DECEMBER 2018

SPECIFICS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CSI
MINNEAPOLIS–St. PAUL CHAPTER

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IMPROVING THE
COMMUNICATION
OF CONSTRUCTION
INFORMATION

Can you help? There are changes coming
The Ghost Writer returns to wrap-up this month's Chapter Meeting/program
Their support enables high-quality programs

Haystacks and construction documents

From Bauhaus to our house
Bill Shmalz' prognostications on writing
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Please welcome our new member!

Their support enables high-quality programs
Test your knowledge

Those volunteers who make a difference
From the President…

Well, there’s that feeling in the air again. Whether it’s the colder temperatures or the expectancy of the holiday season, we may be feeling there is a deadline out there we’re not ready for.

Whether it’s the first snow, project bid dates before the New Year, or nominating individuals for upcoming CSI Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter Board of Directors or Committee Chair positions, we may not be ready for what lies ahead. That is why I would like to talk to you about volunteering for leadership roles in our Chapter.

I have seen a few changes in the years I have been involved in Committees and on the Board, and most of the change has occurred because pressures from work, family, and community and, and, and (you fill in the blanks) have mounted to an almost fevered pitch. Asking someone if they will serve on or lead a Committee or commit for two years on the Board of Directors can be interesting sometimes. You notice their eyes glaze over, they take a step back, and you feel them slipping away as thoughts of their work, home life, and all of the other important things in their life appear before them. Quite a picture isn’t it? Many of us have been there!

There are also those that are a great asset to organization, that are doing things for the organization, without being on a Board or leading a Committee. In order to make knowledge transferable in an ever-changing atmosphere for boomers, busters, Generation Xers, and Yers, we need to have more flexibility, diversity, and volunteerism which will be a main challenge over the next few years for our Chapter.

In order to have a say in what shape the future of CSI takes, we encourage all members to take an active role, even if limited, in working on and planning for the future of CSI and our Chapter. The nominating committee is compiling recommendations for upcoming vacancies on the Board and planning for committee chairs and members for the next few years. If you have an interest in participating at this level, please feel free to contact me, any of the Board members, or a Nominating Committee member. We welcome your interest and involvement, and the more people we have involved, the more manageable the tasks become.

Some of the Board members are attending the Dynamic Chapter Program sessions being put on by CSI National regarding how to interest our new/current members in the industry in the uniqueness of our Chapter events and how to get them involved in Chapter activities.

This is the time of the year the awards committee is looking for nominations for Chapter Members for Chapter, Region, Institute, and Construction Industry contributions. Please contact Rick Nichols, Awards Committee Chair, at rnichols@mail.thebluebook.com.

I would like to extend a special thank you to the following for their excellent and information presentations:

- John Cook and Joan Soranno from HGA for their presentation on the Walker Art Center at the November 12th Chapter Meeting. Thank you to the instructors and students that attended the event from Dunwoody.
- Basem Hammami from RSP Architects and Jeremy Jacob from Mortenson on their presentation on the “One Discovery Square” a healthcare innovative campus in Rochester, Minnesota at the December 10th Chapter Meeting.

Finally, I would like to invite all members, student members, and non–members to attend the January Chapter Meeting “Intersection of Law and the Built Environment” on Monday, January 14, 2019, at Grumpy’s. The speaker will be Mark Kalar of Cunningham Group, Chief Corporate Counsel.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the January Chapter Program.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Long, CSI, CDT
President
FY 2018–2019
If you are going to get sick or a rare disease, there is no better place in the world to be than right here in Minnesota. With the Mayo Clinic just 90 minutes to our south, there is even more excitement in Rochester. Our December 10, 2018 program introduced us to Rochester’s One Discovery Square, an innovative health and technology incubator, further advancing the medical breakthroughs in our backyard and cementing Rochester, MN as the healthcare leader of the world.

**It takes a Village**

One Discovery Square has a plethora of design team specialists to bring this concept to reality. Speakers Basem Hamamami, RSP Architects, and Jeremy Jacob, Mortenson, walked us through the presentation and interactive discussions on what Rochester has up its sleeve (which is of course rolled up for a flu shot).

The project employed an extensive design team due to the extensive nature of the project. Mortenson is the owner, developer and builder for this technology incubator. RSP & HOK St. Louis collaborated on the design. A few of the other players include Coen + Partners for landscape design, Meyer Borgman Johnson for structural, and of course Mayo Clinic. The project encountered lots of bumps and bruises along the way, but took them as learning opportunities.

**What makes Mayo Clinic Great?**

First, for us, the globally recognized Mayo is conveniently located in our backyard. Second, Mayo offers collaboration between doctors. Medicine *should* be collaborative, but this sophisticated collaboration is often not experienced between the silos of specialties. Thirdly, the international perspective of multicultural staff heightens the medical expertise.

**Why Discovery Square?**

Rochester and Mayo noticed talent was leaving, and was encountering more competition. To maintain Rochester as the global destination for health and wellness, Minnesota legislation authorized $5.6 billion to the city of Rochester, including funding this healthcare innovative incubator. This development is intended to keep them in the forefront. In time, Minnesota expects this economic engine will allow the State to gain back their investment.

The Destination Medical Center (DMC) is intended to be the epicenter of health and wellness of the world. Discovery Square in Rochester will be 16 blocks built in collaboration with Mayo Clinic and connected to provide unique entrepreneurial environments for businesses varying from startups to the research giant of the University of Minnesota. Often considered a competitor, in this scenario the University of Minnesota could be a benefit as a collaborator.

One Discovery Square, a healthcare innovation campus, will be the first time that Mayo Clinic will be tenants in a building they don’t own. They signed a small lease, but the rest of the building is for partners to work alongside Mayo. As such, they will be true partners. This project will provide new partners unprecedented access to Mayo, allowing
small start-ups extraordinary ability to work shoulder to shoulder. As this project will feature Grand stairways, it will encourage research connections through accidental acquaintance.

Modifications are coming to the Gonda building in the Heart of the City. Then Discovery Square with Discovery Walk to clinics will link development down to Soldiers Field.

**Challenges**

In order to create the vitality for this incubator to grow, Mortenson is taking applications to determine which tenants have the synergy to accelerate research to change outcomes. Therefore the building is a Swiss Army knife; it has to be prepared to change into whatever the occupants’ processes need. That said, planning included vibration mitigation so the building could be able to respond to various tenant needs. Due to the subterranean conditions, deep foundations are required. In addition, to accommodate ventilation requirements, floor layouts planned vertical shafts dedicating critical utility space. Clean rooms abut exterior walls, creating vibrant, but unusually natural daylight research spaces, that need to meet humidity and cleanliness tolerances.

There is so much work going on currently in Rochester. Much of the large-scale work is by national design firms. This is why construction permits are now taking 14 – 16 WEEKS! This needs to be accommodated in the project schedules.

Everyone wants retail (a coffee shop). But Mortenson showed it was not economically viable for their pro forma. However, it was needed for the tenants to connect, thus serving a larger programmatic purpose than the initial monetary limitations. Future phases, however, will be more strategic to focus costs.

The master plan showed One Discovery Square as a square, but this developed into a rectilinear shape. Parking is also a challenge in downtown Rochester. It is recognized that they need a parking ramp, and the master plan reflects this. The team hopes to finish One Discovery Square in March, 2019, but to future-proof the site, the loading docks can be enlarged in Phase 2.

The exterior image diverts from the Mayo Clinic granite. Departing from this flavor of Mayo proactively contrasts with gray in cementitious panels and orange accents. No balconies are provided. But the challenge of allowing transparency for visibility to the activity inside, using curtainwall, contrasts with the sensitive need for privacy using ribbon windows.

**Designing for Wellness**

With this tremendous opportunity to focus on innovation and healthcare, with a real estate mix, as a devotion to Minnesota, is the project reflecting this with LEED or WELL certification? Mortenson looked at WELL, but chose not to pursue certification. They decided to just incorporate some of the concepts. They also considered LEED. However, they decided to include concepts but avoid exhaustive efforts to save cost. It will not have the metrics or third party verification to demonstrate that it achieved what it set out to accomplish, but the commitment to financial health was just as important to this team as human health.

The design of One Discovery Square wants to draw people to use the stairs. Studies on research clusters show encouraging scientists to walk helps them encounter each other. So the design team flattened the building. If over 4 stories people take elevators, so they hid the elevators and celebrated the stairs. Therefore, the elevators are set back and the stairs are not typical egress stairs. The building is intended to provide innovation clusters and common spaces where researchers could bump into each other (not hard, though) and exchange ideas. (Like–‘my chocolate is in your peanut butter, your peanut butter is in my chocolate’…)

**Who’s on First? (What’s on Second? I Don’t Know… Third Base)**

One Discovery Square cast a wide net for tenants. It was not known who would be on the first level, what incubator or process may reside on the second level, and clearly, I Don’t Know is on third. Now tenants are materializing.

It appears the much-needed café’ will reside on the first floor, to foster chance encounters. The café’ is public and inviting. It is also adjacent to the Lobby-in Learning Stair. Is it lounging? Is it egress? Is it auditorium seating? It is not a required exit stair. So it becomes a lounging space that provides flexible and impromptu staged seminar seating in the middle of an active access, encouraging passers–by to become participants.

Mayo Clinic decided to rent the second floor, providing huddle rooms and central services and bathrooms. Mayo is only on one floor, so all their research at this location is on the same floor. The other big giant, the University of Minnesota Rochester, is housed one floor up. These floors provide 14’–6” floor to floor.

Lest you be counting, the limited access floor with highly controlled private spaces and 16’ floor to ceiling tops the building. Regenerative medicine research employing specialty lab equipment is growing in the CGMP (Certified Goods
Manufacturing Process) on the 4th floor. There is no provision to expand upward; therefore this will remain the top floor. This limitation to 4 stories, based on research showing 4 as the maximum number of stories before people use the elevator, formalizes the intent of forced collaboration.

The roof hatch is sized sufficiently to be able to allow future replacement of HVAC units, with minimal disruption to the tenants. A generator is also on the roof.

Rochester’s City council prevents skyways over 4th. Therefore the tenants and visitors only can use subway connections. One Discovery Square has been future-proofed with a false slab and a wall that can be punched through to block 12 on the north, to connect in the future. The depth of the utilities allows for future subway expansion. This amenity of clear wayfinding and connection to the tunnel system drives value and rent prices.

Conclusion
Transformation is happening. Right before our eyes. One Discovery Square boasts 90,000 rentable GSF with a partial basement. Light rail transit is being considered, with a possible train from the Twin Cities to Rochester. Some of the intriguing activities tossed around to live together are: imaging, advanced diagnostics, regenerative medicine, education, software and technology. In the future phases, they will be researching accelerator space, enhanced human intelligence, and simulation centers. They’ve stated there won’t be a helipad … but just wait and see.

Platinum Partnerships

![Platinum Partnerships](image)
Haystacks: Do construction documents do what they're supposed to do?

The purpose of construction documents is simple: They tell the contractor what is needed to complete a project.

How best to do that has been a subject of debate for a long time, even though a basic set of rules has been used at least as far back as the 1940s. In his "The Case For the Streamlined Specification", published in the July 1949 Construction Specifier, Ben John Small referred to a book titled "Specifications" that was written in 1896; the older book apparently discussed some degree of streamlining.

That's fine as far as it goes, but if the intent is to clearly communicate with the contractor, are we doing as well as we could? Architects and specifiers have a nice collection of rules for organizing information, but do they make sense for the contractor? Our rules are fairly consistent, and they are generally accepted by design firms, but can they be improved? A large project many take a year or more to complete, yet we still have inconsistencies and conflicts. Is it fair to expect a bidder, who typically has only a few weeks to figure out what we want, collect subcontract bids (many of which are incomplete or include qualifications), decide how much to include to cover the inevitable problems, and arrive at a competitive price?

Can we do better than asking contractors to find the critical information in a haystack of information that is less important?

Let's start with what works. Streamlining is the practice of removing many of the words we would use in ordinary conversation, but which add nothing to construction documents. A big step toward simplification is achieved by a simple change of mindset; if you understand that specifications and drawings are instructions written to the contractor, rather than a disinterested explanation of what is to happen, the rest will be easier. When teaching certification classes, I tell the class to write as if they are talking directly to the contractor. If you are talking with a contractor you won't say, "The contractor shall fill the bollard with concrete." Instead, you would say, "Fill the bollard with concrete."

As noted, this is a big first step, one that will automatically eliminate the "shall be" phrases that still are far too common. But even more can be done to reduce the length of specifications without losing critical information. While some things may need something approaching a complete sentence, most requirements can be reduced to what amounts to a checklist. Each item begins with a subject, followed by a colon (defined to mean "shall be" or similar term), followed by the relevant property. For example:

- Air content: 5 to 8 percent.
- Insulation: ASTM C578, Type IV.

Note that this checklist approach translates very well to properties found in BIM objects.

It's fairly common practice to eliminate the articles a, an, and the. In most cases, this works well, but I retain the article when referring to the Architect, the Contract, the Contractor, and the Work, to take care of those situations when those terms occur at the beginning of a sentence. Otherwise, there is no way to differentiate between the contractor identified in the agreement (Contractor) and a contractor working on the same building but under a different contract.
The Heretic Specifier suggests rearranging the haystack

Consider these words of wisdom regarding PageFormat, and consider applying them to everything we do:

The first concern of the Page Format is an improved and clearer presentation of the construction message. ... The writer and the reader were put before the typist, the printer, the equipment manufacturer, but without placing unreasonable demands upon any of them. ... The Page Format should then exhibit a reasonable amount of text density, providing visual recognition of the Parts and lesser levels, and arranging the subject matter in a logical, efficient and versatile page.

– excerpts from the CSI Manual of Practice, June 1974

Although specifiers can have an influence on drawings, let's look at how specifications can be changed to improve communication with the contractor. Let me start by saying that there is no excuse for contractors who don't look at the documents; "We don't do it that way" is a non-starter. On the other hand, it's not uncommon to hear "I didn't see it!" as an excuse for non-conforming work. It's easy to point to our rules and principles and say, "Too bad for you!" but in doing so, are we ignoring the problem? There is no doubt that some contractors just do what they're gonna do, but there are many occasions when I can't help but sympathize with a contractor who's trying to do a good job, but doesn't understand the way we do things.

A couple of responses are possible. We can go out of our way to educate contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers about the intricacies of our various formats and standards, but other than saying contractors should join CSI, not much of that happens. And, truth be told, many in the design professions, including our own members, don't follow the very principles we espouse.

Another approach is to reconsider how we do things. At a recent convention, Nashville, perhaps, there were a number of presentations that took this approach. There was healthy discord and disagreement about the proper use of the "Section Includes" article, and about other aspects of writing specifications, as well. Unfortunately, as far as I'm concerned, those discussions did not continue.

Why isn't this concept applied to all construction documents? Until the day that a significant number of contractors are not just CSI members, but CDTs, we can't just sit back and expect the rest of the construction team to understand what we do. If we're interested in progress, if we truly believe in improving communication, shouldn't we consider changing what we do for the benefit of the rest of the team?

This will be a bit off-subject, but bear with me. How many of you use what appears to be a standard format for meeting agendas and minutes? You know, the one with a lot of blank space at the top for the date and subject, followed by a list of those invited or those who attended, which can run to two or more pages, followed, finally, but the information you're really interested in?

If you think about it, that's a dumb way to organize agendas and minutes. The day after the meeting, will you really care who was there or who wasn't? Especially if the agenda or minutes were sent out under a transmittal form, which duplicates the same information?

Why do we write specifications in the same manner? Instead of starting with the important stuff – what's in the section – we ramble on for a page or so, talking about procedural items, then sandwich the good stuff between that and the how-to information. I know, the "Section Includes" article usually has a generic comment or description, but is that what a contractor is looking for? In most cases, the title of the section tells the contractor about as much as the "Section Includes" article.

What if we rearranged things to make it easier for contractors? Keep "Section Includes", but state what's in the section, including basis of design products; then go on to talk about performance standards, options, and the other stuff that directly affects the contractor, subcontractor, and installer. Follow that with special instructions regarding installation (shouldn't be much unless you know more than the manufacturer), then end with an appendix of information about submittals and other procedural matters.

If it's easier for contractors, it should make life easier for architects and specifiers.

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UPCOMING EVENTS FROM LOCAL CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATIONS

Check websites for complete listings

Information compiled by Joel Meyer, CSI, Member Emeritus, CCPR

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The International Concrete Repair Institute will present the program,” Moisture in Concrete – The good, The bad, the remedy on January 10, 2019. Speakers featured will be Scott M. Tarr, P.E. FACI, Peter Craig, FACI, FICRI, and Don Styka of Tarkett Flooring.

Moisture in concrete floors has been a common problem on many building projects, causing construction delays and flooring damage. This program will be of interest to specifiers and designers seeking more information on the causes of floor moisture problems and their remedies.

Visit the ICRI Minnesota Chapter website for more program information and registration.

Buch Notes – a periodic column by Ed Buch

Los Angeles Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute

BuchNotes #80  Nov/Dec 2018

From Bauhaus to Our House

by Tom Wolfe

One of my favorite writers, Tom Wolfe, died earlier this year so I thought it would be good to reread his 1981 book on architecture. Even if you don't know From Bauhaus to Our House, some of you will remember Wolfe’s popular books from the 1960s and '70s; "The Right Stuff" reporting on the Mercury Seven astronauts, or his "Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test" about Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters. Not knowing very much about either of these topics when I read them, I took them to be accurate portrayals of the subjects. However, after reading his views on architecture in From Our Bauhaus to Our House I'm not so sure anymore. Wolfe's portrait of American
architecture since WWII is at extreme variance with the way most of us view this period in architecture. He doesn't like it at all, and he likes the architects even less. His characterizations of the most famous architects of the 20th Century are almost mocking in tone and his descriptions of their buildings are peppered with ridicule and tinged with sarcasm. Like all of Wolfe's writing, it's colorful and fun to read but, but should we believe it? It's something to think about nearly 40 years later.

Wolfe traces the origin of mainstream modern architecture back to Walter Gropius and the founding of the Bauhaus in 1919. He describes the Bauhaus as a communal, spiritual movement based on socialist ideals and focused on an architecture to benefit the "workers". It was anti-bourgeois and rejected all ornamentation in architecture, furniture, and art. Functionalism was the starting point for a new architecture that was labeled the International Style. It was to have shear facades, flat roofs, and structure expressed on the exterior. Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer were two of the early practitioners. The results, says Wolfe, were buildings that mostly looked the same regardless of their function. Similarly at about the same time in Paris, LeCorbusier started to attract a following among architects and students with his writing and drawings since he had completed only a few buildings.

In the period between the two world wars, American architects were drawn to Europe and the design theories of the Bauhaus even if the Bauhaus's social and political roots were less relevant here. An exhibition in 1932 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, organized by the young American architect Philip Johnson, introduced America to the Bauhaus and its International Style. It was viewed favorably and heralded as the first great style since the Renaissance. But while the International Style grew from the Bauhaus social movement in Europe, in the US it was promoted, not by a bohemian group of avant-garde architects and artists, as it had been in Germany, but by the wealthy businessmen and their wives who headed the Museum of Modern Art. In America, this was just another style, a new fashion, Wolfe suggests.

The International Style took hold here in the 1930s due in part to the fact that many German Bauhaus refugee architects were teaching in American architectural schools. As a result, the works of architects such as Louis Sullivan, H.H. Richardson, and even Frank Lloyd Wright receded into the background. By the 1960s everything was in glass, steel, and concrete, and Wolfe contends they all looked pretty much the same. The "Yale Box" prevailed. He hits a little too close to home for me with his mocking description of the standard, architect designed interior spaces; white walls, sisal rugs on the floor, track mounted down lights, a plant in the corner, and furnished with uncomfortable architect designed and totally unaffordable chairs. Ouch! We were slaves to the fashion of the day and it was ironic for Wolfe, who only dressed in white suits, to criticize all-white interior spaces.

He doesn't have much good to say about the architecture of Louis Kahn, (the exposed concrete interior of his Yale Art Gallery addition has the appearance of a parking garage), or of Meis's Illinois Institute of Technology, (the glass and steel boxes have the appearance of an LA carwash). Even Meis's Seagram Building doesn't escape criticism where Wolfe describes the bronze WF elements on the exterior as "decoration" in clear violation of the tenets of modernism. (See BuchNotes #54, "Building Seagram" for a different point of view on this building.) Wolfe goes on to describe how Eero Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright, E. D. Stone, and John Portman were too parochial to be part of the International Style "club" of architects and, therefore, out of the mainstream of late 20th Century architecture.
The last two chapters of the book take us up to the 1980s. Wolfe gets on his high-horse in his take-down of Robert Venturi's architecture and his book, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture"; his architecture was modernist in contrast to the theme of his writings. Wolfe also provides a detailed description of the war, on paper, between the "New York 5", or the "Whites" as they were called, and the "Grays". Architects Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Charles Gwathmey, and John Hejduk, were the "Whites", and the "Grays" were led by Venturi and included Charles Moore, Robert Stern, Jaquelin Robertson, Allan Greenberg, and Romaldo Giurgola. The "Whites" were slaves to Modernism, according to the "Grays". The "Whites" wrote about their architecture in incomprehensible jargon, ("archivable" is the term used today), understood by only those in the "club". Wolfe cites several examples but one from Peter Eisenman stands out; "Syntactic meaning as defined here is not concerned with the meaning that accrues to elements or actual relationships between elements but rather with the relationship between relationships." Talking about architecture? Maybe that had something to do with why the "Grays", who became the Post-Modernists, won that war.

Further evidence of the "Gray" victory, for the time being, was the design for the ATT tower in New York City by Phillip Johnson, who was up to that time one of the most devoted Mieslings. He capitulated from his modernist roots with his design of the high-rise Miesling in the form of a Chippendale highboy cabinet. Apostasy!! cries Wolfe.

From Bauhaus to Our House was published in 1981 by Pocket Books. It appeared originally as a two-part series of articles in the June and July 1981 issues of Harper's Magazine. It has 128 pages and includes only a few photographs.

Ed Buch, FCSI, CCS, AIA, LEED AP
Los Angeles, CA
Oct. 13, 2018

Is This Diet Write for You?

An Article from Bill Schmalz, FAIA, CSI, CCCA

In our modern, fad-filled culture, there may be nothing as faddish as diets. As we pursue leaner, stronger, and more attractive bodies, we’ve tried the South Beach Diet, the Mediterranean Diet, the Atkins Diet, and the Raw Food Diet, each of which had its moment of popularity, only to be discredited and replaced by another. But the one I find most intriguing is the Paleo Diet. Popularized by Loren Cordain in his 2002 book The Paleo Diet, this diet plan proposes that we eat only what Neolithic humans were presumably eating before the invention of agriculture, on the assumption that, because the human body evolved for this diet, it’s a fundamentally healthful way of eating.

People following the Paleo Diet can eat meat (including fish), eggs, vegetables, fruit, fruit oils (e.g., olive or coconut oil), nuts, seeds, and roots. What they can’t eat, or even think about, are processed foods, including the contents of most grocery store aisles and almost everything sold in fast food restaurants. While the Paleo Diet has its critics [1], it sounds a lot more healthful than what most of us eat today. In fact, it inspired me to propose a Paleo-type writing diet to guide us toward leaner, better writing. I call it the “Old English Diet,” and to explain it, I need to take us back in time.
By the beginning of the 11th century, the language of England, now known as Old English, as a thoroughly Germanic language, an amalgam mostly of Anglo–Saxon language (from the 5th century) and Old Norse (from the 10th century). Everything changed in England, language-wise (as well as pretty much everything–else-wise) in 1066, when William, the French–speaking duke of Normandy in northern France, felt that he, and not the Anglo–Saxon Harold Godwinson, was the rightful heir to the throne of England. To prove it, he invaded Great Britain, killing Harold [2] and declaring himself king. Once the French–speaking Normans were in charge of England, Old English became a third–class language, with French being the official language of the government and the aristocracy and Latin being the language of the church and academia. It took several centuries before English regained its dominance.

By then it had evolved into something quite different: Modern English (or as we now call it, "English"). Many Old English words disappeared, replaced by new words—in fact, thousands of new words adopted mostly from French and Latin. But those ancient Old English words still deeply resonate with today’s native English speakers. Roughly a quarter of English’s vocabulary comes from Old English, including many of the words we use most often [3]. According to the Oxford English Corpus [4], among the one hundred most commonly used English words, all but three—people, use, and because—come from Old English. Which led me to think, if a Paleo Diet makes us leaner, stronger, and more attractive, would an Old English Diet do the same for our writing?

What would such writing look like? For a start, it would have a lot of short words. To make longer words, Old English stuck short words together, such as sticking book to keep to make bookkeeping. So most Old English writing would have a lean look. It would also be filled with words that have many meanings, such as run, take, break, turn, set, go, play, cut, up, and hand [5]. And it would make things much easier for its readers, since they (the readers, not the things) would have known the words since they were children. All in all, Old English writing would look and sound much like this paragraph, in which all the words, other than the word paragraph, are from Old English.

But writing that paragraph wasn’t easy. I had to belabor each sentence to avoid using Latin– or French–based words, which together make up around 60% of English’s vocabulary. Short words that I had assumed to be Old English, such as use, only, text, and glued [6], turned out to have French origins. And there’s simply no Old English way to say paragraph (word cluster doesn’t quite do it). So limiting our vocabulary to just Old English words, much like sticking to a pure Paleo Diet, leaves us with too few options to express ourselves. So instead, writers using my Old English Diet would not be restricted to using only Old English words, but would rely on short, simple (and mostly Old English) words, using longer, more complicated words (often from French or Latin) only when the short ones don’t work as well.

The good news is, English’s complicated history has left us with three parallel vocabularies, consisting of words derived from Old English, French, and Latin, and giving us a rich array of linguistic choices. Here are some examples of the three vocabularies:

- ask (OE), question (Fr), interrogate (L)
- before (OE), prior to (Fr), previous to (L)
- buried (OE), covered (Fr), subterranean (L)
- end (OE), finish (Fr), terminate (L)
- get (OE), receive (Fr), acquire (L)
- help (OE), aid or assist (Fr), benefit (L)
- hue (OE), color (Fr), tint (L)
- part (OE), portion (Fr), fraction (L)
- say or tell (OE), declare (Fr), relate (L)
- see (OE), view (Fr), observe (L)
- show (OE), point (Fr), indicate (L)
- start (OE), commence (Fr), initiate (L)
- way (OE), manner (Fr), method (L)

In none of those word trios are all three words exact synonyms. For example, interrogate isn’t quite the same as question, which in turn isn’t quite the same as ask. Similarly, acquire isn’t quite the same as receive, which isn’t quite the same as get. But with the Old English Diet, we start with ask and get. If it turns out they aren’t conveying exactly what we mean, then we consider a longer (and usually non–Old English) word. By sticking
to our Old English Diet—a diet which relies on short, simple words that everyone understands—our writing will be leaner, stronger, and more attractive. What more could we want from a diet?

Follow the author on Twitter @bill_schmwil.

Footnotes:

[1] Among the criticisms of the Paleo Diet:
- No group of Paleo people ever had access to the wide range of foods now available to us modern eaters. For example, seafood was available only to the Paleo people who lived near a body of water. Potatoes and tomatoes, which existed only in the Americas, were unknown to Paleo people in Africa, Europe, and Asia. Thus, it would seem, someone following a “purist” Paleo diet should eat only what was available to any one group of Paleo people.
- The diet wasn’t based on what Paleolithic people actually ate, since no one was there to watch them, but on the diets of a handful of modern hunter–gatherers, such as the Inuit and the !Kung, whose food we assume to be something like what our Paleolithic ancestors ate.
- Modern meat is nothing like the lean wild game that early Homo sapiens was eating. The animals it comes from get little exercise, eat food that probably wasn’t available to their ancestors, and are often pumped full of antibiotics to keep them healthy enough to be fattened up and slaughtered. Sure, we can hunt our own game or buy it from specialty stores, but those options are time-consuming or expensive (or both).
- In any event, meat was probably a rare treat for our great great … great grandfolks. The bulk of their diet was most likely what they foraged: nuts, seeds, berries, and roots. A Paleo Diet that relies heavily on meat is probably cheating; among modern hunter–gatherers, few, such as the Inuit, depend extensively on meat (fish) for their protein.
- About those fruits and vegetables: Most modern vegetables are not what they were 10,000 years ago, and may not have been edible at all back then. That most American of fruits, the apple, originated in the mountains of central Asia, and probably looked and tasted like a crabapple (i.e., small and bitter). American agro–hero Johnny Appleseed, whom we all learned about in grade school, was a real person (the name on his driver’s license was John Chapman). In the early 1800s, he really did plant nurseries of apple trees. But the apples weren’t for eating; they were for making alcoholic apple cider; the apples themselves were inedible.
- And vegetable-wise, it gets worse, because many of the most popular and healthful modern vegetables, such as broccoli and kale, didn’t exist in Paleolithic times; they are relatively modern creations (i.e., more recent than 10,000 years ago).

[2] Harold Godwinson was not the luckiest of English kings. He was crowned, following the death of his brother-in-law King Edward the Confessor, on January 5, 1066. When he heard that William was building a fleet and an army to invade England, he assembled his own army and waited for William’s attack. And waited. And waited. By early September, William still hadn’t left France, so Harold sent his soldiers home and went to London, only to hear that another claimant to the crown, Harold Hardrada of Norway, had just landed his army in northeast England. Harold G. hastily reassembled what army he could and, on September 25, in the Battle of Stamford Bridge, defeated and killed Harold H., only to find out that William’s fleet had left France on September 27. “Damn it!” he said. So now he had to march his battle–weary soldiers 240 miles south where, on October 14, they faced William’s larger and better–rested army near the town of Hastings. William’s army won, changing the history of the world, and Harold G. was killed, having served as the last Anglo–Saxon king of England for a little more than 10 months.

[3] Examples of common Old English words: colors (black, white, red, green, yellow, brown, and purple, but not orange or blue, or subtle shades such as pink, tan, or beige); body parts (heart, head, arm, hand, leg, finger, toe, neck, foot, lung, belly, chest, bone, blood, lung, and brain, but not stomach, artery, or vein); and animals (deer, cow, horse, goat, dog, cat, bear, and rat (all found in first–millennium England), but not lion, antelope, or raccoon). Mind you, even words derived from Old English words are spelled quite differently now. For example, black was spelled blæc, dog was docga, heart was heorte, and neck was hnecca.

[4] A corpus is a collection of texts used for data gathering; the OEC, with around two billion words, is the largest English corpus.

[5] According to dictionary.com, the words with the most Oxford English Dictionary definitions are, from #10 to #1, strike (with 250 definitions), fall (264), put (268), turn (288), get (289), stand (334), take (343), go (368), run (396), and set (464). It’s no coincidence that they are all Old English words.

[6] One easy way to spot a non–Old English word is if it has sounds that were foreign to the language. For example, Old English had no J or soft–G sound, so just and language would not likely be Old English words.
Critical Marketing Issues: Follow-up

Follow-up: Missing in Action

A famous and oft repeated statement in the realty and land development business is “location, location, location”. In the business of construction product sales its equivalent would be “follow-up, follow-up, follow-up”. In my 30 years of experience, a sales representative’s follow-up is the most important aspect of selling to design professionals. It is also, most unfortunately, missing in action. The lack of follow-up and by extension, follow through, is the one sales tool that can make or break getting and holding a specification. In the final analysis, consistent, focused follow-up is the most powerful way to minimize substitutions, develop alternates, and get product sold and installed.

Follow-up: Maintaining Relationships

Relationship is key to getting specified and limiting substitutions. While follow-up is critical to maintaining relationship there is a fine line between badgering and reasonable contact. Look for opportunities to follow-up such as new products, changes in industry standards, a new location installation that could be visited, and the like.

Follow-up: Significant Sales Opportunity

When a design professional requests product information, sends an email inquiry, calls and leaves a message, the number one priority must be to follow-up. Follow-up in this case can be as simple as answering the request or as involved as calling to schedule a call. From a certain point-of-view the speed of the follow-up can often be more important than the follow-up action itself.

Rapid, consistent follow-up develops competitive advantage and can lead to significant sales and specification opportunities. Woody Allen is quoted as saying, “80 percent of success is showing up.” Show up, follow up, and get specified.

Follow-up: Branding

An oft mentioned notion in the construction products business is that products and systems are the key elements of establishing brand with specifiers. In my opinion and experience, relationship and follow-up have the most impact on developing brand awareness with specifiers.

Tom Peters talks about “experience branding”. He maintains that your primary brand is how people experience your sales and service offerings. What better brand could you have as a company and as a sales representative than “follow-up”?

In the construction product business, consistent and useable follow-up actions are as important as any advertising, company capacities, or time in business. Follow up is experience and experience is brand.

Follow-up: Competitive Advantage

In my experience, a product representative develops competitive advantage by understanding the limitations of their products, by knowing competitive products as well as they know their own, and by demonstrating industry expertise to specifiers. Features and benefits, sole source specifications, and “my product is the center of the universe” is generally not helpful to specifiers.

Ultimately, a product representatives’ ability to be truly competitive with specifiers is to develop and deploy a consistent follow-up strategy. All the knowledge and industry expertise in the world is useless unless it is available to specifiers when they need it.
Follow-up is a tremendous competitive advantage and should be an integral and disciplined part of every construction product representative’s sales and marketing toolkit. In the final analysis, follow-up is about solutions never about products. Show-up and follow-up and watch your competitive advantage grow.

Michael D. Chambers FCSI FAIA CCS is Associate Vice President and Senior Project Specifier for HGA and is responsible for the specifications in the four California offices and is principal of MCA Specifications.

An Article from Colin Gilboy, Publisher, 4specs

**What Are Buildings Built Of?**

Most people start thinking – steel, concrete, and then get lost.

The answer is simple – buildings are built of relationships

This month's newsletter links to an AIA Architect article on how architects select products, along with some other comments.


*Originally published in the November/December, LACSI News*
Georgia and northern Florida. She was also a Territory Manager for GAF Materials Corporation in Minnesota.

Diane graduated from the University of St. Thomas earning a Bachelor’s Degree and double major in Business Administration (Marketing/Management) and Psychology. She went on to earn her Master’s of Arts Degree in Psychology from the University of St. Thomas.

She enjoys spending time with her three teenagers, two boys and one girl. Her boys are serious baseball players and her daughter enjoys equestrian horseback riding. She spends all her free time watching and cheering on her children at their baseball games and equestrian events.
CERTIFICATION QUIZ

By: Jack P. Morgan
Indianapolis Chapter Quizmaster

1. Facility managers should perform a post-occupancy evaluation how long into occupancy?
   a. Three months
   b. Three to six months
   c. Six to nine months
   d. Just before the one-year correction period completion

2. When interpreting contract documents, the A/E should:
   a. Show no partiality to Owner or Contractor
   b. Protect the client’s best interests
   c. Protect the A/E from liabilities
   d. Achieve the original design intent of the A/E

3. Which of the following is the recommended sequence for an addendum?
   a. Changes to Procurement Requirements, changes to previous Addenda, changes to Conditions of the Contract, changes to the agreement
   b. Changes to previous Addenda, changes to Procurement Requirements, changes to Agreements and other Contract Forms, changes to Specifications and Drawings
   c. Changes to Specifications, changes to Drawings, changes to previous Addenda
   d. Contract Documents, changes to Specifications

4. What information is found within Division 13 in MasterFormat?
   a. Mechanical Systems
   b. Furnishings
   c. Equipment
   d. Special Construction

5. The dollar amounts of cash allowances are:
   a. In the Instructions to Bidders
   b. In the Supplementary Conditions
   c. In Division 01
   d. In the Specification sections of Division 02 through 49 that specify the product installation

ANSWERS ARE PROVIDED ON THE NEXT PAGE
## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. (PDPG 14.2.6.1) *– b
2. (AIA A201, 4.2.12) * – a
3. (PDPG 11.21) *– b
4. (PDPG 11.3.7.3) *– d
5. (PDPG 11.3.10.4)– c *
6. Martin Luther King Jr. age 35 in 1964

### Chapter Board (2018–2019)

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Cynthia Long, CSI, CDT</td>
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<td>Andy Garner, CSI, CDT</td>
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<td>Certification Committee</td>
<td>Jerrilyn O’Brien, CSI, CDT, EIT, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Communications Committee</td>
<td>Jerry Putnam, PA, FSCI, CCS, Chair</td>
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<td>Expo Committee</td>
<td>Kathrine Barrett, CSI–EP, CDT, LEED GA</td>
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<td>Membership Committee</td>
<td>Gary C. Patrick, CSI, AIA, RRC, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Susan Lee, CID, CSI, CDT, AIA, NCARB, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Brien DuRouche, CSI, Chair</td>
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<td>Social Committee</td>
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<td>STEP Committee</td>
<td>Hannah Fleischaker, CSI, Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Chair</td>
<td>Adrienne Rulseh, CSI–EP, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Chapter Administrator</td>
<td>Shelby Laramy, IntrinXec Management, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Chapter</td>
<td>Madison Silva, IntrinXec Management, Inc.</td>
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