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What distinguishes a ‘global’ consultancy from a merely ‘international’ one? How can engineers convince clients of their worth as design is increasingly automated? When everything is connected, how do we protect buildings from cyber attack? And does our work really contribute to the good of humanity and the planet?

These were just a few of the topics that arose in our rich and varied debates at Buildings Summit 2016 in Chicago, an action-packed two-day conference attended by 110 delegates from across our global property and buildings division. As the representatives of a 10,500-strong business with 500 offices in 40 countries, we had much to talk about, both in terms of fulfilling the wider company’s 2015-2018 Global Strategic Plan and in responding to the revolutionary technological change sweeping the built environment. The twin themes of our inaugural summit were inspiration and innovation; the aim being for everyone to return home reinvigorated, refreshed with new ideas and connections, and ready to spread the word.

In his opening keynote, global property and buildings director Tom Smith invited us all to make a personal commitment to taking the key messages back to our colleagues, clients and project partners. Our buildings business must strive to be number one in every sector, the first choice for every client in every city, as Tom said: ‘You have to be made up of lot of number ones to be the overall number one. If we don’t have that ambition, there’s a danger we become a big amorphous mass.’ Perhaps the greatest potential lies at the interface between buildings and infrastructure: ‘I can’t think of a firm in the world that can say they’re the number one transportation firm and the number one buildings firm. What a massive opportunity for us as we see our cities transform.’

Tom challenged us all to create a ‘best consultant mindset’, to become ‘the McKinsey of our industry’. Over two mornings of workshops, you filled hundreds of flipchart pages with ideas on exceeding client expectations, engaging employees and developing new services, and on the challenges and opportunities for each discipline.

There can be few destinations more inspiring than Chicago for property and building nerds. It is not only a stunning cross-section of modern architectural history, but it’s also home to some of the world’s most innovative designers – not least Halvorson and Partners, a WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff company since August 2015, who welcomed colleagues for a feast of deep-dish pizza. We were also treated to a presentation by Gordon Gill, founder of Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill, archetypal Chicago architect and the practice behind Saudi Arabia’s 1000m-tall Kingdom Tower.

Gill gave a fascinating and frank account of the practice’s latest thinking, in which masterplanning and sustainability are as much a focus as high-rise. The firm’s philosophy, ‘form follows performance’ updates the modernist maxim ‘form follows function’ coined by Chicago’s Louis Sullivan 120 years before.

The city proved an interesting destination not only for its illustrious past but also for its tumultuous present too: we arrived in the immediate aftermath of the US presidential election as protesters took to the streets, and while the Chicago Cubs had just stormed to victory in the baseball World Series for the first time since 1908. In the unseasonably warm sunshine, there was no missing the gleaming hulk of the Trump tower on the skyline or the Cubs’ ubiquitous blue-and-white Win flag.

From the ‘now’ and the ‘new’ to what’s coming ‘next’, as Jay Wratten from the BOLD&R Innovation Center in Colorado might phrase it, was the challenge facing five finalists from our company-wide innovation competition, selected of 52 entries to pitch their ideas. Thomas Coleman had created a digital model of Chicago to aid in infrastructure planning, Nitin Tyagi proposed to use the CRC’s in-house IT expertise to develop tools to help his colleagues work smarter, while Teemu Jamu explained the CITYROI service, already up and running, which uses parametric modelling to identify underused capacity in urban areas. Peter Richards painted a frightening but very plausible picture of buildings rendered uninhabitable by cyber attacks, urging that ‘smart buildings are complex systems, and we need to...
be the experts’. Finally, Mark Bessoudo highlighted the chasm between engineers’ growing influence on every aspect of people’s lives and their lack of training in the moral and ethical issues this inevitably presents, with his ‘Plato for Plumbers’ philosophy website.

The competition finalists had just eight minutes to win their peers’ votes, but the next group of speakers faced an even taller order in a rapid-fire ‘PechaKucha’. Leaders from across the business had 20 slides, with just 20 seconds on each, to present their vision of the future. Steve Burrows, Nick Offer, Johnny Walstrom, Dave McAllister, Mark O’Connor and Herbert Els all rose to the challenge, racing from the Egyptians to hyperloops, via transparent timber, BIM and climate change, and provoking a lively Q&A session across the floor.

A recurrent theme throughout the conference was the need for greater interconnectivity and information sharing between regions and disciplines. According to our pre-summit poll, you were most looking forward to networking with your colleagues from around the world, and many of you arrived a day early to make the most of the opportunity.

Our custom-built smartphone app was a stand-out success, prompting many to wonder whether they could use something similar to collaborate on a daily basis. Created by Thomas Coleman, manager of technology integration in Chicago, it not only put all essential information at our fingertips, but provided a user-friendly platform to share impressions of the event. There was a steady stream of posts even before the summit, turning into a torrent of brainstorm highlights, memorable quotes, architecture snapshots, jetlagged sunrises and late-night team selfies.

The activity feed was a testament to a richly inspiring couple of days, but also to new and ongoing connections. Many of you continued to post pictures of your home cities and projects, from mammoth plant installations in Kuala Lumpur to building forensics divers inspecting a shark tank in Dubai. ‘Super conference and please remember your personal commitments,’ was Tom’s parting shot. If the app is anything to go by, you have embraced your task with enthusiasm.
SESSION SUMMARIES & VIDEOS
Making a personal commitment to shaping our future.

Why did we decide to host a summit in Chicago? To build relationships, share ideas, make new friends and have some fun!

In addition to these fine objectives we also wanted to inspire ambition and create excitement about our global property and buildings business, and my presentation articulated our enormous scale and capability covering geographies, sectors and skills. We are a phenomenal business with 10,500 colleagues, across six continents and actively delivering projects in over 40 countries. We have 4,700 systems engineers, 2,700 structural engineers, 1,200 project managers and strong global networks covering all our specialist services from fire to facades and lighting to security – the depth of our technical expertise is unparalleled and something we should be extremely proud of. What impressed and inspired me addressing our summit was the talent in the room – you couldn’t put a price on such talent.

Why do we need to develop into a more connected and integrated global business? It certainly isn’t a vanity thing. The need to be global is being driven by our clients, employees, projects and business. Let’s just take clients as an example. Even the most local of our clients is looking to us to provide the very best global expertise and experience. We are working with many of the world’s leading firms, be they architects, end users, contractors or developers and they increasingly desire a global partner. We must all work smarter on developing a global mindset to best service our clients and offer great opportunities to our staff.

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How do we do that? The world is rapidly changing through globalisation, digitalisation and competition and we must defend our business by addressing these trends head on. The way we design buildings for our clients will drastically change in the next five years through BIM, digital engineering and augmented reality. Are we ready for this? What do we need to do better? We need to build a knowledge eco-system that underpins sector expertise, research & development and multi-disciplinary global delivery. Our competitive advantage is the knowledge of our people and we need to do more collaboration and knowledge sharing. If we defend and build we can flourish and that is the ultimate goal – delighted clients, engaged colleagues and great returns.

We live in a changing world and I want us to be a firm that is in charge of our own destiny, making things happen, but we can only do that together through being an integrated and connected global property and buildings practice. And that’s where you come in. Let’s keep our personal commitments to following through on the actions that come out of the conference, inspiring your teams by cascading down the messages and videos we share with you and thinking about how we make 2017 the year of innovation.

Tom Smith
GORDON GILL KEYNOTE

Gordon gave us to a rare treat - an insight into the work his architectural practice undertakes now, how they work, what excites them and what the future might hold.

The company started in Chicago exactly a decade ago when two like-minded architects joined forces to form Adrian Smith Gordon Gill. Their pedigree was established over many years also in Chicago working on numerous iconic and frequently tall towers all over the globe.

Gordon described a range of buildings, including Kingdom Tower in Jeddah at over a kilometre in height, and the challenge of addressing wind and micro-climate conditions at the base. Two towers in China were described including the unusual features of ventilated facades, opening windows and curved glass. In New York WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff are providing support engineering services for a super tall tower to deliver views over Central Park. The technical skills of developing such towers were described in the context of the extraordinary residential values being achieved for such properties.

The extreme weather conditions in Astana affecting a 72-storey residential tower were also discussed.

On a smaller scale Gordon described a new luxury hotel in Beijing where the cladding and much of the detailing comprised bronze panels. He described how the fascinating idea for the bronze emerged and was delighted with the outcome where ‘there is a consistency to the unevenness’. This must be on anyone’s ‘must see’ list for a trip to Beijing.

Recent new projects in theatre and performance spaces is providing the practice with new opportunities and the intellectual challenges that they crave.

So against this backdrop Gordon began to talk about ‘Lifetime implications of buildings on city parametrics’ and how architects take on this challenge. The ideas around real-time building performance, ‘building fit bits’ and technology transfer were also explored. There was a discussion about master planning of large cities where in future perhaps we would consider a carbon footprint map rather than traditional densification. Other topics included healthy buildings and potential ‘live or active components on building facades’.

Finally, Gordon talked about his concept of ‘peculiar conversations’. This turned out to be a reference to his approach and ability to establish close relationships with clients and other designers where he is asked to step out of his ‘accepted’ architectural identity into other areas of interaction, ideas and support. Gordon is clearly asked questions by his top clients on a very full range of topics in the built environment and way beyond.

Gordon gave us the benefit of a long Q&A period taking questions from the WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff delegates. One such question was around Gordon’s ability to challenge a client brief and potentially the underlying client business objectives. The outcome of such dialogue frequently enriches a project and enables a greater understanding within the architectural and wider design consultant team. Delegates were very interested to have a glimpse into the process whereby a client will sometimes step away from their traditional brief and the result steers a project in a dynamic and challenging direction generating enhanced value.

Gordon also allowed us an exclusive interview where he provided thought-provoking answers to a range of questions. He discussed what he looks for in an engineer, how buildings need to create a relationship with their surroundings, what effects digitalisation has on his practice and just because we can build tall – should we?

Definitely worth a watch.

Bill Price
Nov 2016
IN CONVERSATION WITH GORDON GILL

Find out what Gordon had to say in this exclusive interview he gave us post keynote speech:

- Young Engineers
- Is It Right To Build Tall?
- The Clients Brief
- The Ground Plane
- On Digitalisation
- On Densification
- Working With Engineers
- No Regrets
- Designing Super Tall Buildings
- These Buildings Are Talking To Each Other
ICEBREAKER
SESSION
These workshops were devoted to clients and aimed to seek ideas and thoughts to help guide our future thinking and approach to client care and exceeding our clients’ expectations on all of our projects and assignments, irrespective of the nature of the services being provided, the scale or end market sector.

Each session tackled the following questions:

1. How do we stay abreast of our clients’ (architects, developers, end-users and contractors) current and changing expectations?
2. How do we meet/exceed clients’ expectations when delivering services across offices/regions/globally?
3. How do we develop a global client care mindset and ownership throughout our organisation including our project level people?

The following ideas were identified to help us improve our collective approach:

**QUESTION 1**

a. Continually engage with clients through networking and industry events; share intelligence
b. Use thought leadership to demonstrate a market leading position
c. Improve key client management
d. Seek regular feedback; both informal and formal

**QUESTION 2**

a. Increase prominence and enhance the use of subject matter experts and global networks
b. Create easy access to experts, projects and client information; share knowledge
c. Embed ‘client and project first’ culture particularly for global and cross-regional work

**QUESTION 3**

a. Invest in global project collaboration efforts
b. Produce a best practice approach and framework for client care
c. Introduce foreign exchange programme and increase mobility

As is always the case when we discuss clients and what constitutes the best approach, everyone has their view based upon their experience, and the room resonates with passionate conversation. Seldom however, does ‘one size fit all’. The most memorable and impassioned quote (plea) which came from Jeff Smilow (USA) however, just about disproved the rule…

‘When the client calls to discuss a specific subject, you don’t say call John, you speak to John and go back to the client with the answers to his questions’. In essence Jeff was saying take ownership of the situation and make sure we deliver a response back to the client in a personable (caring), timely and effective manner, exceeding their expectations in doing so.

**NEXT STEPS**

A global working group will be set up in January to develop these ideas and a plan to deliver a number of guides and training resources. These will be signed off at the Global Property & Buildings Leadership team meeting at the end of February in order that they can be further developed and rolled out during the remainder of 2017.

Further communication on these plans will be issued in early March.

Paul Tremble
Nov 2016
FUTURE BUSINESS: NEW GROWTH SERVICES

The new growth services workshop aimed to identify profitable new areas we can and should move into – based on client needs and current skills base.

We captured five common areas across our three workshops that all participants highlighted as having high potential.

FINANCIAL SERVICES
Strategic advisory services and building economics with potential to move into equity project investment. Particularly applicable in P3s where a small equity play will ensure maximum services.

BUILDING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
New service incorporating multiple aspects of the measureable performance of a building. Includes references to leveraging big data, becoming the keepers and interpreters of data plus the idea of analytics over a building life cycle. Also offers BIM management, and performance monitoring of health and wellness of the tenants/occupants. The agreement that the problem is not so much gathering data but more how to manage it to generate value for existing and potential clients.

TECHNOLOGY (SMART BUILDINGS)
Global growth of the services currently offered, but more integration and collaboration globally. Also looks at integrating data from theme 2 (above).

TRULY INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY
Where all our discipline streams combine efficiently and effectively. We need to show our clients the benefits of single firm solutions compared to individual services. We need a NEW tool kit to demonstrate our advantage. (This will require training, tools, cultural shift.)
Leverage our global specialists: delivery of global best in class specialist services. This would incorporate pre pre- and post-disaster evaluation, city resilience modelling, cyber security, blast and hardening design. This would also be aimed at maximising cross-selling and optimising our existing services. (Note: a key observation is that many offices are NOT aware of the depth of specialist services available at a global level)

Not a service but a critical area for real action

INVESTING IN R&D
Learning from automotive and aeronautics industries, investigating material innovation, working with universities, specialist suppliers, off site and modular technologies. The idea, being able to increase our own efficiency and productivity in support of value and margin enhancement.

Some other key observations from the groups were:
1. Less references to ‘tech’ either as we know it or as something that might inspire us, yet all groups mentioned the data analytics.

NEXT STEPS:
1. From the 5 themes, pick 2 or 3 to develop a business case.
2. Assign ‘champions’ for each business case who see it as a path for their career growth.

Armin von Eppinghoven / Bill Price
Nov 2016

2. Belief that skills for these new services can be found to a large extent within the existing skill base of the company
3. A feeling expressed by someone that we could seek to establish a relationship with ‘our building’. The idea that we could help fund, conceive, design, build, maintain, monitor and optimise the performance of ‘our building’ as it ages and develops over time. This might help us to adapt it for future use, enable it to contribute positively to the urban environment and respond to sustainability and environmental change.
4. Little or no mention of core design services of Structural and MEP (building systems).
Our workshop centered around two themes; how to build a sense of community across our global business and how we can use major projects to improve collaboration across regions.

The following is a summary of proposed actions

**BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

Communication: need co-ordinated, relevant and consistent communication delivered over multiple platforms.
- Clear vision
- Communicating – but appropriate quantity, not too much
- State of Nation updates – verbal or written
- Promote values & brand
- Consistent messages
- Specific taskforces

Platforms for sharing knowledge: Need to enable the sharing of knowledge through investment in technology and key staff
- Improved ease of access to global expertise
- Easier staff mobility / exchange
- Develop an App similar to the Chicago App
- Thought leaders to be globally mobile
- Technical working groups

Recognition: need to be quicker to celebrate our successes and recognize achievements
- Celebrate success
- Recognition / thanks @ personal level
- National and global awards

**HOW TO USE PROJECTS TO COLLABORATE ACROSS REGIONS**

- Globally connected business, not just a series of international businesses
- Collaboration with outside businesses
- Identify and promote subject matter experts – a good way of getting global involvement

Enable project-related collaboration:
- Staff exchange programmes
- Invest in collaboration tools
- Knowledge management CRM
- Intranet sites
- Best practice database

Andrew Mather & Laura Swanepoel
Nov 2016
THE FUTURE... AND WHAT IT MEANS TO US

Picture this, it’s Chicago 2016 and in front of an audience from around the world of our firm, 6 people are charged with describing the future of our business in 20 slides in 400 seconds.

Yes the future in coming and it’s arriving both fast and furiously!

Using Pecha Kucha, each presenter was asked to describe what the future looks like – Now, New and Next meaning today, tomorrow and then as far as we can see ahead.

The presenters covered a range of topics:

• The Future of Buildings – Steve Burrows
• Urban Technology – Herbert Els
• Investing in Climate Change – Johnny Wahlström
• New Material – Mark O’Connor
• Placemaking – David McAllister
• Digital Workflow – Nick Offer (video) with Tim Morrison in person.

One common thread amongst the speakers was that of change. The construction industry is huge, and is seen as ripe for technological change; the level of investment in this area is at an all-time high and the opportunities presented by data, the human experience, urbanization and climate change are greater than ever.

This captured the imagination of the audience in question time as the questions exceeded the length of the presentations and could have continued for a long time, but in response to a question about what this means to us, one quotation by a speaker was ‘this is the greatest time in history to be an engineer’ and we all believe that to be true.

We learned some new things from the presenters such as the existence of transparent wood, how autonomous vehicles will change the spaces between buildings, the impact of robotics on construction, how buildings will speak with their occupants, how algorithms will give us freedom to be more creative and what a carbon constrained economy might look like.

Questions from the floor included ‘how do we share global knowledge more easily in a world of rapid change?’, and ‘should we have a Global Director of Innovation to help us to anticipate and incorporate change at the right time?’ The buzz from the floor was palpable and the quest for knowledge unites us.

The thirst for innovation exceeded the thirst for the cocktail reception that followed as the session needed to be brought to a close with many hands still raised, but those questions continued throughout the rest of this dynamic conference.

As the moderator of the session, what stood out for me was that we have created a firm that is unique in its range of skills, its geographic reach and its potential to influence the future of cities and how they are connected to each other. We are also at a time in human history, and our own history, in which we have a huge opportunity to affect the future of this planet. We have the talent, the clients, the need, the scale and the influence to make a difference. The future may be uncertain by definition but one thing that is certain about the future is that it will one day be our history.

We can put our stamp on history, and the future should just be seen as our opportunity to do so.

Steve Burrows
Nov 2016
THE FUTURE... AND WHAT IT MEANS TO US

TOMORROWS BUILDINGS
Steve Burrows, Executive Vice President, USA
WATCH VIDEO

PLACE MAKING
David McAlister, Global Director, Transportation & Infrastructure
WATCH VIDEO

URBAN TECH
Herbert Els, Senior Vice President, USA
WATCH VIDEO

NEW MATERIALS
Mark O'Connor, Director, UK
WATCH VIDEO

BIM/DIGITAL ENGINEERING
Nick Offer, Director, UK
WATCH VIDEO

INVESTING IN CLIMATE CHANGE
Johnny Wahlström
WATCH VIDEO
The 2016 Buildings Summit in Chicago was designed to encourage innovation within WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff’s projects, culture, and business practices.

As part of the summit, a global Innovation Competition for all staff was sponsored by the BOLD&R Innovation Center in collaboration with global Property and Buildings staff. Innovation is a core value of the company. However many of our best ideas are reactive solutions designed to a client’s specific brief, or are isolated innovation pockets within an office or region. Collecting ideas, combining them with complementary service offerings and solutions, and marketing them to our clients is a key driver in our future success. In addition, it is paramount that staff at all levels recognize their mandate as innovators of change within the company.

The goal of the competition was to create a platform where our global thinkers could share and promote their innovations, to recognize and connect ideas across various regions, and to chart strategies for the future.

Competition submitters were encouraged to focus on illustrating the ‘why, what and how’ of their innovative idea, communicating their passion, and demonstrating their idea’s business value. With a free trip to Chicago up for grabs, Jay Wratten with the BOLD&R Innovation Center included the following challenge to submitters;

“We have a good understanding of the NOW, our current service offerings and delivery methods. And we have a rough roadmap for how to transition to the NEW. But what is the NEXT? What could we become? We’re looking for demonstrable innovations of how we could lead our industry, our cities, and our society into the future.’

An incredible collection of 52 ideas were submitted, spanning thirteen countries, four continents and different parts of our global business. A panel of judges reviewed the submissions against the following criteria – passion and enthusiasm, originality, definition of proposal, and marketability. The judges were overwhelmed with the quality of submissions, which clustered around four general topics - sustainability, productivity, technology, and cities. Jay Wratten noted; ‘all entrants can be very proud of their ideas and we will be exploring opportunities with each one in due course’. Tom Smith commented; ‘it was an extremely difficult task to select five shortlisted entries to join us in Chicago but after much deliberation and challenge we got there’.

The five shortlisted entries were as follows – Thomas Coleman (USA) ‘Chicago Model – Infrastructure for a Smart City’, Nitin Tyagi (India) ‘Technology and Business Solutions’, Peter Richards (UAE) ‘Cyber Security Risk Management’, Teemu Jama (Finland) ‘Citi ROI’, and Mark Bessoudo (Canada) ‘Plato for Plumbers’.

**CITY-WIDE DIGITAL MODEL – THOMAS COLEMAN**

Thomas’ submission outlined the benefits of a city-wide digital model such as the one that has been created for Chicago by WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff for the O’Hare Airport Express Rail project. Digital city models would put WSP at the forefront of smart city infrastructure planning and management, they would facilitate graphic information systems (GIS) data and multi-modal traffic flow analyses, and enable improved project visualizations. During the presentation’s question and answer period, Thomas addressed questions over what data sources could be used to feed into the model (pretty much any source) and how to manage the size of the model so that computing power does not limit its use.

**AUTOMATION AND INTEGRATION – NITIN TYAGI**

In presenting his idea for Technology and Business Solutions, Nitin provided an overview of the automation and integration tools that have been created by the iCRC team in India. These custom solutions include Revit BIM batch processing, project data export and management, web based project management services, and project opportunity tools. Nitin’s submission proposed expanding on these successes to identify repetitive engineering and business practices and automate them in order to allow staff to focus their time on the aspects that best add value for clients.

**CYBER-SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT – PETER RICHARDS**

‘Smart buildings and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies will transform the built environment. Systems are becoming more complex and more inter-connected in an ever more connected world.’
This was Peter’s introduction to his submission on Cyber Security Risk Management, which stipulated that we need to become experts at monitoring and safeguarding cyber threats to the projects we design. As our designers leverage the power of Smart Buildings to deliver our clients more value on their projects, we will be converging and connecting traditionally separate building systems into a single network. This convergence offers huge opportunity but also increases cyber security risk. As designers of these facilities, we are in a prime position to manage this risk.

INCREASING URBAN CAPACITY – TEEMU JAMA

Teemu’s submission introduced CITYROI, which is a service to find and increase urban capacity by using the latest GIS methods to determine the structure of the city to discover its full potential. CITYROI endeavors to increase urban capacity by detecting economic potential with current urban structure and identifying the most profitable areas for development based on their proximity and connectivity. This analysis goes beyond traditional city planning metrics in order to create communities where city dwellers have a better connection to their society and environment.

PLATO FOR PLUMBERS – MARK BESSOUDO

‘Plato for Plumbers’ was the title of Mark’s submission, which advocated for WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff to consider the philosophical, environmental and societal implications of technology in the built environment. Mark suggests that we should consider not just whether our solutions are ‘better’ due to their efficiency, economy, safety or sustainability, but whether they are ‘better’ due to their truth, their beauty, their justice, or their well-being. Not whether we could, but whether we should? Mark’s proposal is to develop a website and blog that explores the philosophical impacts of our work and encourages dialog on these impacts with our clients.

AND THE WINNER IS...

The five shortlisted submitters flew to Chicago for the 2016 Buildings Summit and pitched their innovations to more than one hundred global Property and Buildings leaders. The Summit attendees then voted for their favorite and, together with employee votes, the winning submission emerged as Mark’s ‘Plato for Plumbers’. As winner of the competition, Mark received a 3D printed trophy designed by the Visual Coms team in UK Structures and most importantly funding to further develop his idea next year. Mark is already in discussions with the editors of WSP’s ‘The Possible’ publication to explore whether the Plato for Plumbers website could form a part of our online innovation presence. Feedback from the innovation competition has been incredibly positive from staff at all levels and we are looking forward to the next steps. Perhaps Steve Burrows summarized it best;

‘What you see is a bunch of people thinking way beyond their day job, trying to think how the firm can be better by making changes and connecting people together.’

Jay Wratten
Nov 2016
INNOVATION AND INSPIRATION IN CHICAGO

WATCH MARK BESSOUDO INTERVIEW

WATCH THOMAS COLEMAN INTERVIEW

WATCH PETER RICHARDS INTERVIEW

WATCH NITIN TYAGI INTERVIEW

WATCH TEEMU JAMA INTERVIEW

GLOBAL INNOVATORS

WATCH INNOVATION COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS
At the WSP Global Structures Workshop thoughts were expressed by structural representatives from all over the world.

These thoughts jotted down on flipcharts, and subsequently collated and summarized below, generally confirm a desire by all to function as an entity that is truly global and a belief that we will be best in all respects if we work together towards achieving this goal. Many ideas were mooted around which plans can be developed to achieve true globality that will not only be good but great.

- Striving towards innovation we need to do research and development possibly with companies such as Google. To this end a global research budget will need to be created. PANs (Practice Area Networks) can then be used to share innovative ideas, market trends and documents. In order to keep ahead of the knowledge curve we will need to apply this new technology, e.g. new (high strength) materials, etc., 3D (BIM) design and possibly invent new structural systems.

- For best efficiency and productivity we need to automate our designs and drawings. Engineers should learn to draw in Revit thereby linking design and draughting.

- We further need to work together globally sharing resources, research and development and knowledge.

- Best consistency will be achieved by standardization and automation. We should have a WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff ‘Way of Working’ or manual for global BIM and quality specifications.

- Technical excellence will be achieved in a number of ways.

We need to develop a global matrix of technical excellence and identify who the experts are. Some of these experts will then be tasked to put together a framework to standardize our technical details and methodologies.

We further need to employ the best people and invest in global interconnectivity by encouraging global Lync mentoring, global commentary, global peer reviews and encouraging movement secondments.

We need to have a global research and development centre and support all of this by global funding.

- For best intelligence global communication across disciplines will be required. Intelligence should be shared globally between KAM’s or global account managers via monthly calls, emails or an automated prospects register.

- Best relationships are built on integrity, honesty and trust and delivering while providing advice beyond the project scope and engineering. This is achieved by constant face to face contact preferably by key or global account managers as part of global business development.

Kamran Moazami, Bob Halvorson & John Truter
Nov 2016
The building systems global leadership team’s robust discussions generated a consensus that WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff is already number 1 in many regions and sectors; and certainly top-tier in most of our locations.

There was recognition that being number one in every location in every sector is an ambitious, perhaps unachievable target; however the collective intellect in the room felt as though we should strive to be ‘the best’ in every location and sector; with the best being defined by the best clients, the best projects, technical excellence and the best people; underpinned by solid business performance.

We identified a series of themes, actions and plans to enable us to begin this journey as a global team, as opposed to a somewhat disjointed collective of regions:

- **Thought leadership at a global level.** We have it, we just don’t necessarily showcase it enough; or understand at a collective level, where this thought leadership exists. Some of our competitors do this well: they don’t necessarily have better thought leadership and experts than WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, they just showcase what they have extremely well.

- **Tied in with thought leadership is better marketing of our technical expertise, and better use of it on our projects through global expert input or peer reviews. Leveraging this global expertise has significant potential which in many locations is relatively untapped.**

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- **Better global connectivity, knowledge sharing and quality consistency will yield significant market advantage.** Having 30 or so global Building Systems leaders in the same room in Chicago was a good start and regular connectivity of this leadership team is paramount; however it should not just end there. We can strengthen this by:
  - Commencing a Building Systems PAN, to provide a forum for any of the Building Systems staff globally to communicate, collaborate and utilise our wealth of expertise that exists in every region in which we operate.
  - Providing more granular detail in the GTE matrix.
  - Regular (annual) global discipline leadership face-to-face meetings; ideally a 1-day workshop prior to each Property Leadership conference.
  - Setting up smaller and more agile working committees to progress action items between these face-to-face meetings, throughout the year.
  - Create a ‘be interruptible’ team of core experts; whose mission is to help with technical dilemmas in a 24hr response timeframe.
  - Planned strategic internal and external communications, specific to Building Systems.

- **Better leveraging our global capability through our global experts is important; however, we also recognise that many of our clients also appreciate our strong local connections and relationships. We need to bring Global to Local and keep the Local in Global; whilst maintaining a consistent level of client care – another region’s client is just as important as a local client and we should always remain hungry, but always be humble. Our major Global competitors do not do this well and getting it right would open up some market advantage to us.**

- **We need to embrace mobility of our staff, to gain experiences in other regions and in other industry sectors, building internal networks along the way. We should support and incentivise secondments; publishing success stories from those who have relocated with us, to help generate interest.**

- **Create a ‘WSPN 24/7 news channel’ to share content globally. Technical news items, project profiles, person profiles, ‘a day in my shoes’ all created in MP4 format can be streamed to any screen/device residing on the WAN, whether it be a notebook, PC or TV in the lunchroom or screen in a reception area.**

Three items certainly stood out as the core recurring themes throughout the meeting; namely getting our people together, acting locally/thinking globally and global technical expertise; so the above actions predominantly focus on these aspects.

Looking ahead, we expect that some of these themes and actions may be consistent with the other groups; so it would not be prudent to push ahead in isolation. Once we understand which actions may be delivered in another forum, we will then create a definitive action plan, communicate to the wider team and form some committees to commence working through the remaining items, in late Q1-2017.

Vincent Tse, Sean Treweek & John Bredehorst
Nov 2016
We have an outstanding specialist services business covering everything from VTS and lighting to fire and acoustics. Many of our experts are pre-eminent in their fields. However we are not as famous as we should be inside or outside the business. Our workshop focused on how we move our business to the next level and become the go-to specialist engineer for complex client challenges.

COMMON THEMES
- Need for better global connectivity and formulation of Specialists networks
- Need for a common platform / terminology for the Specialist offerings (eg: Fire Engineering vs Fire Life Safety, Building Science vs ESD vs Sustainability, Intelligent Buildings vs Building Technology systems)
- Leveraging our global expertise to deliver locally
- Internal awareness raising
- The need for better cross selling
- Better external awareness and marketing
- Awareness raising on high fee yield and value add Specialists provide
- Internal recognition that Specialists offerings provide unique selling points and market differentiators to our competitors

MEMORABLE MOMENTS
- The enthusiasm and passion during the workshop
- The desire by the workshop attendees to develop a global Building Specialist identity

GENIUS IDEAS
- Building Specialist App, linked to a Property & Buildings app.
- Global ‘lunch & learns’ to raise awareness of Building Specialists and promote knowledge sharing
- Connecting Building Specialist at different grades together

STAND OUT ITEMS
- Connectivity
- Awareness
- Identity
- Knowledge sharing

FUTURE BUSINESS PLANS
- Connect the Global Building Specialists
- Develop an Internal Building Specialist Awareness Campaign
- Support the development of Smart Building Technology team by connecting the expert already in our business
- Support the development of a global Cyber Security team
- Develop the CTBUH Smart Building Guide to promote the Smart Building Technology team

NEXT STEPS
SHORT TERM (6 MONTHS)
- Develop a Communication Plan to drive the initiatives identified in this summary
- Reinvigorate or form Building Specialists networks:
  - Assign leaders to drive
  - Increase use and development of PANs
  - Internal awareness raising campaigns
  - Internal knowledge sharing sessions
  - Develop and adopt common terminology as much as possible
  - External marketing material – web presence, etc
  - Form team to develop the CTBUH Smart Building Guide

MEDIUM (12 MONTHS)
- Specialist Discipline Global Strategic meetings – Fire Engineering, Acoustics, Building Technology Systems, etc
- Assist regions establish or expand Specialists offerings (eg: Vertical Transportation in US, Building Science in ANZ, UAE, etc)
- Publish the CTBUH Smart Building Guide
- Have a global team of Cyber Security specialists (c. 5 people)

LONG TERM (> 12 MONTHS)
- Building Specialist Leadership team (7 members) representing each of the primary regions (UK, ANZ, US, SWE, ASIA, ME & CAN)
- Global Head of Building Specialists

COMMUNICATION PLAN
- A Building Specialist Communication Plan will be developed during Q1 17.
  Dean McGrail, Melanie Taylor & Wayne Bretherton
  Nov 2016
Where is Building Advisory and where would we like to be as a global discipline?

We are slowly gaining momentum, visibility and recognition. However, we need to have a set of global initiatives. Building Advisory is a higher-value strategic consulting service offering that supports our Property & Buildings clients internally and externally, in ways that do not encompass design. It includes due diligence, whole life costing analysis, economics and asset value management, and property planning.

We need to create group-wide differentiation and a better market position in Building Advisory to help us establish and sell ourselves as a stronger non-design-related position in property and buildings.

We want to be ‘best in class’ and first choice as advisor on major projects and on bids with clients, and one way to do this is by partnering. Together we make a better team, drawing on each other’s expertise, skills and knowledge from around the world.

Clients want:
- Someone that understands them and their business = knowing your clients’ needs, improve our understanding of client needs in doing so, identifying opportunities to better position ourselves;
- Our Expertise = experts in our field, global reach, right people with the right skills;
- Us to meet / deliver to their expectations = setting client expectations, exceeding expectations;
- Us to deliver solutions that match their objectives = understand their vision;
- Relationships = partnering, ongoing service with the same company representative;
- Regular communications = always initiate contact, be positive;
- Us to deliver what we promise = manage promises, be accurate and dependable, give certainty;
- Forward thinking = innovation, opportunities;
- Loyalty = nurturing, put the client first; and
- Us to anticipate = act on, support.

Collective Themes and Actions
- Focus on being the best in Building Advisory.
- How do we stand out from the crowd?
- Creative big picture advice required.
- Advisory needs to be prompt and upfront.
- Needs to be proactive vs reactive.
- Think before doing.
- Trusted advisor – be trustworthy, be positive, be inspirational, be your client’s best friend, be like their doctor.
- Strong client relationships – talk the client’s language.

Stand Out Ideas
- Have like a doctor patient relationship with your clients.
- Take risks even if it means saying ‘No’.
- The idea of having an elevator pitch to explain what we do in 20 seconds.
- We need to create the solution/s to solve problem/s.
- Advisory Services needs more explanation. Many still do not understand what it is.
- Unite globally to draw on each other’s diverse skills and expertise.
- Lessons learnt is important to improve and innovate what we do and who we are.
- Collaborate more.

What Happens Next?
- Develop a global strategic plan.
- Build on our offering.
- Differentiate ourselves.

When Can people expect a plan to be communicated?
By the second quarter of next year 2017.

Tinoulla Philippou, Derek Pitcher & Caroline During Nov 2016
WHAT YOU SAID...

Great conference! I think there is a great opportunity for regional innovation competitions, with the winners coming to compete at next year’s conference.

I would like to see it expanded to include all Business Unit Leaders (those with P&L responsibility), and Centre of Excellence Managers/Leaders. We need to better connect at a technical and business level to share ideas and promote excellence.

In your forthcoming summary, please set plans for the company and for us that keep our momentum going. While we should do this on our own, we require your assistance, your approval and your encouragement. It’s still a bit fragile and the task to organize ourselves into a cooperative networked global company is huge.

Eye opener for me personally. After being acquired by WSP I didn’t fully understand how truly global and world class the company is. Now having met so many people from around the world it’s much more clear. Inspirational conference! I am excited to share with my team.

I think we could have used a few additional break out sessions... maybe another 2-3 hours, just cause every session I attended was really fun and engaging.

Great discussions with colleagues. Need to ensure the discussions continue after the conference.

Keep it going and begin to focus more on the opportunities to share best practice.

Let’s be sure to do this again. Actions must follow including ensuring the dialogue continues across our global practice area and market sector leaders.

Very well organised conference with a good cross section of delegates.

It was perfect. Keep doing it every year. It will produce results!

Really enjoyed making new friends and catching up with some old ones. The Summit 2016 App was great and I can’t imagine another conference without one.

It was a privilege to meet so many extraordinary people. I expect that everyone came away with a better sense of the tasks ahead and the need to collaborate globally.

We had an impressive 75 responses to our feedback survey so you clearly had thoughts and ideas still to express. 81% of attendees rated the opportunities for networking, one of our key drivers as fabulous! With a positive response to the workshops at 91% the themes were on topic and our innovation competition was an interesting and good experience for 91% of attendees. Your feedback is so important for us and our future plans so we have already taken on your comments; read some of our favourites below:
THE CONFERENCE IN NUMBERS

THE TOTAL AIR MILEAGE TRAVELLED WAS EQUIVALENT TO THE LENGTH OF 49,235,519 DOUBLE DECKER BUSES • OR FLYING AROUND THE EARTH 18 TIMES • OR TO THE MOON...AND BACK • THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF NIGHTS SPENT BY OUR DELEGATES IN CHICAGO AMOUNTED TO A WHOLE YEAR • COSTING THE EQUIVALENT OF 14.8 UBER TRIPS ALONG THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA (AT CHICAGO PRICES) • OR TICKETS TO SEE 2016 WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS CHICAGO CUBS 16 TIMES PER PERSON
NIGHTS STAYED IN CHICAGO

|--------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

BUILDINGS SUMMIT

CHECK IN

CHECK OUT
Let’s do this every year to strengthen relationships, promote collaboration, receive feedback and adjust direction as required. Congratulations to all. We should invite along a few of the next generation leaders & a handful of grads. Very rewarding. Events like these set us apart from the competition... they must not fall foul of budget cuts, or we will reverse into being just like the rest.
I do want to reiterate how impressed I was with it. The Canadian attendees I spoke to were all very grateful for the opportunity of attending (as was I). It was terrific to meet so many bright and enthusiastic people from around the world. I sensed a great desire for collaboration and taking the business to the next level (there are at least a couple of initiatives we want to embark on globally rather than nationally as a result of the conference). I don’t think we can underestimate the value of such gatherings. We owe you and all the organizers a debt of gratitude.
Thank you for the wonderful opportunity for me to have close conversation with other colleagues from the various part of the world. It was a very inspirational and entertaining experience which has also given me deepest feel of pride in our Group.