

Programs and Education

CSI Great Lakes Region Conference, Indianapolis

April 19, 2018

These are some of the invigorating ideas for programs and education that we have gathered and culled as our best practices, to offer as tips for chapter committee chairs tasked with bringing enlightening, engaging programs and educational meetings to the chapters. These are also organized by some of the current Institute directives for Education which they support.

Institute Directive: [Collaborate and share knowledge across the building team] [Bring all members of construction community together as equals within organization]

Invite Allied Groups - Co-Locate with other groups for seminars, trade shows, product fairs, and chapter programs on general interest topics - e.g the KC and Indianapolis chapters are currently doing programs touring the local zoo / highlighting interesting new exhibits like the Orangutan exhibit in Indy. These are great times to find out about what our respective organizations do. Cincinnati Chapter holds joint meetings with different organizations almost every meeting. E.g. AIA, AGC, AWIC, ACI, estimators group. They are a piece of the pie and we are the whole pie. Include designer, manufacturer, contractor, and facility owner/manager groups.

(The same can go for co-locating your chapter's allied committee meetings - Programs and Education Committees at the Indianapolis Chapter have long been meeting at the same time which has had great synergies.)

Meet the Contractor Night - Grand Rapids Chapter, October

Institute Directive: [Provide a variety of educational opportunities for members of the construction industry as ALL STAGES of their careers] [Make learning engaging and interactive]

Hands-on Programs - that actually get your hands dirty - e.g. brick laying, and tile. SW Missouri and Grand Rapids Chapters have done these.

Workshops - e.g. for architectural interns to attain Intern Development Program (IDP) credit by writing outline specifications with guidance from a panel of your chapter's CCS's. Coordinate with your chapter's and region's Academic Education Committee leaders to develop lists of invitees. Structure the program based on the specific requirements of the AIA's IDP program.

Mock Bid-Day - Panel of general contractors to discuss what it is like to be a prime bidder on bid day, and then an activity where all participants from any side of design and construction can spend a little time in the shoes of a general contractor and prepare your bids while addenda are flying.

Institute Directive: Differentiate our value

Avoid programs that are the same thing architects already have day in / day out from product representatives' lunch & learns in their offices. (Such routine programs ARE however good to have in your back pocket as a fail-safe in case an out-of-town speaker has to cancel. Always have 1 or 2 in the can and update those speakers annually.)

Unusual Topics / Opportunities - Field testing or product lab testing can be very interesting. Attendees can watch as mock-up construction is tested to the point of failure. Your nearest field testing & inspection agency is sure to have field testing going on for any number of interesting projects. Or a testing laboratory that does large-scale fire tests or many others, or manufacturing plant with in-house testing can all be great opportunities. This is just a starting point. Think of anything else unusual that might attract attendees and offer exceptional educational value.

PechaKucha™ Night - A Japanese-inspired rapid-fire program where each slide is only shown very briefly, e.g. 20 slides for 20 seconds each. [PechaKucha is a registered tradename of Klein-Dytham Architecture (KDa). The PechaKucha terms of use require presenters to "grant PechaKucha Night certain non-exclusive rights and license to reproduce their appearance. More info - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PechaKucha>.]

Game Show Night - Certification or other topics presented in Jeopardy-style or Price-is-Right types of games. Make the prizes especially fun too. Variations include "Are you Smarter than a Specifier" based on the similar show ending in 5th-Grader, or "Stump the Specifier Night".

Look for Programs that are Controversial and at the Forefront - Change is inevitable. Harness it.

Institute Directive: [Be the go-to resource for knowledge in organizing, managing, and communicating building information in order to ensure future relevance] [harness and improve existing and new technologies for communication]

Information Management - BIM and OmniClass are the future. Information management has always been a core strength of CSI! Think about pre-MasterFormat there was chaos and inefficiency. Now with BIM we need to find ways to apply all the CSI formats there are, to once again help bring the industry up to date with standards and resulting efficiencies. Otherwise all it amounts to is whole new levels of chaos. Find success stories where architect, suppliers and fabricators, and contractor have collaborated using BIM tools and CSI standards, and see if the team and the specifier for the team can do a chapter program about it.

Institute Directive: Inform the building process from beginning to end

Project Tours - Be aware of projects going on around town and ask for tours at different stages of construction and then completion. These can be especially interesting to many in the construction community. Talk with the seasoned leaders in your chapter for ideas on notable people who would be likely to accept a request for a project tour. These seasoned leaders,

maybe past presidents, etc., will be glad to share many ideas for event success. Then also invite such project teams to attend your chapter's awards banquet.

Plant Tours - Local manufacturing or fabricating plants can be excellent learning opportunities and can draw a good crowd when publicized to your group and some of your occasional attendees - keep a list of people who might attend various special programs.

Famous Failures Make Great Topics - e.g. the World Trade Center collapse and what could have helped prevent it - adequate fireproofing, and fewer combustible materials. The 2017 Grenfell Tower Fire in West London.

When Failures Occur, What Happens? - A program can cover what happens legally when failures occur - case studies not only on who was responsible per the Contract Documents but also how did they remedy it, and who decides whether the fix is good enough?

Legal Topics and Risk Management - Court precedents regarding construction e.g. Spearin Doctrine, design professional's standard of care, how things really work in the courtroom, liens and getting paid if you are a sub or supplier in such a situation, etc., and best practices for keeping out of court to begin with.

Institute Directive: Make the quality of our programs the highest priority, bring the intellectual rigour of our standards to our education programs, and use citations and bibliographies for further research whenever possible.

Evaluate programs ahead of time before they present to your chapter. Can the speaker really present well? Is the program information impartial / nonproprietary? (If not, encourage them to do table-tops or product show booths.)

Have a low-tech backup plan for events as much as possible, because at some point technology may not be on your side.

Panel Discussions - Many topics can be attractively presented with a panel of experts from various sides of construction - e.g. Weighing out Project Delivery Methods, with panelists from owner, designer, manufacturer, and contractor experts to talk about reasons to use/not use each type of delivery method for a variety of projects. Consider noting interesting projects briefly along the way to keep it down-to-earth.

Institute Directive: Make education omnipresent in everything we do - [Broaden educational content relevancy by complying with other organizations' continuing educational requirements]

In closing, keep this thought in mind for everything we do pertaining to programs & education - for marketing your chapter and CSI to professionals, the variety of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) is perhaps the most valuable thing CSI offers to the design community. Do everything

you can to help them by following AIA pre-approval guidelines and their process, and other organizations that require CEUs, and then report the credits for those who put their name, credential, ID number, and contact info on the sign-in sheet (remind them to do so LEGIBLY). Offer certificates to those who need them. Have someone who can dependably report the credits and make the certificates each month soon after the programs.

Continue the Conversation!

Let's keep sharing program ideas and continue fine-tuning what is working. Please contact:

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Thanks for your interest!