

Society of Women Engineers New York Section

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Spring Issue

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President's Message



Rebecca Goldberg

Dear SWE New York:

The current economy is a good reason to gently remind everyone that when it comes to protecting our jobs or searching for new ones, SWE is a very good resource to have at our disposal. We should look to professional societies like SWE, now more than ever, for benefits such as career fairs, job postings, and professional development seminars and webinars. My hope for everyone is that you are able to weather this economic storm and come through on solid ground.

SWE NY has been fortunate to have had a busy spring thus far! We kicked off the New Year with our Fifth Annual "After the Holidays Party," followed by a joint happy hour with

the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. Next we held the Developing 3D Client Relationships Seminar and the Leadership, Influence and Power Seminar, both of which were hosted by the Jennings Group. Lastly, by teaming up with SUNY Stony Brook, we were able to hold a Career Choices seminar.

Additionally, I am happy to report that keeping in tune with our mission to encourage future engineers, SWE-NY has helped sponsor the regional Future City Competition and the SUNY Stony Brook Engineering Ball.

Please check out our "SWE Bits" emails and website (www.swe-ny.org) for further event information and updates. I hope you will continue to support SWE-NY in the near future!

Best regards,

Rebecca Goldberg, P.E., LEED AP

President, SWE New York Section

Learning About Leadership and Leadership Cultures

By Margaret Tang

On Monday, December 1, 2008, SWE NY held the "Leadership and Leadership Cultures" seminar, courteously sponsored by Weidlinger Associates, Inc. Olin Jennings, Chairman of The Jennings Group presented the first in a three-part seminar series being offered by The Jennings Group and SWE-NY.

The foundation of the seminar was the idea that there are Four Basic Elements of Leadership: understanding yourself, understanding others, communicating to motivate, and a well-defined personal vision. The Jennings Group believes while natural charismatic leadership cannot be taught, these four elements can be learned and mastered.

During the seminar, Mr. Jennings introduced the Motivational Value System (MVS), a tool used to assess what motivates us – why do we do what we do? A better understanding of the MVS also allows us to understand why others do what they do. Once we are better

able to understand ourselves and others, it only seems natural that we are better equipped to communicate to motivate. But motivation without direction is really just the blind leading the blind. Creating a well-defined personal vision is an essential element of leadership, providing the guiding principles and goals for our activities; you know where you are going in all parts of your life, and this reinforces leadership confidence.

These elements are the building blocks for effective leadership. Mr. Jennings also discussed how to develop a leadership culture and how each of us could contribute to and nurture this leadership culture in our own organizations. One of the key points he made was that technical expertise really only opens the door to our career paths; our individual skills, such as leadership, management, and teamwork, are what will ultimately set us apart from our peers.

Open
Nominations
Due May 1st!

Save the Dates!

- ◆ May 2, 2009 - Revlon Run/
Walk for Women in NYC
- ◆ May 7, 2009 - Monthly
Board Meeting
- ◆ May 13, 2009 - NYC Happy
Hour
- ◆ June 1, 2009 - Monthly
Board Meeting
- ◆ June 6, 2009 - Wine Tasting
at Long Island Vineyards

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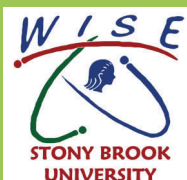
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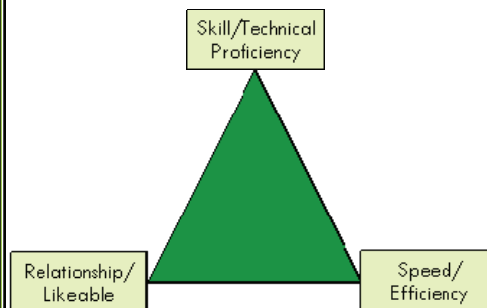
Chadni Saxena



Developing 3D Client Relationships - Becoming Indispensable to Your Clients By Kyrsten Brea

The second of SWE-NY's three part series with The Jennings Group proved a veritable success from the start, as 39 event attendees filed into the lunch room at Weidlinger Associates, Inc. on Tuesday, March 3. From the fantastic dinner spread to the wealth of new faces at this SWE seminar, Building 3D Client Relationships started with speaker Olin Jennings asking each of us one question: Who wants to be a better engineer and have more fun at work? While most participants raised their hands, you could sense there was some confusion in the room. Of course we want to be better engineers, but it's in relating to clients where many of us struggle. Mr. Jennings, an engineer by degree, pointed out that engineers don't like going on presentations and sales calls, but they do want to be better at what they do.

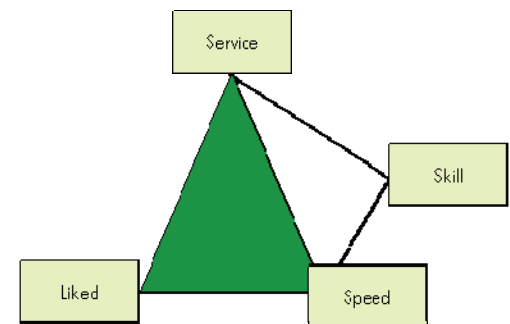
And so the presentation began, as Mr. Jennings took us through the market challenges for a commodity driven market versus an intellectual product such as engineering services. In speaking about creating value for a product, Mr. Jennings drew a "Value Matrix" triangle showing likeability/relationships, speed/efficiency, and skill/technical proficiency at the three points but noted that engineers generally like to focus on only two points of the triangle, leaving out the relationship building. Why do we, as engineers, find relationship building difficult, asked Mr. Jennings? Because we see it as unnatural and it is not a skill that is often rewarded in the technical service industry, he responded.



This is where differentiating your company or yourself comes into play, and developing relationships is required. How can service be

a commodity? Mr. Jennings explained that you become a commodity when price is the only differentiator. The risk with this mentality is that if all things are equal and price is the only thing that stands out, the best way to make your product appear unique is through service – how you deliver the product. The group discussed how service is highly personalized and can vary both by person and situation, thus proving to be the ultimate differentiator between suppliers.

Enter the 3rd dimension of the Value Matrix: Service



Service is a means of creating client delight by consistently, and unexpectedly surpassing the client's expectations. Delight is critical for getting good references, repeat business and in separating a technical service firm from just your average commodity.

With that Mr. Jennings left us with four tips to make a more natural and effective relationship:

1. Source information about people – what are their interests?
2. Pick up dropped comments – comments made in passing, that show what your contact is really interested in on a more personal level.
3. Focus on your contact – it's not about you.
4. Be creative.

Mr. Jennings left us with one parting thought: In developing relationships, be true to yourself. Be sincere and avoid "artificial" activities.

An Evening of Revelation and Inspiration

By Laureen Pellegrino

Energetic! Knowledgeable! Approachable! Who I want to be when I grow up! All of these terms applied to the March 10th seminar speaker, Ms. Florence Hudson, the 2008 SWE Upward Mobility Award Winner. She received the award based on her exemplary business and technical leadership, and for serving as an outstanding mentor and role model for women worldwide.

The seminar was held at SUNY Stony Brook and co-sponsored by the Stony Brook Collegiate SWE Section and Stony Brook Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Program. A very diverse group attended the seminar, including SWE collegiate members (both male and female), professional SWE section members, Stony Brook faculty, the Director of the WISE program, and the president of the collegiate section at Hofstra University!

Ms. Hudson began the presentation discussing her current role as the Energy & Environment Executive of IBM Corporate Strategy. Her responsibilities include developing strategies and execution plans for “green” solutions to benefit clients in their goals to improve their impact on energy and the environment worldwide. She discussed her career decisions while at IBM and stressed that her moves up through the ranks were based on the choices she made and the opportunities she pursued. Ms. Hudson had several defining moments throughout her career influencing her career choices. Three moments that left a mark and resonated with me were:

Firstly, she spoke of an experience she had while in high school. During her senior year she received a scholarship from Grumman. After being presented with the scholarship she found herself in the corridor with her physics teacher, where instead of the expected congratulations, her teacher proceeded to tell her that he felt someone else should have received the scholarship because she was a girl! Instead of letting the negativity of the situation deter her, she proceeded to continue her education and went on to receive a Bachelor Degree in Aerospace Engineering from Princeton University.

Secondly, later in life at a time when she was five months pregnant and interviewing for a new position within IBM, the interviewer was so impressed with her that he hired her, knowing full well she might not return to the job after her maternity leave. This show of faith in her skills cemented Florence’s decision to return to work after giving birth.

Thirdly, when IBM supported Florence to become a Special Director with SWE, IBM paid Florence her full salary even though she was on “sabbatical,” working for SWE. This helped reinforce Florence’s own sense of self worth and value within the organization.

At this point in the presentation, she let us in on a little secret: she graphs all of her accomplishments. Ms. Hudson explained that

Things that we can do to improve and help with our career choices:

1. Every engineer should take a finance or accounting course. This will help with interacting with others and understanding costs of choices.
2. Have personal cheerleaders – These are people who are in your corner and help with bouncing ideas off of or giving you confidence in your choices
3. Have a pallet of various mentors: One mentor does not fit all, so various mentors can help with different situations.
4. Become a mentor. A person should also give back and help others.
5. Plan your life to achieve your purpose. Know what your purpose is and make decisions based on this.
6. Live your values. DO NOT let anyone compromise your ethics. The word “Enron” comes to mind.
7. Remember the 3R’s of leadership: Respect. Responsibility. Reliability.



Pictured on the left: (left to right):
Florence Hudson and Rebecca
Goldberg

