



**STRATEGIC PLAN
(2007-2010)**

ADOPTED AUGUST 20, 2007

Introduction

This American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC/M) Strategic Plan updates and modifies our Strategic Plan of July 2004. This plan affirms our mission and vision and establishes three Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) to complete by 2010. According to Jim Collins, author of *Built to Last*:

“A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as a unifying focal point of effort and acts as a catalyst for team spirit. It has a clear finish line, so the organization can know when it has achieved the goal; people like to shoot for finish lines. A BHAG engages people – it reaches out and grabs them . . . people get it right away; it takes little or no explanation.”

In addition to the three BHAGs, this plan has four strategic rules. According to Charles Fleetham, the facilitator for this plan and author of *The Search for Unrational Leadership*:

“A strategic rule generates the decisions required for achieving a BHAG. One litmus test for your strategic rule is: How much thinking and action does it create? If the answer is ‘very little,’ you don’t have a good strategy. For example, one strategy deployed by NASA in going to the moon was ‘one step at time.’ First, they went around the earth once, then three times, etc.”

The ACEC/Michigan Board of Directors met on June 7 and July 12 to develop this plan. Prior to the June 7 session, Fleetham surveyed the Board as well as select Past-Presidents. The survey resulted in a list of critical issues that needed to be discussed in formulating the strategic plan. The top five critical issues were as follows:

- A few firms carry almost all the load. We need to get the smaller firms active.
- We are not seeing enough younger people in the organization.
- We are too focused on MDOT. We have to look beyond MDOT. A lot of our members don’t have transportation practices. We’re missing the boat with them.
- We have a strategy to push QBS, all ACEC members have to support it.
- Our board members need to represent the industry, not their firm.

This plan was adopted at the August 20, 2007 Board Meeting. We will review the plan annually to determine progress and changes, if needed. The Executive Committee will monitor progress quarterly and report progress to the general membership through our website. As you see from reading this plan, we need the support of all of our members to succeed. Please get involved today!

VISION

Enhancing business interests and opportunities for the most respected engineering companies

MISSION

Organizing political advocacy, education and networking while promoting professionalism and ethics

STRATEGIC RULES

Become the number one resource for firm profitability

What are the two things that every firm in our industry wants to achieve? The answer is increased growth and profitability. As ACEC/M moves forward in implementing this three-year strategic plan, we must consider how our goals and decisions will financially benefit our members. These impacts may come through funding legislation, tax reform, tort reform, contracting reform with client agencies, roundtable discussions or training of member firm staff. Regardless, the financial benefits must be defined, measured and publicized.

Whatever we do, we get young people involved

The future success of ACEC/M is dependent on getting “the future principals” involved in the association. Current principals will retire and they will be replaced with individuals. ACEC/M must develop a relationship with these individuals before the current principals retire so that current principals can help their successors understand the value of membership in ACEC. Many individuals within a firm do not know what ACEC is or does. Involving them in committees, seminars, and special projects will help them to learn the value of ACEC. They will then communicate the benefits to their peers. Young people have a different perspective and different needs. Tapping into these ideas will help to improve the value of ACEC.

Partner, Partner, Partner

We can only achieve our goals by expanding our reach, whether in the public arena, political arena, or within the consulting business community. Partnering includes those organizations that we affect and affect us, but also with member firms in coming together to achieve a common objective or for a common cause. It is critical that we embrace all of the organizations and agencies with which we are involved, in addition to improving the interaction we have with each other. Only through effective communication and engagement can we accomplish our BHAGs. For ACEC/M, there is definitely strength, and success, in numbers.

BHAG #1 - Grow our PAC to Texas Size

In order to become “recognized” in Lansing, it is imperative that ACEC/Michigan grow its PAC and be acknowledged for the contributions of its individual members. Growing the PAC will increase the respect of legislators and consulting engineering firms and demonstrate that ACEC/M is serious about promoting and protecting the business interests of engineering firms in Michigan. The establishment of a conduit fund in order to “bundle” the individual contributions of its members when supporting legislators reinforces the message carried by the PAC. In order for this to be considered a success, various targeted amounts must be reached. The number of contributors should also be used as a measurement tool for success.

Responsibility: CEPAC Advisory Board, and: Dan Fredendall, Tom Long, John Friel, Clif Seiber, and Andy McCune (tasks will be assigned as the plan unfolds).

Targets:

- In 2007, bring PAC to \$30,000
- By end of year, 2010 – PAC is \$40,000
- Conduit target is \$50,000 for 2010
- Pass two pieces of meaningful legislation by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor by 2010.

Tasks:

- 1.1 Get Board Members to embrace the goal and demonstrate leadership by contributing either \$1,000 to the PAC or delivering the same amount from other members.
- 1.2 Prepare a presentation detailing the benefits of a robust PAC, showing the relationship between a robust PAC, the access it provides to legislators, and the benefits and successes of the CEPAC.
- 1.3 Identify most politically active members to deliver the presentation throughout the ACEC/M community – at individual firms, committee meetings, membership meetings, etc. Conclude each presentation with a call to give to the PAC.
- 1.4 Invite an ACEC leader from another state to speak on how his/her state built a robust PAC and used it to benefit the membership.
- 1.5 Identify a source to explain the conduit fund mechanics and then develop an explanation for our members on how it will work.
- 1.6 Establish conduit fund contribution goals for member firms.
- 1.7 Modify the website to show the importance of the PAC and progress towards achieving the BHAG.
- 1.8 Develop high level contributor “Club” – members have to contribute at least \$1,000 to CEPAC.

BHAG #2: ACEC/M Executive Director, Ron Brenke known as Mr. ACEC

Being known and trusted is a key start to getting things accomplished with governmental types. We have demonstrated this with the MDOT/ACEC partnership. MDOT personnel trust Ron Brenke to deliver messages between ACEC firms and MDOT. He is the person called when there are issues that need to be resolved. With this MDOT partnership as a role model, ACEC needs to have other state agencies, the governor's office and the legislative leaders look to our executive director for counsel and advice on infrastructure and business related issues.

Responsibility: Ron Brenke, Jim Escamilla, Larry Fleis, Roger Johr, and Kirk Branson (tasks will be assigned as the plan unfolds).

Targets:

- Leaders in the legislature increase requests for ACEC support of legislation.
- Technical leaders in municipalities increase requests for Ron's advice and input on issues.
- ACEC/M's reputation improves in legislature and within large organizations. For example: Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), City of Grand Rapids, etc.

Tasks:

2.1 Increase Executive Director visibility to various groups, including:

- Peer groups (MSPE, ASCE, AIA, etc.)
- Engineering clients and industry associations (MML, MITA, MTA, AGC, APWA, CAM, etc.)
- Legislature (proactive sending message to key legislators on issues that effect our industry)
- Agencies (key spokesman to various governmental agencies – MDOT, MDEQ, DMB, USDA-Rural Development, DWSD, etc.)

2.2 Increase publications authored by Executive Director

- Establish budget for PR firm in 2009
- Define needs to assisting us in press releases and announcements
- Interview several firms to collect information on how they could help
- Use info to define scope of services
- Seek proposals/hire PR firm

2.3 Increase Executive Director's time to devote to enhancing ACEC/M reputation

- Evaluate staffing
- Re-assignments of staff
- Evaluate how to fund additional help (no later than February 2008)
- Hire QBS facilitator to help external visibility of our industry and complete QBS duties
- Visits to members and non-members

2.4 Identify potential coach/mentor for Executive Director

- Enhance network
- Optimize presentation skills

BHAG #3: Increase Involvement

This BHAG envisions not only achieving the membership involvement necessary to accomplish the various goals and objectives of the organization, but also to increase membership to provide additional resources to help achieve success.

For any organization to thrive, particularly a volunteer driven organization such as ACEC/M, member involvement is critical to its success. For ACEC/M, member involvement means both firm involvement and individuals in the member firms. Most of the ACEC/M initiatives that are important to the consulting engineering business require volunteers to move the initiatives forward. Volunteering can take on many forms including being a member of the board, being involved with committees, participating in meetings and conventions, and volunteering for special events, functions, and task forces.

To achieve our goals and to keep ACEC/M a vibrant organization, we must increase the number of firms that belong to ACEC/M, the number of member firms that are active in the organization, and the number of member firm staff that participate in ACEC/M initiatives, committees and volunteer opportunities. Firms become involved with ACEC/M by belonging to the organization and thereby providing financial support through dues, supporting the their staff's participation in ACEC/M events and activities, promoting ACEC/M to other member firms, and providing financial support in addition to dues.

Responsibility: Wally Alix, Ruben Ramos, Mark Smolinski, Jim Susan, Keith Swaffer, Paul Wade, Becky Smits (tasks will be assigned as the plan unfolds).

Targets: (To be quantified)

- Number of youth involved under 35 years of age
- Number of new firms
- Number of people from different firms attending ACEC/M events
- Number of people total attending ACEC/M events

Tasks:

3.1 Review committee structure to streamline the committee structure so we can focus the Board and staff's involvement and hopefully have committees that are truly engaged and achieving meaningful results. Currently, there may be too many committees to be effectively managed and monitored that consume a great deal of staff time. The review should address the following questions/objectives:

- Review current committees and their purpose
- Which are active?
- Which should be eliminated?
- Should we restructure?
- Develop a mission for each committee
- Tie all committees to the Strategic Plan
- Stress the need for strong committee chairs

3.2 Conduct youth outreach to increase involvement of younger members

- Expand "New Leaders" committee with youthful membership on the west side of the state
- Have committee develop a 3-year strategic initiative to fit with ACEC/M
- Develop programs that will be of interest and build future ACEC/M leaders
- Partner with ASCE and add liaison from ASCE with possible subcommittee; create young leader interest similar to ASCE youth interest
- Create joint programs with ASCE; ACEC focus being business related and ASCE focus being technical issues
- Identify opportunities: scholarship program, bring young members to golf outing, Michigan YES!

3.3 Conduct Firm Outreach

- Conduct two CEO Roundtables per year - assign board member to each member firm who will contact the CEO and personally invite to the CEO roundtable; invite two to three nonmember firms
- Using the list compiled for the CEO roundtable contacts, board members reach out to member firms on a quarterly basis to encourage participation in ACEC events such as regional meetings, legislative day, committee meetings and future roundtables.
- Within each firm that we reach out to, discuss with contacts the organizations desire to get younger firm members involved and encourage firms to have younger staff volunteer for committee assignments.
- Identify firms, not currently members of ACEC/M that should be part of the organization. Consider targeting small number of firms annually to increase focus. These may be firms that were past members.

- Identify what firms want out of ACEC (use past survey)
 - Review previous member surveys to get a better appreciation of what firms and their leaders expect to get from ACEC.
 - Use this analysis to develop a list of services that ACEC/M can provide.

3.4 Maintain and improve partnerships

3.5 Expand educational outreach

- Develop committee to identify educational needs, consider PSMJ and other training opportunities
- Set targets for participation and revenue generation