these young people being labelled as self-interested, lazy and difficult to manage in the workplace. His theory is that four characteristics of their pre-work lives have combined to create these people's profound lack of self-confidence and social coping skills. As a result, millennials enter the workplace in a deficit and struggle to achieve fulfillment, and often quit as a result.

Characteristic #1: failed parenting strategies

When they grew up, millennials were always told by their parents that they were special, and that they could have anything they wanted simply because they wanted it. They got good grades in school because their parents complained to their teachers when their marks slipped, and they got participation medals in sports—even for coming in last place. But when they graduated and they moved into the world of work, they quickly realized that they weren't special, that their parents couldn't get them a promotion, and that they earned nothing for coming in last. As a result, their self-esteem is shattered.

Characteristic #2: an addiction to technology

Millennials are addicted to technology, says Sinek. In much the same way an alcoholic gets a rush of dopamine from that first sip of liquor, young people get a rush of approval from receiving a text message, an email or a Like on their Facebook page. They turn to these media in times of stress in exactly the same way an alcoholic would after losing his or her job. The problem is that interactions through these technologies are superficial. They're not helping these people build long-lasting, meaningful connections with one another. They're also not helping these people learn inter-personal communications skills. As a result, when times are difficult, they don't understand how to work through a problem with a peer, a friend or a boss. They simply stop communicating. Or quit their jobs.



Characteristic #3: everything on demand

Sinek says that millennials are often called entitled, but he thinks the real characteristic they display is impatience. They've grown up in a world where everything is at their disposal when they want it. Amazon delivers consumer goods tomorrow. Netflix means they don't have to wait for television or movies. Even dating apps mean that physical relationships don't need to be cultured over days and weeks. They've seldom experience social awkwardness or have ever needed to learn patience.

It's therefore no wonder that they apply the same thinking to their jobs. They've been told they can accomplish anything—and one day they might—but they expect that's going to happen in weeks or months rather than years. They're standing at the foot of a mountain, says Sinek, and they want to be at the top, but they've no concept of the slow, plodding process called life that takes them from the foot of the mountain to its summit. Nor do they have the skills to make that journey or even to ask for help to get there.



Characteristic #4: the office environment

The final piece of the puzzle for millennials is that they're bringing ideas from the 00s and the 10s into workplaces that were created in the 80s and 90s. In other words, they're asking for personal and professional development—for their employers to care about them—when all the company really cares about is boosting profits and creating value for shareholders.

At a deficit

These four characteristics, says Sinek, combine to put these young people at a deficit when they enter the workforce.

His advice: companies will need to do more to nurture these people and help them develop the relationships they need to succeed. In some cases, that means banning cellphones from meeting spaces so people can actually talk with one another before meetings and stay focused on tasks.

His advice: "remove the temptation of devices, take the time to enjoy the world around you. The time between events is when our minds wander and we innovate. Phones take away those moments."

Watch Sinek's talk on Millennials in the Workplace at <http://bit.ly/2k99MC1>.



BXNet
Builders Exchange Network
2018
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

Tuesday to Thursday.
February 6 to 8, 2018

Hotel Valencia, San Antonio, Texas

PROGRAM:

Tuesday Feb 6

BX Net Board of Directors
Afternoon Options - City Tour or Golf
Opening Welcome Reception

Wednesday & Thursday

8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Educational Program
Wednesday evening social function



*U.S. News &
World Report's
Best Hotels in the USA,
San Antonio, 2017*



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