



Photo: PCI

## Highest and Best Use of Your Time

William Nickas, *Editor-in-Chief*

**T**oday's world has made us more accessible and there is an app for everything. You are expected to fill out your time sheet; fill out an expense report; fill out progress reports; fill out two-week look aheads; review staff utilizations; review backlogs; and reallocate resources from anywhere, and at any time. These are all realities of running a business, but in many companies too much time is being spent "administering" and "tracking" project activities and tasks. Project principals are faced with managing and adjusting a client's expectations and at the same time protecting the technical/production teams from multiple interruptions to allow them to immerse themselves in the exciting job of delivering bridges.

Whether I was working at the farmer's market at my grandfather's produce brokerage house or my dad's construction company, there was a family theme: "Highest and Best Use of Your Time." Every employee knew that family mantra. No salesman was at the copier, no crew foreman was sorting papers into the cubbies for filing, no brick mason was mixing mortar, and certainly everyone understood their specific job tasks.

Has today's connectivity distracted our most valuable and creative employees from being at the optimal level of productivity? We all know that someone has to steer the ship, but come on folks, it looks like everyone is steering and fewer and fewer are rowing the boat. Please position yourself as an expert with a passion for bridges. Do not let distractions consume your energy and certainly guard against a growing tendency of doing more with less, which really means upward delegation of tasks resulting in additional lost opportunity for your most talented staff. Always look for a focus for the day.

Positioning yourself is crucial and identifying your expertise to internal and external customers is a must. When everyone understands each other's strengths, teamwork comes naturally.

As you work toward that next impression, whether a website or an oral presentation, lead off with your ideas and approach. This business requires precision and consistency. Make the audience well aware of the outcomes and ideas about the concrete bridge project rather than a large focus on yourself. Truly some websites need to be flipped around and repositioned.

As I mentioned in the last issue, Emily Lorenz explains in this issue why the regulatory process used in developing transportation projects explicitly meets the balance sought by the sustainability movement, but there is a call for action. There is a higher need for those selecting and creating the built environment to reinfuse why resiliency and high performance are keys to long-life bridges with low maintenance. We don't want to substitute sustainability for resiliency; instead sustainability should encompass resiliency. Please read this important article and pontificate if you really want your college kid to sleep on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of a wooden dormitory with sprinklers? I think not. Wood is touted as green, but is it really a high-performance material that also provides safety and resiliency? I know this periodical focuses on bridges, but all new structures need to include considerations for passive resistance to damage and deterioration through better details and material selections. Talk to your neighbors and friends to educate our general communities on these broader structural and construction concepts and help adjust society's expectations and behaviors.

Get on board with the most versatile and intrinsically robust construction material, concrete, and enjoy making every day the highest and best use of your time. I certainly enjoy my career in transportation and the whole *ASPIRE*<sup>™</sup> team hopes to create or reignite a passion in you for concrete bridges. Please go to the website and send us your concrete bridge story ideas for editorial board consideration in the near future. 

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### Cover

Walsh Group built the Allegheny River Bridge, which features twin cast-in-place concrete segmental bridges with 532-ft-long main spans. Photo: FIGG, the engineer of record for the project.



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