The Power of Servant Leadership

I can’t remember what year it was, I think in the early 90’s. I was volunteering at the ASCC booth at the World of Concrete in Orlando. The senior education manager was Susan Clancy. Susan showed up at our booth and shared her challenge of dealing with a speaker that was hung up in Chicago and wouldn’t be there to do his safety seminar the next day. I popped up and said “I’ll do it!” And a man from CNA Insurance said “I’ll help you!” At the time I owned a small safety consulting company, and the CNA representative specialized in safety for CNA. We had the power point the original speaker was going to use and worked on our presentation that night. We pulled it off and it went very well.

Later that year Susan called me and asked if I would be interested in doing a seminar for the next World of Concrete. That was the beginning of what has been a long career of teaching, speaking, and consulting while I led and managed my own construction company. Now that I’ve closed my business, the teaching, speaking, and consulting have become my new career.

So, one might ask, what does this have to do with the American Society of Concrete Contractors? I’m glad you asked. My life has changed because of ASCC. No, not because I joined and used all the wonderful resources; because I volunteered and got involved, HEAVILY involved. I loved it!

Working with all the other contractors, on the same level, and having a common goal, — creating the Annual Conference, taking over the CELF, MIX Groups. I could go on and on. Here’s the deal, I got so much more out of this organization than I ever gave. Not only for my business, but more importantly developing as an individual and all the meaningful friendships. My MIX Group was made up of Gary Burleson, Bill Clifton, Joe Cooper, Bob Dalrymple, Doug Groninger, Don Marks, Tom Ralston, and Tommy Ruttura. All these men became good, longtime friends and each of them had very special relationships with each other. Tommy and Audrey traveling the world with Don and Louise, and I could tell more stories on and on. Joe Cooper driving up to Mishawaka to spend time with me one on one and talk about the concrete business. I better stop or I’ll fill up the entire newsletter. Bottom line? Give. Give your time, and when you have it…give your money. And I know…”I don’t have time for that”. I didn’t think I did either but it made a difference in my life. When I stood with my concrete brothers and their spouses to say our last farewell to Joe Cooper and Don Marks I had no regrets about my involvement and work in ASCC.

Executive Director’s Message

“What Would it Mean to Lose $6.6 Billion in Market Share?”

Several interesting topics were discussed at the Concrete and Masonry Related Associations (CAMRA) meeting a few weeks ago. One was industry promotion. Though promotion is not part of ASCC’s mission, because of my background, it’s
something I’ve always had an interest in. I’ve watched the industry in several failed attempts to launch an industry-wide promotional campaign. A major stumbling block is the sheer number of concrete and cement organizations (near 40) that represent the various segments of our industry. Organizing and convincing them to spend their promotion dollars on the greater good, if you will, has been found to be nearly impossible. While it’s easy to criticize, it’s also understandable. Then there are organizations like ASCC that say “we don’t promote,” and leave it at that.

At our June meeting some sobering numbers were presented by Statler Nagle (SN), the market research firm that’s been funded primarily by the Portland Cement Association to determine threats and opportunities, an assessment of industry readiness and interest in collaboration, the state of the industry’s marketing and promotion practices, and a vision for collaborative industry marketing development. In their research SN determined that our industry organizations overall spend approximately $40M a year on promotion. This could encompass anything from the concrete pavers tradeshow, to an ad campaign for shotcrete, to a program designed for state DOTs.

SN predicts that if we (the concrete/cement industry) continue down that path, over the next 10 years we’re set to lose $6.6B of market share. If, somehow, we were able to corral and repurpose that $40M and add another $5M-$17M a year to it, we would increase market share by $4.2B in the same time frame. If we were able to add $10M-$25M a year, by 2027 we would have increased our piece of the pie by $6.5B, at a cost of $325M.

The larger and more influential members of CAMRA are going to be knocking on our door soon for $25K, a pittance in the whole scheme of things, but a lot to ASCC. That’s only if they get their ducks in a row first. But let’s say they do. Will we say “we don’t promote?” Food for thought.

Decorative Aggregate Selection

Old Is New (and Trendy) Again

Going to high school in the 80’s I was an unknowing victim, unaware of the overly short athletic shorts that would haunt me as later in life my children perused, then taunted, my personal athletic achievement shrine in our basement. Thank God Michigan’s Fab Five basketball team came along and shorts rightly went much longer, offering a more reasonable level of coverage. Unfortunately the short short trend is likely to come back, just as trends in construction cycle over dozens of years. As I now use social media to keep up on trends in decorative concrete I am seeing a fast resurgence in the usage of swirl finishes on patios and driveways.

Swirl finishes have been around for over 50 years, but the current trend is incorporating integral color with the finish method to create some very attractive looks and at a moderate cost compared to other decorative options. I am seeing heavy use of swirl finishes in northern climates of the US and even more in Canada, which makes sense due to the textured, anti-slip nature of the finish. Extremely unique, the swirl pattern is created by smearing the surface of the concrete in a uniform overlapping circular pattern. The smearing can be achieved with nearly any type of trowel, float, or even a smaller brush. Some people say when finished the pattern resembles rose petals.

Making a swirl finish stand out takes a talented finisher, or team of finishers. Consistency is needed when working on larger projects so that the arch size and directions are identical. When successful the finish can be stunning, safe, and durable for the owner. So let’s embrace and appreciate the look of an old-school finish, unlike the new romphims (man rompers) that we hope are here once and gone for good.
The ACI-ASCC 117 Tolerances Committee has just established a subcommittee to consider the effect of movements on tolerances. The current ACI 117-15 does consider the effect of some movements on tolerance measurement. It considers time, within 72 hours, in measuring flatness and levelness either by F-numbers or a 10-ft. straightedge and also considers a construction operation, formwork removal, when measuring flatness and levelness and elevations of suspended slabs. The subcommittee, however, needs to consider movements caused by temperature, moisture changes, post-tensioning, backfilling, and other operations with respect to tolerance measurements.

As a preamble, to ACI-ASCC 117’s efforts, I searched other countries’ tolerance documents to see how they handle the effects of movements on tolerance measurements. Most of the tolerance documents didn’t address the issue, but there were two that provided some information: the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the German national standards organization (DIN).

ISO 7976-1 Tolerances for Building Methods of Measurement of Buildings and Building Products Part 1: Methods and instruments

*Influence of deviations from reference conditions*

“Variations in the ambient conditions from the specified reference values can give rise to errors in the measured size of a dimension. Temperature, especially direct sunshine, is normally the most significant of these ambient conditions”.

“Other reference conditions such as moisture content of timber and age of concrete components shall be taken into account where appropriate”.

“The actual temperature of either the object to be measured or the measuring equipment may be difficult to determine in practice since it is unlikely that either will be at uniform temperature and because temperature differentials within the object to be measured or in the equipment will exist. The most satisfactory solution is to allow both the object to be measured and the measuring equipment adequate time to achieve a stable ambient temperature. This temperature can then be measured and allowance made for any variation from the specified reference temperature”.

“Measuring straightness deviations with the aid of a wire should be avoided during rain and strong wind”.

DIN 18202 Tolerances in Building Construction

- “Deformation as a function of time, loading and temperature shall be considered elsewhere”.
- “Owing to deformations occurring as a function of time and loading, measurements are to be made as early as possible, by the time of acceptance by the subsequent contractor or final inspection of the building at the latest”.

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Safety & Risk Management Council

Hot Weather Safety

While summer weather is fast approaching, many of the hazards that could affect project teams in the heat are already part of our daily routine. The work we do is physically demanding, outdoors, and requires protective clothing and PPE, all of which make us susceptible to high temperatures and direct sunlight. Every project team must prepare to keep workers safe during the summer months by assuring that:

- Drinking water is available
- First aid resources and cooling areas are available
- Everyone is trained to recognize and understand the signs of heat stress

Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself by sweating. It can lead to several heat-induced illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat stroke is a severe medical condition that needs immediate attention. Symptoms of heat stress include:

- Redness or sudden rashes on the skin
- Lethargy (a drop in energy, sudden tiredness or weakness)
- Change in personality (uncharacteristic irritability or giddiness)
- Headache, vomiting, nausea, or vertigo
- Lack of sweat or sudden chills
- Confusion and slurred or muddled speech

If anyone on a project site shows signs of heat stress, be prepared to stop work and get them first aid attention.

Movements that Affect Tolerance Measurements

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Possible Direction for ACI-ASCC 117

Neither the ISO nor DIN documents are very specific; however, they do alert the reader to some issues. ISO discusses specified reference values for ambient conditions. Thus it might be appropriate for ACI-ASCC 117 to specify that tolerance measurements shall be taken when the member temperature is between a range; such as 60 to 80°F. This would help decrease the effect of temperature on tolerance measurements.

The DIN document indicates that measurements affected by loading should be made as early as possible. It would certainly be better to make tolerance measurements before deformations due to loading. Thus ACI-ASCC 117 could require that tolerance measurements be taken prior to backfilling walls and prior to post-tensioning.

One interesting suggestion made by ASCC contractor Frank Salzano of Ceco Concrete Construction is shown below:

Movement and Tolerance Measurements:

All tolerance measurements must be taken within 72 hours of placement of concrete (similar to F-numbers and straightedge measurements) and within 20°F of existing ambient temperature at time of placement.

I certainly think Frank’s suggestion has merit. If other ASCC members have suggestions, please send them to Bruce Suprenant at bsuprenant@ascconline.org. Thanks!

Message from Steve Lloyd

After serving my time with the US Navy, I came back home to Lynchburg, VA, confused as to what I wanted to make my career. After a couple of years of trying to figure it out, I chose concrete. Since then I’ve really tried to understand this concrete stuff. Just as I think I have it mastered, I figure out how much I’ve still got to learn. As time has gone by, I still have the five original men here. In addition to them I have their sons and daughters as well.

We’ve had many ups and downs over the years but managed to survive, thanks to my strong faith, my family, and our loyal employees. On my journey I joined many organizations, but when I went to the World of Concrete, a friend took me to a hospitality suite in the Las Vegas Hilton where I met people in the ASCC and I knew that was for me. It took a few years to justify the dues, but long story short, once I became a member I had a desire to get involved. But I was just a little fish and I felt very intimidated. Here I was a concrete finisher, no education to speak of, Southern and talked very country. Boy how wrong was I!

I stayed so involved out in the field, I didn’t know a lot about the inside business so I trusted people and low and behold I was embezzled, not once but twice! The second time almost put me under, but my faith, family, customers, and my employees pulled us through. I got involved in a MIX Group shortly after. My little company joined Peter Ruttura, Nate and David Somero, Clay Fisher, Ray Merlo, Vince Van Heukelem, Keith Ahal, and Jim Engelman. Man, the fish in that lake were huge! That didn’t matter to those guys, they changed me and my business to what we are today. Not only those guys, but all of ASCC has the most stand up guys and gals you ever want to meet.

On March 29 on the way home from the ACI convention in Detroit, I and my son were involved in an automobile accident. It was pretty bad and I believe the injury to my spine will require another surgery. While spending a week in the ICU in Detroit Paul and Juana Albanelli, Ray and Nancy Merlo, and Warren McPherson made sure I wanted for nothing.

I chose concrete for my profession and I truly love it, but this group of colleagues (ASCC and ACI) sent thousands of e-mails, cards, phone calls, and prayers. Those prayers were answered! I want all of you to know how much I love you all and I’ll never, ever forget that you are my FAMILY. I want to thank my wife, children, son and daughters-in-law, and my grand youngins for hanging in there with me. Thanks to Bev and all the ASCC staff for the job they’ve done keeping you posted on my status. But most of all, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for giving me everything I’ve achieved thus far in my life.

Thank each and everyone of you!

May God bless you and your families.