

I would like to propose a RED STAR graveyard for some business practices for A/E/C firms. Here are a few of the relics that should be sent out of town on a flat bed.

Do it now. Send them to the past-practices cemetery.

In a few years you can go back, reminisce and giggle that you ever operated that way. Some of your old guard may cherish these practices. My advice - see the business revolution around you.

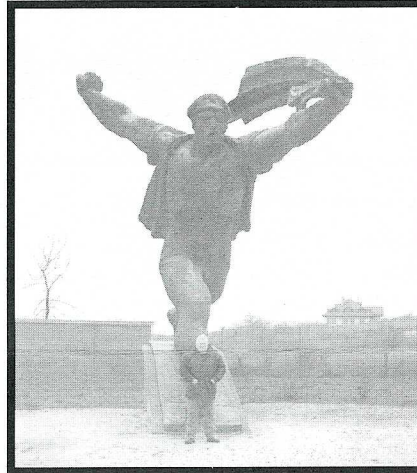
Spending thousands to save hundreds.

For example, some organizations feel compelled to record, track, account, and allocate every long distant phone call. The people time to distribute the call is more than the call it self. I know a large organization that has the technology for each person to send and receive faxes at their desk computer. But it continues to have a single fax center and a full time person to operate it. The service actually slows down the process.

Organizing your business by technical disciplines instead of client type.

Market sectors have unique differences. Industrial clients almost always have a compressed schedule. They typically expect less detail and want more personal interaction.

When your project manager and cross-functional team become really expert in dealing with a single client type, client satisfaction and internal efficiency will increase.



Believing that “good technical work” is all the marketing you need to do.

Good technical work is the price of admission to the great game of business. Do poor work and you will be out of business soon. Word of mouth does work in a reputation-based business. Remain an unknown firm with little name recognition and no top-of-the-prospect-mind recall, and you might as well turn off the lights and lock the doors.

We live in a message rich world. Is your message getting through?

Failing to know what your firm’s external and internal reputation.

It is amazing that any firm would operate without a recent reputation study. Our’s is a reputation-based business. Word of mouth tells the good, bad and the ugly about us. Every three years each firm needs to formally interview clients, prospects, and past clients to uncover its street reputation.

Annually you need to poll your staff to see what is on their collective mind too.

Using authority instead of persuasion as the primary employee motivation tool.

A firm’s foremost capital asset walks out the door every night. Finding the right staff motivational methods is essential. Using directive authority on workers is counterproductive in knowledge-based businesses. The wise manager knows personal relationships, team building, team goal setting and monitoring provides motivation. Every good behavior must be praised; every error must be constructively corrected. Goals are set; results towards those goals must be reported frequently.

Is your firm ready to haul off some old practices of the past? Erect them in a graveyard of the past. They may have worked once in a different time and under different conditions. No more.

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