



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

ACEC Young Professionals Webinar Notes May 22, 2020

TOPIC ONE: Working in the Age of COVID-19

a. *Maintaining Focus*

- Upon starting the day, clean out everything from the night before, then look at content periodically, rather than constantly. Finish one task before checking on a new one.
- Use the Pomodoro Technique and check-in with a teammate to ensure accountability.
- To manage communication from clients, call to check-in each morning, and follow-up with an official e-mail outlining expectations.
- A majority of participants indicated they are more productive or as productive while working at home.

b. *The New Normal*

- Most offices may continue working remotely. Trust matters- trust that your coworkers and employees can do their work from home
 - o Companies will start looking at hybridized environments permanently- to prepare, you should be set up to collaborate with technology.
- Companies will continue utilizing video chat. To facilitate a meeting via video, mention that you will be on video chat when setting up the appointment. This will encourage video chat from other participants.
- Don't forget that people are with young kids and may be distracted- try to be flexible. Recognize that people will likely continue to work outside the 9-5 parameters of the office.
- Temper expectations. Recognize that the environment will not be ideal, but if goals and utilization benchmarks are being met, the system is working.

TOPIC TWO: Communicating and Working with Leadership, Clients, and Coworkers

a. *How to Respond to Clients Regarding Inefficient or Unaccountable Co-workers*

- Ask the client what they need, then communicate the clients' needs to your coworker, as well as the clients' concerns. Tell your coworker privately to maintain trust, but ensure you communicate the importance of responsiveness.
- Communicate openly and tell your coworker directly what needs improvement. It will be better received from a peer than a supervisor.
 - o Keep communication lines open by suggesting open office hours and provide clear deadlines and expectations with all team members.

b. *Asking for a Raise/Better Benefits*

- Never compare yourself to somebody else- make it about your value. Ask your supervisor what you can do to provide more to the company
 - o Make the business case by presenting what you've done, how you've improved, then as what more you can do.
 - Never mention a salary survey/barometer.
 - o Present a summary of all your yearly highlights/contributions in addition to goals for the coming year. It will guide the discussion and remind leadership.



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- c. *Struggling to See Eye-to-Eye with the CEO*
 - Try to imagine the greater implications of why decisions are being made.
 - Use Resources:
 - o [The Five Whys](#)- A technique to quickly dissect a problem and reveal its underlying causes
 - o [Difficult Conversations](#), by Sheila Heen, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton: A step-by-step approach to confrontation and stressful discussions.

- d. *Most Important Leadership Qualities*
 - Intellectual curiosity
 - A strong work ethic
 - Flexible and adaptable
 - 'Plays well with others'- a good team member.
 - Be smart - make the team better by being on it!
 - Be a self-starter and willing to help the project succeed despite not all tasks relating directly to your "title".
 - Have the ability to speak truth to power. Leaders are busy and need to look at the business from every angle. Sometimes they can't see everything, so don't be afraid to be honest or mention if something is being missed.
 - Use clear communication.
 - Be willing to learn new things and step-in above where you're "comfortable".
 - When you make a mistake, own it!

TOPIC THREE: Growing as a Young Professional

- a. *Future Challenges for Young Professionals*
 - Growing businesses amid the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Leveraging technology
 - How we will look at the built environment
 - Explore resources to gauge emerging markets and trends:
 - o ACEC
 - [ACEC Advocacy](#), which follows what markets and industries are being funded
 - [ACEC Research Institute](#), a think tank specializing in researching new and innovative ways the design consulting industry will contribute to society.
 - [Private Market Resources and Briefs](#), which provide quarterly reports on trends in the four major private markets in the industry.
 - o *Engineering Change Lab*, which provides a multifaceted view of how all aspects of engineering are contributing to innovation.