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STREAM ONE - EMERGING ISSUES **The Changing Role of Consultants**

Chair:

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The Changing Role of Consultants

Workshop goals:

- 1) To explore issues affecting our profession and
- 2) To identify ways we may evolve to meet the demands of tomorrow



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The Changing Role of Consultants

Workshop program:

- 1) Opening remarks
- 2) Round-table discussion
- 3) Report outs



The Changing Role of Consultants

We live in an era of change:

- Project complexity
- Integration of projects
- Alternative delivery methods
- Globalization
- Sustainability
- Demanding clients



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The Changing Role of Consultants

As consultants, we must consider skills beyond the technical details:

- Economic
- Political
- Environmental
- Social



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Forces Driving the Change: *Project Complexity*

- Increasingly stringent regulations require better informed consultants
- Prepare clients for the future
- Public's interest and influence can add complexity
- Project complexity related to project stakeholders
- Understanding the influences and needs of stakeholders is vital for project success



Forces Driving the Change:

Alternative Delivery Mechanisms

- Alternative delivery mechanisms gaining popularity:
 - D-B (design-build)
 - B-O-T (build-operate-transfer)
 - Other forms of PPP (public private partnership)
- Owners will want one partner for the whole project
- Consultant expected to take full responsibility for the investment
- Blending of technical roles of the designer and constructor: becoming the *Master Builder* or *Grand Conceptor*



Forces Driving the Change: *Globalization*

- Professionals from different cultural backgrounds and countries working together
- Special skills needed to manage diverse teams
- Increased competition results in fee pressures
- Outsourcing work for lower costs will make quality control more challenging
- Consultants must, as always, also manage technical details and quality under these increasingly complex conditions



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Forces Driving the Change: *Sustainability*

- Sustainable projects focus on improving the quality of life, enhancing the environment, and creating economic opportunities for present and future generations
- Sustainability principles provide for multi-faceted projects that may serve multiple purposes
- Consultants will need to be more creative with their solutions



Forces Driving the Change:

Integrated Resources Management

- A more holistic view of a problem or challenge that helps to establish viable project goals:
 - Maintain or improve current infrastructure assets
 - Engage all stakeholders
 - Serve present and future needs
 - Address multiple problems simultaneously
 - Utilize creative funding solutions



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Forces Driving the Change:

Technical Resources

Dangerous convergence of increasing project demands, an aging workforce, and a shortage of technical professionals, which could create serious problems for engineers and consultants— a “perfect storm.”



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Forces Driving the Change:

Helping Clients Do More With Less

- Clients want understanding and trusting partner
- Successful consultants will be knowledgeable in project finance, permitting, and operations
- Integrity will be paramount
- Leading consultants will understand owner challenges and work processes
- Consultants will need to be responsive and proactive



Forces Driving the Change: *The Bottom Line*

- The consultant of the future will need to be more than a great designer—technical expertise will be assumed!
- We must be able to:
 - Lead and build consensus
 - Communicate effectively
 - Innovate
 - Manage risk
 - Envision holistic solutions
 - Excel at program management
 - Lead diverse global teams
- Anything less than this and the consultant will not be working for the owner.



Questions to get us started:

1. Will the role of consultants fundamentally change? If so, how?
2. Should independent advisors be engaged by clients and, if so, under what circumstances? Who will they be? Will we serve in these roles?
3. What will consultants do differently in the future and why? Will we have to use engineers differently to meet global needs?
4. Will project management be considered an integral part or independent service from consulting engineering firms?