CODE OF ETHICS
The construction profession relies upon a system of technical competence, management excellence, and fair dealing to serve the public with safety, efficiency, and economy. Each member of the association is committed to following the Standards of Professional Conduct:

1. A member shall maintain full regard to the public interest in fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities.

2. A member shall not engage in any deceptive practice, or in any practice that creates an unfair advantage for the member or another.

3. A member shall not maliciously or recklessly injure, or attempt to injure, the professional reputation of others.

4. A member shall ensure that when providing a service that includes advice, such advice shall be fair and unbiased.

5. A member shall not divulge to any person, firm, or company, information of a confidential nature acquired during the course of professional activities.

6. A member shall carry out his or her responsibilities in accordance with current professional practice.

7. A member shall keep informed of new concepts and developments in the construction process appropriate to the type and level of his or her responsibilities.

Adopted by permission from the American Institute of Constructors. April 1999 Revision

Will Your Business Last Longer Than Any One Person?
4 Steps to Developing Your Succession Plan
By Mark Ernst, Ernst Enterprises, LLC

When I work with clients one of the things I ask is, do you have a formal succession plan? Most reply no, saying one of several things: I plan on doing one someday; I’m too busy now with the business; I have something worked out informally in my head.

I probe a bit deeper and ask what happens if you, a family member, or a key employee were suddenly not available for work due to illness, accident injury, or — even worse — a sudden passing away. I have had responses that range from, “Mark you don’t understand. Joe (the key employee) has been here a long time. He isn’t going anywhere” to “That would create a big hole.” Then they change the subject, not wanting to talk about such an unpleasant topic.

There is an unfortunate reality that we all must face if we are to prepare our business to last longer than any one person. The reality is that all of us, including our employees, will one day leave our business. A life change; a marriage or death in the family; the need to care for an aging parent or ill spouse; our own serious illness; or accident or death may cause the departure. And in many cases there is no advance warning.

What would happen if tomorrow you or a key employee were suddenly not available, and there was no one to call to get information, and everything thing on the “to-do list” is stopped? Who would pick up the reins and get things done? Where would you or your managers go to see what has to be done? What are the urgent things that must be done right away? Who must be notified? Who has critical contact information, passwords, keys, and controls? At this point, the impact of a sudden and unplanned departure or unavailability begins to hit home.

What exactly is succession planning?

*A Succession Planning Program is a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions and encourage individual career development.*

The succession plan is a forward-looking formal program. The goal of the program is assessing present employee talent today against what will be needed in the future, and we include what development is necessary so that the employee has the skills, competencies, and experiences necessary to be ready for the future job when the job is needed. Succession planning is a way to preserve the organizational knowledge because you are not bringing in new employees to fill jobs.

All this may seem difficult or time consuming and you may not be sure where to begin to develop the plan. The balance of this article will focus on the steps you can take to develop your succession plan.

1. Think about your business 3-5 years into the future and consider how your business will change. For example, what products or services will be added and deleted; what markets and customers will be added and which will be dropped; who will be your competition, and what will be your market differentiation; and will your business be larger and more complex or change in some other way?

2. Look at the various management jobs you now have and consider the changes in the business above. How will those jobs be impacted? Create a job description for each role for the future position. Pay particular attention to the skills, competencies and experiences the manager will need to have to perform the job.

3. Assess the employees who you feel would be capable of growing into these

Continued on page 7
Past Presidents: Where are They Now?

Robert (Bob) Benda

By Jennifer Danquist, Director of Business Development, Marco Contractors, Inc

When it comes to the RCA, we would not be here without our Past Presidents, who have guided this association, built it up, and watched it continue to grow. For this we are all grateful. In an effort to recognize these “founding fathers,” remember our beginnings, and review our history, we have created a new feature in our newsletter: Past Presidents: Where Are They Now? Each edition will feature a RCA past president and give some insight into their time at the helm as well as talk about what they’re doing now.

He is a farm boy from Minnesota, the oldest of 10 children, and has been at the helm of Westwood Contractors, Inc. as President and CEO since 1987, when he bought a majority interest in the company. Robert (Bob) Benda is the only RCA Past President to have held the reins of the association during two separate terms, first from 1994 to 1995 and again from 2004 to 2006.

“I was first elected to the board in 1992 to fill the unexpired term of Joe Mcleod of Porter & Mcleod,” recalled Benda. “At that time, I was also appointed to fill the Treasurer’s office on an interim basis.” In the spring of 1992, Benda was elected by the board as Vice President for one year and then as President the following year for a one-year term.

Benda’s first job at Westwood Contractors was doing a Pier 1 Imports in Tarpon Springs, FL, where he learned about single ply membrane flat roofs. “If I was not in the commercial construction industry, I would be a retailer… the only thing I would not miss, being a merchant, would be trying to beat last year’s comps,” Benda joked.

I decided since Benda has served with so many of our RCA members that I would reach out to one from each term. From Benda’s first term, I talked to Jack Sims of Jack E. Sims & Associates (and formally the owner of PDMS Construction). “Bob started and ended every board meeting with a Texas Six Shooter as a gavel. It was a real gun — unloaded — but brought character and interest to the start and end of every meeting. He is a smart and talented businessman, and has always been a good communicator and ‘people person’ as well. These talents served RCA very well as the organization developed and grew in membership,” commented Sims.

Bob Benda has really seen the industry evolve over the years, with the application of technology to our work being what he deemed “the single most dramatic change.” A close second to technology would be how much more sophisticated the client organizations have become about their management and leadership of the entire retail design, development, and operations cycles.

The RCA has benefited Benda personally and professionally. “My favorite things about the RCA are the friendships, the networking, and of course the parties!” Benda laughed. “I have made close lifelong friends from my RCA experience. I have learned that you get back many times over what you give as a volunteer and my service with RCA has opened many professional doors for me.” Benda talked about how the association gave Westwood Contractors credibility during its early years. Westwood has always been “power users” of the RCA training programs and that has made a significant difference in the abilities of their clients.

According to Benda, Westwood has received...
RCA 2010 Annual Meeting

The RCA 20th Annual Round Up, Learning From the Past, Talking about the Present, was held prior to SPECS, March 5-7, 2010 at the Gaylord Palm Resort in Kissimmee, FL. Over 80 contractors, retailers, sponsors, and other supporters enjoyed a weekend full of professional development and networking opportunities.

The weekend kicked off with a welcome reception, held in the beautiful Castillo Fort in the Gaylord.


Saturday’s program included five sessions, addressing topical issues (the economy), technical issues (LEED construction, moisture-related flooring problems), and business tools (social media).

At the welcome reception, l-r: Hunter Weekes, Weekes Construction; Matthew Schimenti, Schimenti Construction; Brad Bogart, Bogart Construction; Danny Stone, Bogart Construction.

At the Saturday reception, l-r: Jay Saterbak, Elder-Jones; Jason Miller, Kahl’s; Mike McBride, Westwood Contractors; Brian Perkko, Elder-Jones; Sandy Sharkey, Commercial Contractors.

The 2010-2011 RCA Board, back row, l-r: Matt Pichette, Art Rectenwald, Chandler Weekes, Ken Sharkey, Don Thayer, Gene Colley; front row, l-r: Brian Perkko, Mike McBride, Matthew Schimenti, Brad Bogart, Dan De Jager (not pictured: Mike Kalaskowski).
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<td>John Kuruc</td>
<td>724-845-7336</td>
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<td>Barry Fries</td>
<td>212-563-3300</td>
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<td>860-870-7070</td>
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<td>Dennis Pigg, Jr.</td>
<td>770-887-3573</td>
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<td>Frank Leonie</td>
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<td>Brian Perkko</td>
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Past Presidents: Where are They Now? Robert Benda

Continued from page 2

many new client inquiries as a result of their association with the RCA and its promotion of RCA members.

So what was it like during Benda’s second term as RCA president in the 21st Century? For that I turned to our current RCA president, Matthew Schimenti, president of Schimenti Construction. “Working with Bob was a great experience. When I was a young guy having just joined the RCA, he could have turned his back on me, but he didn’t. He treated me with respect and wanted to help guide me,” stated Schimenti. “Bob has some major strengths, in particular his professionalism, his leadership ability, and his mentoring relationship.” Benda taught Schimenti a lot and continues to do so to this day.

“Who would not want to learn from a guy who has industry and business experience like Bob’s, and was such a positive in my personal development?” commented Matt. “He helped take the RCA organization to the next level and I felt honored that he tapped me to be a part of his board. If you ask me, it was as if he wanted to plant seeds for the future.” Schimenti also informed me that Benda has got an impeccable talent for providing an education on choosing an unforgettable wine. Just have a dinner with him and try a different wine with each course – you can’t beat that!

Hearing so many wonderful things about Benda from the people who have served with him, I wanted to know who his mentor or hero was. “Most of my RCA director colleagues have had a big impact on me, however, if I had to select one person, it would be David Weekes, Chairman of the Board of Weekes Construction,” Benda said that besides Weekes being the most charming, bright, and physically gifted person he has ever had the privilege of calling a friend, “Dave was a true visionary who foresaw the value of a self-policing industry organization that could differentiate the professional operators in our business from those who cut corners.” Benda also commented on how Weekes helped to educate the retailers on the value of hiring someone who could be trusted to do things the right way. “He had the charisma and strength of will to attract people to the idea and there would be no RCA without the vision of David Weekes.”

In closing, if you cannot find Benda at a RCA meeting, an industry conference, meeting with a client, or working at the office, then you might want to check Telluride, CO, where he enjoys skiing in the winter and climbing, fly fishing, cycling, and hiking in the summer. When I asked if he had any guilty pleasures, he simply said “guilty pleasure!”

We salute Bob for all he has contributed to the RCA, as a board member, as a two-term president, and by just making sure we are all having a good time. He has helped to continue to build this association and wants nothing more than to see all of us and the RCA succeed and thrive in our industry.
Congratulations to Ryan Bentz, the recipient of RCA’s 2010 Intern Scholarship. This $1,500 award is given a rising senior or junior who is enrolled as a full-time student for the Spring 2010 semester and who completed at least a two-month internship with a current RCA member company in the prior year.

Ryan is a senior and a Construction Management major at Central Connecticut State University and interned at KBE Building Corporation. According to his nomination, Ryan was one of the first interns to go through KBE’s rotation program, which is set up to give interns experience in various departments. Ryan thrived in all areas, from field operations to estimating to business development. The managers with whom he worked commented on his work ethic and drive to learn more about the construction industry. After his internship was complete, Ryan continued his relationship with KBE by visiting two project sites, interviewing a superintendent for a class project, and reaching out for reference material on another class project.

Ryan says of his experience: “I was able to intern at KBE, where I made the discovery that successful families and successful companies had something in common. While working in the different departments of KBE one thing was always present—a support network. Successful companies give you the necessary guidance and tools to be a success, just like a family does. I was given the opportunity to meet new people who contributed to a positive learning environment. I was able to work hard, absorb the knowledge, and view new business practices. My internship has helped to solidify my classroom experience. It was a good feeling to be part of a team effort.”

RCA’s Scholarship Program supports the Intern Scholarship, in addition to providing scholarships at 18 schools with construction management programs across the country.

For information on the program or to make a contribution, visit retailcontractors.org.
Will Your Business Last Longer Than Any One Person?

Continued from page 1

management roles. At this stage we typically involve the employees in the process. It may be as simple as having a career planning discussion for the purpose of identifying which employees have higher career aspirations. It is critical to find employees who have the capability and desire to grow into a bigger role. If either capability or desire is missing, the employee will not be a good succession candidate.

4. After identifying potential promotable employees, compare the employee’s competencies, skills, and experience to the draft job description and identify the “gap” that is, the short fall between the employee’s existing skills and the desired skills. This is the information that will be needed to create an individual development plan.

By going through these four steps you will have made a good start on building a succession plan. The goal of developing a succession plan is that you have employees being actively groomed for future roles. Imagine the benefit to your company if employees see that they are being developed for the future. Our advice is don’t wait for a great plan — implement good plans and improve them over time.


Mark Ernst is the founder of Ernst Enterprises, LLC. He has been a trusted advisor to CEOs and senior business leaders for over 20 years. He has an extensive background in strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, process improvement, change management, talent acquisition, management and employee development and retention, and succession planning. [www.ernstenterprisesllc.com](http://www.ernstenterprisesllc.com)

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Roger Williams University: Troy Dahlgren
Texas A&M University: Matthew Filippo
University of North Florida: Kyle Boivin
University of Nebraska: Joshua Barth
University of Oklahoma: TBD
University of Washington: Andrea Haluptzok
Wentworth Institute of Technology: Christopher T. Catalano

RCA Scholarship Recipients

Each year, RCA awards scholarships to America’s top construction management students at universities throughout the United States. This signature program helps develop the business leaders of tomorrow. For this current academic year, 2009-2010, RCA has awarded scholarships to the following deserving students:

Auburn University: Brady McGee
Bowling Green University: Robert W. Volbrecht
California State Polytechnic University: Ryan Brown
Clemson University: Laura K. Weber & Justin P. Burgess
Colorado State University: TBD
Ferris State University: Casey R. Holstege
Kansas State University: Chris Hansen
Minnesota State University-Mankato (Christian Elder Memorial Scholarship): Joshua Adams
Northern Arizona University: Florin Vlad
Pratt Institute: Jonathan Schwartz

Scholarship committee member John Elder with Kansas State University recipient Chris Hansen at the May scholarship presentation ceremony.

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Don’t miss our CCP event in New York City on Sept. 16, 2010!

For information on joining Commercial Construction People, contact Membership Director Kayla Thompson at kt@ddcomgroup.com.

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