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roitenbergt@teamtsp.com

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651.639.0644  
c.pekron@roofspec.com

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Marjorie Simon  
Simon & Associates Public Relations  
763.574.9296  
simonspr@aol.com

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Becky Nazario  
TKDA  
651.292.4412  
nazario.bj@tkda.com

#### MEMBERSHIP

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Parsons Electric  
763.571.8000  
ross@parsonscorp.com

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[www.smps-tc.org](http://www.smps-tc.org)

## Don't Miss the SMPS-TC Biotech Industry Outlook Luncheon This Friday, January 13, 2006!

Register now! [registration@smps-tc.org](mailto:registration@smps-tc.org) or call 763-566-6098

**Friday, 11:30 a.m., January 13, 2006,  
St. Anthony Main Events Center**

\$35 SMPS Members, \$50 Non-members, \$65 late registrations/walk-ins.

With hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into Minnesota's health science research centers, our state will see explosive growth in the biotech industry. Is your firm ready to take part? Whether "yes" or "no," don't miss Friday's monthly luncheon program dedicated to that topic.

Three biotech industry experts will speak. They'll give outlooks on facility design and construction requirements. They'll look at new regulations and how they impact our AEC industry. You'll also gain insights on testing requirements and physical environment needs.

**Randall Tlachac, the University of Minnesota's program director of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics**, has more than 25 years of experience in quality control, manufacturing and commercial development of biotherapeutic, biotechnology and pharmaceutical products, medical devices and combination products. He has extensive experience with the design, development, construction and validation of sterile products and medical device manufacturing facilities, as well as the design, qualification and validation of facility critical systems such as Water-for-Injection, ETO and Steam Sterilization, Radiation Sterilization, Process Compressed Air, HVAC and ISO 14644 Cleanrooms. Tlachac received his bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Wisconsin and has completed post-graduate studies at University of Wisconsin in virology and at Roosevelt University - Chicago in marketing and business administration.

**Phil Gerlach is senior director of manufacturing services for Protein Design Labs**, one of the state's largest human health microbiology companies (\$80 million in annual sales). Gerlach worked in various engineering, manufacturing and management capacities at Helix Biocore and Lifecore Biomedical from 1990 to 1995. Prior to this, he worked in quality assurance and chemical engineering at the Gillette Company, and in biochemical research at the University of Minnesota. Gerlach received a bachelor's degree in biochemistry and chemical engineering from the University of Minnesota.

**Carl J. LaBella is president of CSI Testing, Inc.** He is also president of Independent Certification Services, Inc., and a member of the board of directors of the Controlled Environment Testing Association (CETA). Previously, LaBella was senior manager of facility services at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center, and director of operations at VSC in Eden Prairie, Minn., a specialty electronics manufacturer. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and his M.B.A. from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN.

**Register TODAY before 4:00 to avoid a late fee.** E-mail: [registration@smps-tc.org](mailto:registration@smps-tc.org) or call 763-566-6098. If registering by e-mail, you should receive an e-mail confirmation. If you do not receive confirmation, please call the office at the above number. Without a confirmed registration, you could be charged the late registration/walk-in fee of \$65 at the door. Please notify SMPS of special needs when making reservations. Attendees must pre-pay or pay at the door. No-shows will be invoiced for the program and an additional \$10 service charge. Visa and MasterCard are accepted! (Credit card statement will show Synergy Resource Group as the payee).

St. Anthony Main Events Center  
219 SE Main Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
[Click here](#) for map

### FEBRUARY EVENTS

*Friday, February 3*

#### Monthly Luncheon Program

Client Care 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 a.m.

### MARCH EVENTS

*Friday, March 3*

#### Monthly Luncheon Program

Media Roundtable 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 a.m.

#### Professional Development Seminar

Proposal Writing

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tanya Pierce, Adolfson & Peterson Construction

Dear SMPS-TC Colleagues:

Happy New Year! It has been a busy fall for our chapter and the pace will continue this winter. Consider our fall highlights:



- State Commissioner Matt Kramer kicked off our monthly programs with insights on Minnesota's economy and the implications for our industry
- A program on concrete ways to bring A/E/C professionals together, regardless of their discipline
- DBIA and SMPS teamed up for a joint program on various successful design/build models from a client's perspective
- The professional development seminar on four critical elements for firm recognition: public relations, award entries, photography and trade shows
- Feedback from two owner's representatives on factors that influence an owner's firm selection

On fall's last official day, December 20, we hosted our first networking event of the year at Chino-Latino. The winter months take us into a new slate of noteworthy events.

January's program is a biomedical industry discussion with Randall Tlachac, molecular and cellular therapeutics program director at the University of Minnesota; Phil Gerlach Sr., director of manufacturing services for Protein Design Labs, and Carl LaBella, President of CSI Testing. The panel will discuss **the future of the biomedical industry in Minnesota and the implications for our A/E/C community.**

In February, a speaker will address a popular topic that many firms seem to struggle with in our industry - client care. **How does a firm ensure their clients are 100 percent satisfied and completely loyal? Better yet, have the client's expectations been outlined and further, how does one ensure that teammates are doing everything they can to meet those expectations?**

Finally, look forward to our second annual wine tasting event. This was last year's most well-attended social event, and we are in the final throes of securing a location for an event of a similar nature in February.

Watch for event notices and newsletters, and visit our website frequently. The public relations committee is updating our site weekly to keep you up-to-date on events. If you miss an event, members can always check the password-protected website section for event summaries and available handouts.

All our best for a prosperous new year.

Warmest Regards,

Tanya M Pierce  
SMPS-Twin Cities Chapter President

## PROPOSAL WRITING 101:

### Stress the Benefits, Not Just the Features

By Dan Safford

I realize you have heard this before. I know my clients have (I say it all the time, like a broken record), but I'll say it again: Your client buys what you're selling because she perceives it as having some benefit to her!

That may be obvious. But here's something that isn't so obvious: You need to point out what the benefit is, even if you think it's obvious. Too often, proposal writers think they're calling out benefits when what they're really doing is simply citing the features of their offering.

**Features vs. benefits.** A feature is a characteristic of your approach; it's a part of what you are offering the customer. A feature of a refrigerator, for example, is its cold drink dispenser in the door. Now, this may be a benefit to some buyers, but the benefit is not intrinsic; the cold drink dispenser by itself is not a benefit.

A benefit is what the feature does for the client. The cold drink dispenser lets the user have cold water with very little effort on her part. She likes that, and sees how it would simplify her life; the feature makes the refrigerator more attractive to her than one without that feature. That's the benefit of the feature. Too often, proposal writers assume the intrinsic niftiness of their technical solution is self-evident, that just citing a feature will be enough for the reader to immediately see its benefit. Not likely. It's your job to point out the obvious, because the obvious really isn't. How do you know what the client will consider a benefit? This is a direct result of your win- strategy brainstorming. And the benefit statements you use are the manifestations of your proposal themes.

**Characteristics of effective benefits statements.** Benefits statements vary according to what your client thinks is important. But in general they:

- Should be the major point of the section.
- Must be conclusive, factual, quantified, and brief.
- Must be stimulating; it needs to capture the readers' attention and drive them to seek proof in the text and graphics of the section.

Benefits are the heart and soul of a proposal; they're what will close the sale to the client. Citing clear and direct benefits to the client is also an excellent way to spike yourself above the competition. In the end, you want the client to feel she will get more value from your solution than from anyone else's. In the end, the proposal that has the biggest benefit to the client will win.

**About the author:** Dan Safford is CEO of PS Associates, Inc. Proposal Development Consulting & Training ([www.psassociates.com](http://www.psassociates.com)), and is their senior proposal consultant with nearly 20 years experience managing proposals. He works with clients to plan, write and manage proposal development efforts for a wide variety of products and services. He can be reached at [dans@psassociates.com](mailto:dans@psassociates.com) or by phone at (206) 463-6827.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS TIPS: *LATimes.com* Senior Editor Reveals How PR Pros Can Bridge the Credibility Gap with the Press

“Journalists actually recognize how important PR people are to do their jobs,” says **Dan Gaines**, senior editor for *LATimes.com*. “For example, PR people provide information, access to individuals and things like background on the companies they represent. The large number of inappropriate pitches might bother journalists—but the fact is, we can’t turn off all PR pitches because there are often good ideas ... Plus, we all need access.”

“There are things PR people can do to earn our trust—things like paying attention to what we cover and need. Another thing that [builds trust] is appreciating why we do this. Most journalists do it because we’re in the business of helping readers understand things,” says Gaines. He offers the following additional insight—and advice—to help PR practitioners build better rapport with reporters and close the credibility gap with the press:

1. **Trusted PR practitioners are resources—not pitching machines.** “I have been covering the personal finance world for much of my career,” says Gaines. “There are PR people for tax information services and financial planners who pay attention to what we write and what is published. They understand that we cover certain things at certain times of the year—and they help us with that. For example, we write about taxes at tax time and we cover how the markets did at the end of the quarter.”
2. The upshot: “The **PR people who do it right suggest new or interesting ideas** during those times. The ones who don’t get it wind up calling us saying they’d like us to quote their client. Why should I do that? That part—what’s in it for me or my readers—is missing in most PR pitches.”
3. **Trusted PR practitioners always follow up—and respect journalists’ time.** “I got a note today from a tax information service’s PR person,” Gaines reveals. “This is a new person there, saying they can be quoted on new tax laws. But he also had some new data to give me,” he says. “We’ve been using their information regularly every year. I use their information and source them when they come to me. Also, this PR person wasn’t intrusive. I appreciate that. It was just a one-sentence email saying the new data was available.”
4. **Trusted PR practitioners write concisely—and eschew hype.** “PR spin and hyperbole—those are the things that give PR a bad name,” Gaines says. “So does sales-y language. There is a desire among PR people to be too colorful and to use sloganeering in releases that is rarely useful. That kind of language is off-putting to journalists. **What journalists really want is to understand the new product, what makes it new and different, and how that impacts readers. They also want to know those things as quickly and efficiently as possible.**”

His advice: “Try to make your PR writing clear, efficient, sharp and direct,” suggests Gaines. “I understand that there is a lot of noise out there and that you need to get my attention. But the way to do that is to perfect the art of being clear about what sets your pitch apart and then conveying that accurately and concisely.”

Gaines offers the following example: “If someone has a complicated story or profile [for a reporter covering minority business], a pitch that might work would be, ‘Want to interview a successful local minority business person?’ But even better,” he says, “would be the pitch, ‘Interview local minority who invented new computer chip.’ The reason that works is it’s targeted to the right person—and it includes a specific detail.”

In addition: “This pitch is also brief. That’s important. **If you waste my time—or if I’m burned once by discovering the pitch is misleading—then I won’t trust you again,**” cautions Gaines.

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## WEB GEMS

### Proposal Writing Resource



[www.psassociates.com](http://www.psassociates.com)

This website includes several resources for writing winning proposals, including articles (see “Proposal Writing 101” in this issue for a sample), seminar opportunities and a free newsletter.

### ZIP Code Lookup



<http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>

This page of the U.S. Postal Service website allows you to search for ZIP codes by address, city or company. You can also find all cities in a particular ZIP code.

### Healthcare Lead Generation Service



[www.healthcarebuildingdata.com](http://www.healthcarebuildingdata.com)

This website, offering both free and subscription-only options, can help you find the location, detail, schedule and value of new projects; contact key decision makers; and track the latest news and developments on projects.

### Effective Communication Tips



[www.arnoldsanow.com](http://www.arnoldsanow.com)

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP is a speaker, seminar leader and author. He offers a free, bi-weekly “E-Zine” on effective speaking and leadership skills.

## NOVEMBER BREAKFAST PROGRAM “Design/Build (D/B) as a Delivery Method – A Client’s Perspective”

November’s program gave perspectives from three industry leaders including **Bill Harrison**, construction consultant in property development for Target Corporation; **Jim Driessen**, facilities construction manager for Medtronic; and **Dan Kratz**, senior director of business development for Children’s Hospital and Clinics. The panelists, moderated by Tanya Pierce, offered insights on when and how to use D/B.

All presenters stressed the importance of owner clarity. They recommended that owners provide clearly defined parameters and goals. Contractors must listen very carefully to understand the unique qualities of the owner and project. Finally, it’s vital to be honest and open with owners.

Other critical factors included:

- **Selecting a qualified team.** Owners should insist on meeting the “A-Team” at the interview. As Harrison said, “The process is only as strong as the weakest team member.”
- Owners should **focus on one project at a time** for best results, despite feeling a loss of some control once the contract is signed.
- **Good design doesn’t have to mean higher cost;** costs can actually be lower.

All three agree that D/B is here to stay and that owners and contractors should continue to refine the process to ensure it’s a “win-win” for all parties.

## SMPS BOOKSTORE: YOUR SOURCE FOR A/E/C MARKETING RESOURCES

The SMPS mission is to be the premier source for education, information, and resources in marketing professional services for the design and building marketplace. The books available at the SMPS bookstore are selected specifically for professional services marketers and business developers. SMPS member receive a discount on these publications.

Topics cover the six Domains of Practice, among other resources. You can search the library of publications by subject, title or author of a book, or view an alphabetical index of titles. You can even recommend your favorite business books by e-mailing [publications@smps.org](mailto:publications@smps.org).

Visit <http://store.smpsbookstore.org/> for more information. Happy reading!

## NOVEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM Best Practices for Firm PR, Trade Shows, Award Submittals and Project Photography

As promised, the SMPS-TC Fall Professional Development Seminar delivered a variety of useful, actionable information on the promotional activities that are so critical to showcasing our firms’ talents. Each roundtable discussion leader presented to the group, then the attendees broke into small groups to discuss issues and solutions.

Presenters for this interactive session were:

- Marjorie Simon of Simon & Associates Public Relations (Public Relations)
- Raymond Dehn of ESG Architects (Award Submittals)
- Beth Fellman of BWBR (Photography)
- Christine Wiegert of TKDA (Trade Shows)

In addition to the valuable information presented by our industry experts, attendees were treated to a presentation on “The State of Digital TV,” by Twin Cities Public Television’s chief technologist, Bruce Jacobs; and all were invited to tour the TPT studios following the seminar.

SMPS members can view the seminar handouts, including presenters’ Top 10 Tips, on the SMPS-TC website at [www.smps-tc.org/members/program\\_notes.html](http://www.smps-tc.org/members/program_notes.html) (password required).

Don’t miss our next Professional Development Seminar on proposal writing. More information on date and location to come!

## AEC WINTER QUARTER INDUSTRY EVENTS CALENDAR



**January 16-19: *Technology for Construction*;** Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada; [www.technologyforconstruction.com](http://www.technologyforconstruction.com); 866-962-7469.

**February 26-March 1: *The 2006 International Conference and Exhibition on Health Facility Planning, Design & Construction*;** San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, California; [www.ashe.org](http://www.ashe.org); 312-442-3800.

**March 29-April 1: *50th Annual Construction Specifications Institute Show & Convention*,** Las Vegas, [www.csinet.org](http://www.csinet.org).

**January 19: *AIA Minneapolis Chapter January Free Luncheon Program*;** 2005 Honor Awards: According to the Architect.

## DECEMBER LUNCHEON PROGRAM Why Owners Hire Your Competition and What You Can Do About It

Be concise... Avoid boilerplate...  
Choose your battles... Rehearse...  
Do your homework. These are just a few of the tips offered by Dick Strassburg, partner, The Tegra Group, and John Tietz, principal, Tietz & Hoye, at the December program.



Tietz and Strassburg's hour-long presentation provided "real life" examples of what to do – and what not to do – to win more work. They shared the guidelines they use when writing requests for proposals, and when counseling owners on selecting their design/construction team.

SMPS members can view the speakers' handouts, on the SMPS-TC website at [www.smps-tc.org/members/program\\_notes.html](http://www.smps-tc.org/members/program_notes.html) (password required).

Also, *Finance & Commerce* reporter Brian Johnson gave this front-page coverage in an interview with Strassburg following the program which appeared in their December 13 issue.

Don't miss our next January 13 luncheon program, featuring a client panel from the biotechnology industry.

## DECEMBER SOCIAL EVENT Holiday "Feliz Navidad" Happy Hour

SMPS members enjoyed our first social event of the year on Tuesday, December 20, at Chino Latino. In addition to catching up, attendees enjoyed deals on drinks and those great appetizers that make Chino Latino such a happy hour hot-spot.

Special thanks to Rich Ross of Parsons Electric, our membership chair, and his committee. Currently, they are planning for our upcoming wine tasting. If you missed this last year, make sure you attend this time. We had a great crowd who enjoyed some fine wines with detailed information about them, along with appetizers and desserts. Watch for your announcement this month.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We welcome your comments and contributions! If you have an idea for *The Exchange* or would like to submit an article, contact Marjorie Simon at 763.574.9296 or [simonspr@aol.com](mailto:simonspr@aol.com).

The Exchange Editor: Marjorie Simon, Simon & Associates Public Relations

Newsletter Layout: Elaine Samolytz, SRF Consulting Group

SMPS-TC Public Relations Committee:

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## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

### New and Transferred Members

**Kristi Pepin**  
Ellerbe Becket

**Terza Kurki**  
LHB Inc.

**Stephani Simon**  
LaBreche Murray Public Relations

**Jami Anderson**  
H&B Specialized Products

**Lynette Todd**  
M.A. Mortenson

**Ryan Miner**  
Fabyanske Westra Hart & Thompson PA

If you have changed positions, been promoted or moved to another company, please let us know! Send updates to Membership Chair, Rich Ross at [RRoss@ParsonsCorp.com](mailto:RRoss@ParsonsCorp.com).

### Current Members

Remember to renew your SMPS membership promptly upon receiving notification from National. We want to keep you all current and active!

### Job Bank

As a member you can post or review job openings for free! For additional information on how to use this resource, contact Rich Ross at [RRoss@ParsonsCorp.com](mailto:RRoss@ParsonsCorp.com).

For more information on membership and its benefits, visit the SMPS-TC website at [www.smps-tc.org](http://www.smps-tc.org)

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