



MIDDLE *of* SIX

Change-Proofing Your Marketing Department:
How to Take Back Control of Your Time
and Prevent Burnout

SMPS MVRC | 2022



Why Are We Here?



What We'll Cover

1. Economic downturns and their impact on the AEC industry
2. Firm psychology and why our firms sometimes undervalue marketing
3. 12 Activities to Better Control Your Time and Resources





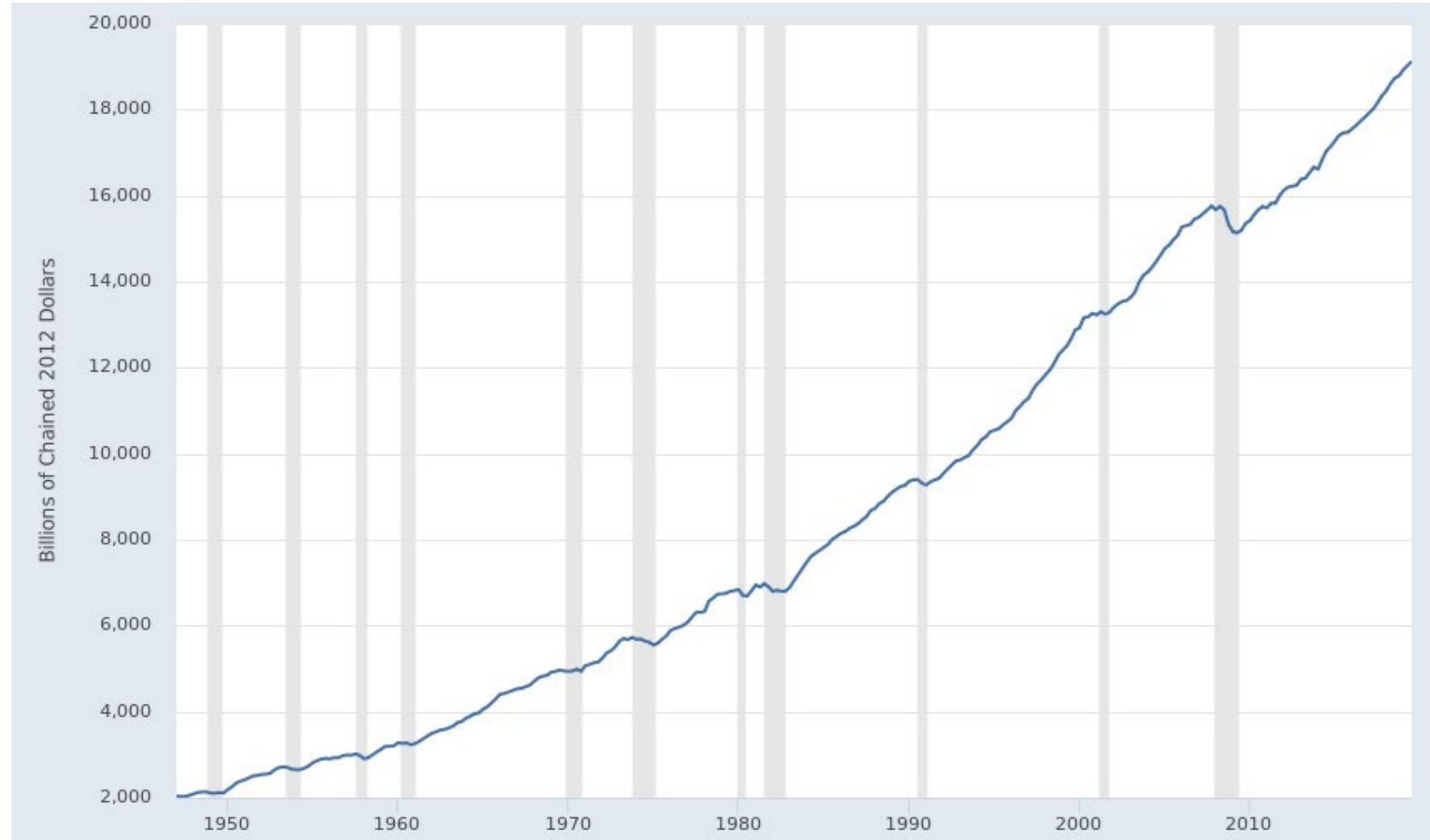
Economics & the AEC Industry



Recession Statistics

Since World War II:

- Average recession lasts 11.1 months
- Average period of expansion lasts 38.7 months (3.2 years)
- Minimum Expansion: 12 months
- Last Expansion: 126 months (10.5 years!)



\$ How is government affected in recessions?

Major Tax Revenue Streams for City and County Governments:

Sales Tax

Property Tax

Transient Lodging Tax

Gas Tax

Lottery Tax

“It's likely the pandemic's full financial impact has yet to hit many cities.”


Source: [Cities grapple with expected revenue declines as fewer workers commute downtown](#) (March 28, 2022)

\$ Remembering '08

1. Housing markets collapsed across the country – new construction ground to a halt
2. Major financial institutions failed (Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers). Stock markets plunged
3. Household debt rose dramatically, spending slowed significantly
4. Massive layoffs occurred in the industry trades
5. Which gave rise to unemployment and foreclosures
6. Tax bases shrunk

Public and Private sector growth stalled.

\$ Remembering '08 in the AEC Industry

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1. RFPs increased significantly, then dwindled
 2. Contracts were cancelled
 3. On-calls stopped producing new work
 4. Public agencies started keeping as much work **in-house** as possible

A/E/C firms feel the effect and begin cost-saving measures.

\$ Remembering '08 in the AEC Industry

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for overhead-reduction categories.

Overhead category	# of responses	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation
Bonuses	425	2.233	2	0	1.940
Company functions (parties, etc.)	410	2.239	2	0	1.833
Charitable and holiday gifts	426	1.988	2	0	1.703
Training and education	432	1.021	0	0	1.412
Contributions to retirement plans	424	1.297	0	0	1.853
Corporate officer salary	418	1.077	0	0	1.367
Business development and accounting staff	429	0.854	0	0	1.375
Travel and company vehicles	425	1.228	1	0	1.438
Home office: space (i.e., rent)	408	0.398	0	0	0.919
Home office: benefits paid by company	400	0.511	0	0	1.051
Home office: number of hours worked	402	0.359	0	0	0.879
Home office: staff salary	403	0.492	0	0	0.957
Home office: insurance costs	392	0.450	0	0	0.962
Other descriptive statistics					
Number of overhead categories reduced	437	5.524	5	6	3.421

Source: “Quantifying the impact of the Great Recession on the AEC industry—a call to reevaluate home office overhead costs.” *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, May 2018.

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Firm Psychology

???

WHY?

Why do firms dependent on B2B business development sacrifice their business development staff?



'Widgets'

A discrete unit or object of production.

A 3-dimensional, manufactured object that is sold to a buyer.

(Autos, clothing, tech, dish detergent, toys, etc.)



‘Professional Services’

A human being’s expertise
in a field valued by the buyer.

(Consulting, real estate, legal, accounting, advertising, etc.)



Marketing 101

‘Widgets’

- Can be taken for a test spin or tried before purchasing.
- Can be modified or repackaged to suit new tastes.
- Can be returned if it breaks.

‘Professional Services’

- Services are predominately intangible/complex.
- Selection is based on reputation, past work, references
- Transaction is ‘high touch’



Marketing 101

Personal Reputation

- My clients select me because they know me.
- My work speaks for itself.
- If I do good work, I'll keep getting hired.
- I'm good at marketing myself.

'I'

Brand

- Name/logo recognition
- Corporate value statements
- Body of work
- Marketing of the entity in addition to the individuals

"We"



Understanding SOV

“Share of Voice”

The amount of Marketing capital you spend versus your competitors



Understanding SOM

“Share of Market”

The portion of a market controlled by a company (brand)



SOV-SOM Phenomena

When a brand's share of voice is greater than its share of market, it is likely to grow its market share in the coming year. Therefore, companies that increase their marketing investment when most others are cutting back have an opportunity to substantially improve the standing of their brands.

For more insight:

<https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2009/budgeting-for-the-upturn-does-share-of-voice-matter.html>



WHY?

So again, why do firms dependent on B2B business development sacrifice their business development staff?



Gutcheck

Because there are **fundamental misunderstandings** of what AEC marketing is and what marketers need to be successful.

Regardless of economic fluctuations.







proposals







12 Activities to Better Control Your Time and Resources

1 Marketing Check-Up Checklist

DOES YOUR MARKETING DEPARTMENT:		YES	INCONSISTENT/ INCOMPLETE	NO
Have an annual off-site marketing retreat?				
Have a specified marketing budget for events, sponsorships, memberships, etc.?				
Have dedicated time codes for marketing broken down by specific tasks?				
Annually review where marketing staff are billing time?				
Provide office/firmwide trainings on house style, proposal process, how to network, other in-demand skill-building exercises?				
Have a marketing internship program?				
Have contacts at relevant local media outlets in each of your marketplaces?				
Have a press release template?				
Have a process for conducting competitor research?				
Have complete dossier on each of your main competitors?				
Track how many proposals you do by month, by prime/sub?				
Have a style guide?				
Secure speaking engagements for your key staff?				
Have a documented process for coordinating a free or low-cost event?				
Have a documented process for coordinating a high-budget event?				
Host tables/sponsor events in your key market areas?				
Prepare quarterly reports for your firm leadership?				
Does your Marketing Director have regularly scheduled briefings with your CEO?				
DOES EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM:		YES	INCONSISTENT/ INCOMPLETE	NO
Know how to update the website?				
Know how to copyedit (using the same style)?				
Have full command of your CRM software?				
Know how to use InDesign?				
Know how to use PPT?				
Can every person on your team recite your firm's strategic plan by heart?				
Does everyone on your team have an 'alter ego'? Are they tasked with and committed to overseeing a marketing function(s) beyond proposal work?				
CLEAR OUT THE COBWEBBS:				
What are the "We'll get around to it" items that reflect poorly on your department?				
Unified boilerplate piling up	Dormant social media accounts			
Glitchy templates that billable staff hate	Outdated news section on website			
Outdated color palettes	Typos in staff resumes that never get fixed			
Inconsistent branding (Word, PPT, InDesign, website, etc.)	Messy or inconsistent filing system for marketing materials			

GoNoGo CONSULTING Marketing at Low Tide: How to Recession-Proof Your Marketing Department Check-up Checklist

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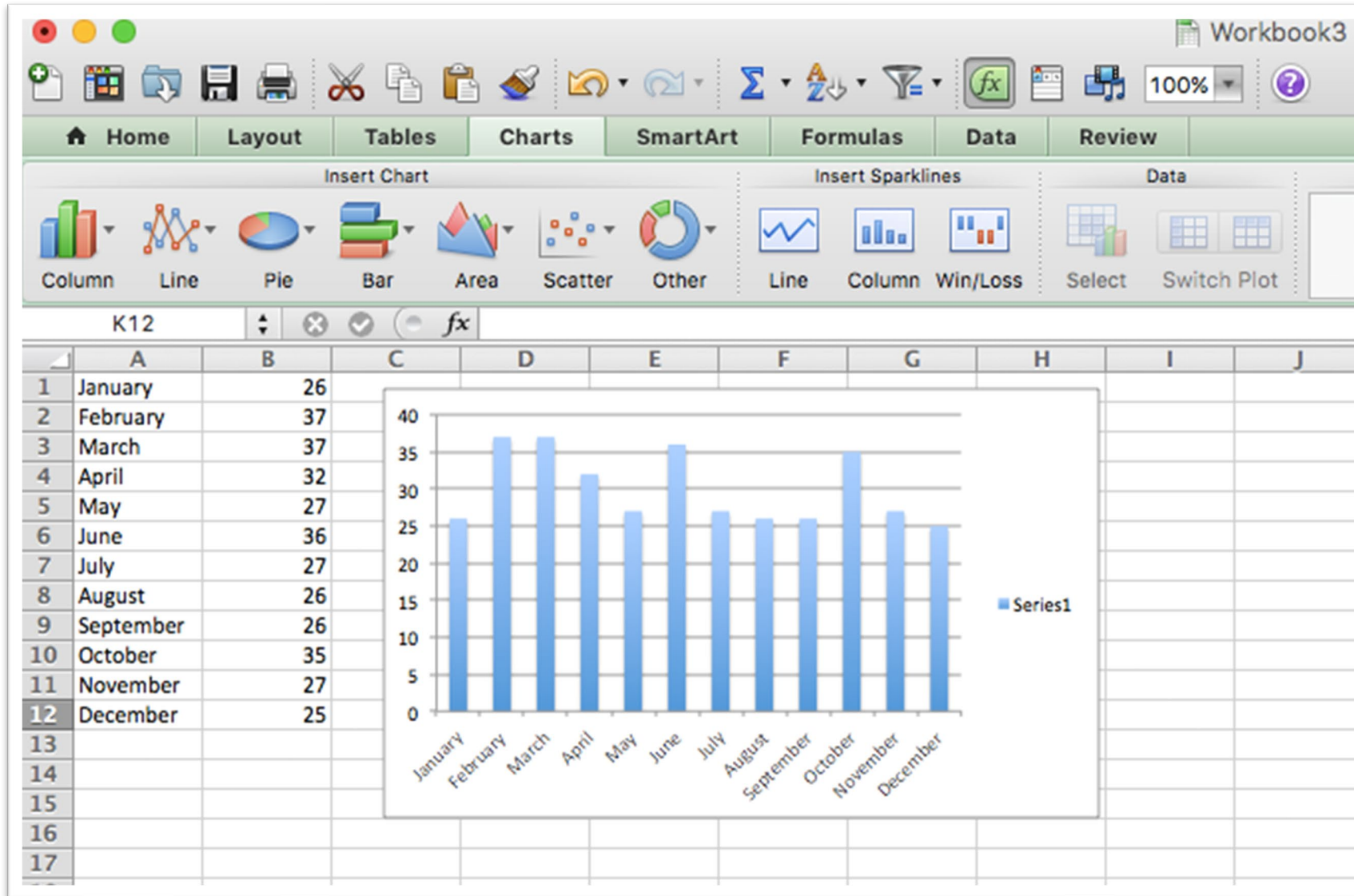
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2 Staff Assessment



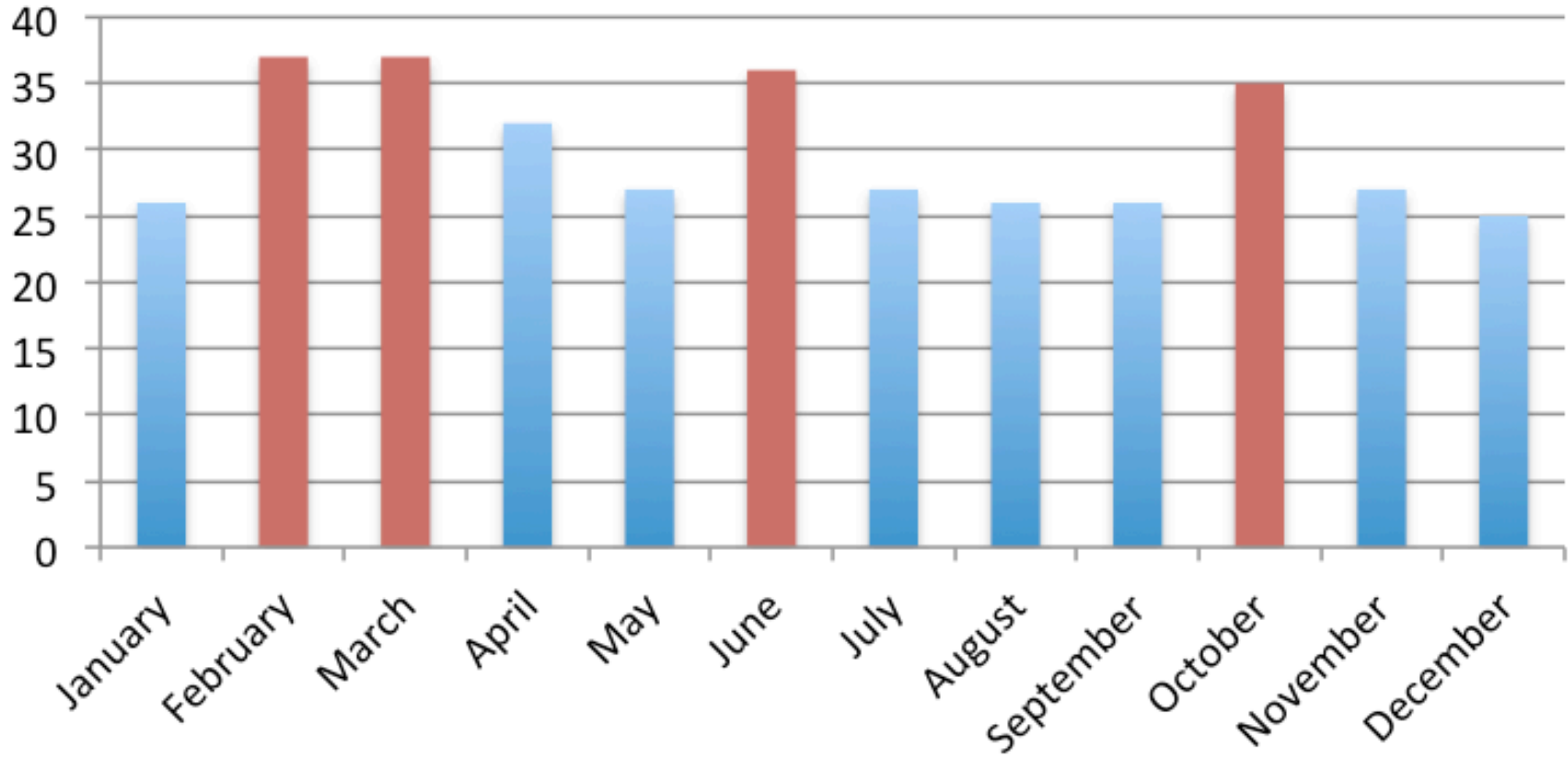
3 Know Your Flow

Anticipate peak proposal times and plan around them.



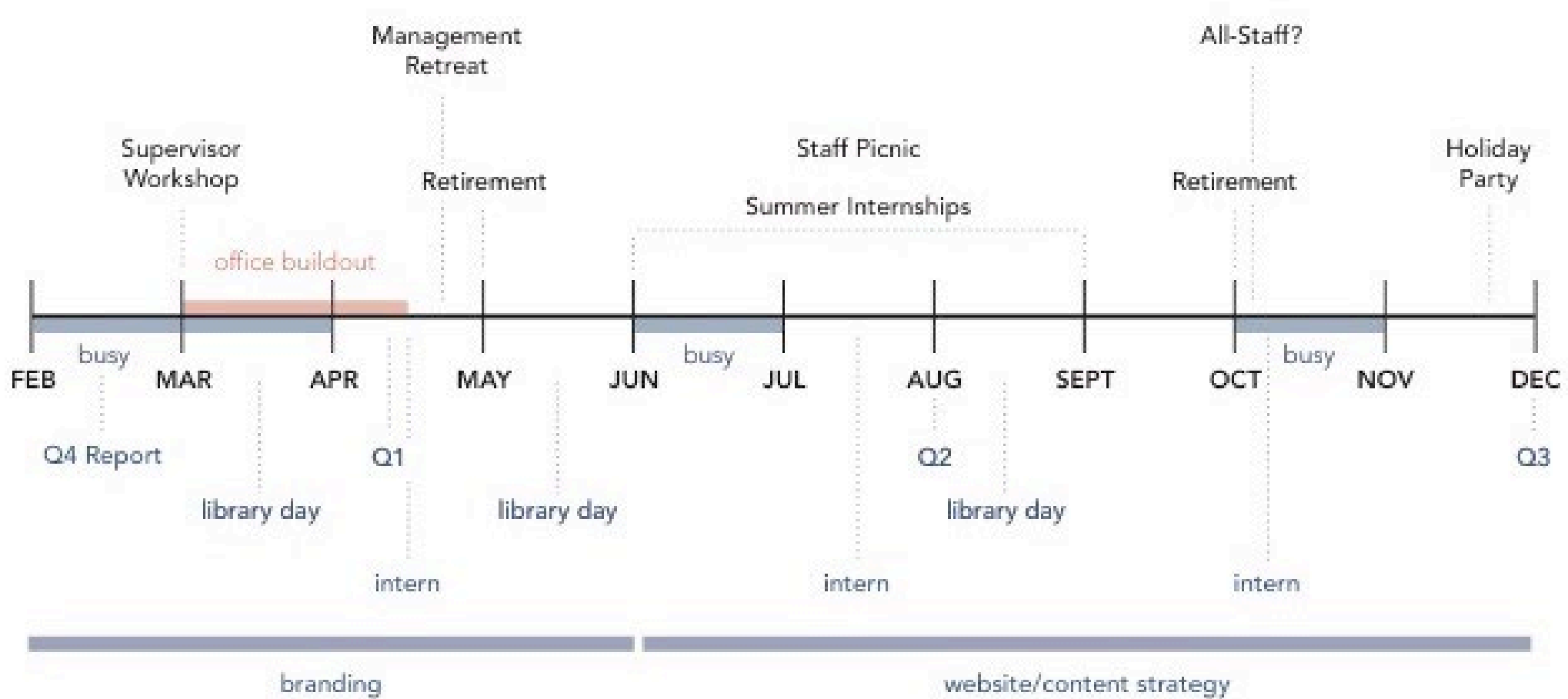
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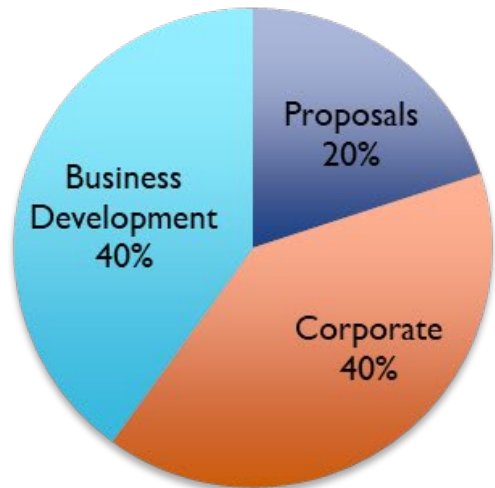
4 Create Your Annual Marketing Calendar

Perspective is Power



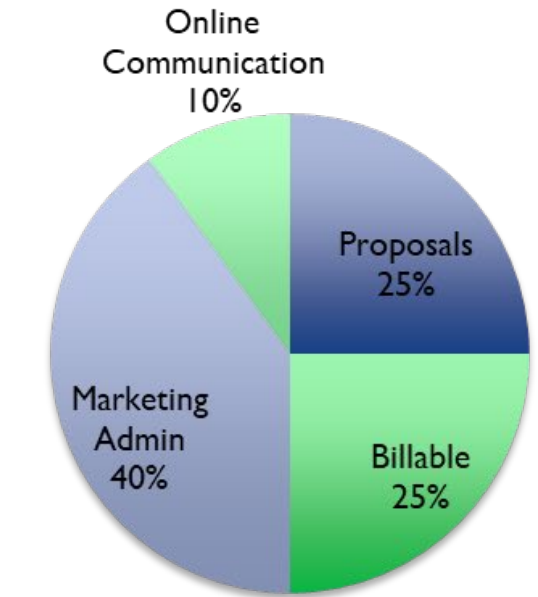
5 Know Where Your Time is Going

Perspective is Power



Marketing Director

Marketing Coordinator



Proposal Coordinator

5 Know Where Your Time is Going

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6 The Critical Value of Interns

Get constantly shifting tasks done once and for all.

- Resume updates and formatting in Word and InDesign templates
- Marketing quals consolidation
- Google analytics
- Proofreading
- Research:
 - Upcoming conferences and events
 - LinkedIn staff audits
 - Social Media Audits

7 Tighten Up Leads Tracking




8 The Client Survey

A free and (somewhat) painless way to know what's what.



9 Digital Marketing

Reach your audience without wasting your time.

Firms to Review	FB: Frequency of Posts	FB: Content	Twitter: Freq. of Posts	Twitter: Content	LinkedIn: Freq. of Posts
	once/month	Same as content on LinkedIn and Twitter; not much of it but nice pictures	Erratic, not often; once/month or less; 264 followers	Mostly same as LinkedIn content; hosting a tweet chat on 1/12/17 with specific hashtag and with other groups; maybe trying to start posting more often	Erratic, not often; once/month or less; 1,663 followers
		Mostly share articles about their projects; some about conferences; some about awards won	A little bit more often- 5-10 times/month; 375 followers	Same articles shared on FB; others are retweets about similar subjects; pictures of project areas or local nature; updates on renovation projects	1-2 times/month or 765 followers
				Same as FB	No posts; 90 followers

“Audit” – an official inspection of an individual's or organization's accounts, typically by an independent body.

10 Marketing Budget

Seize control of your expenditures.

Whether you're given a set number or not—you're spending.

And probably more than you need to.

10 Marketing Budget

Seize control of your expenditures.

Having a budget demonstrates:

Accountability

Fiscal Responsibility

Strategic thinking

More nuanced conversations about **ROI**

11

Say it Loud and Proud

Set the expectation through transparency.



12 Retreat!

Take charge of the year in front of you.

- Meet **offsite** and in person.
- Brainstorm your agenda each week for one month prior – **let everyone have a say.**
- **Share your agenda** with your firm's leadership and promise a full report of your outcomes.
- **No email, no proposals.** And don't forget to set your Out-of-Office! Go 'radio silent' for one day so you can come roaring back the following week.

12

Retreat!

Take charge of the year in front of you.



Parting Thoughts

Bringing this Back to Your Team



It all starts with the
Check-Up Checklist.

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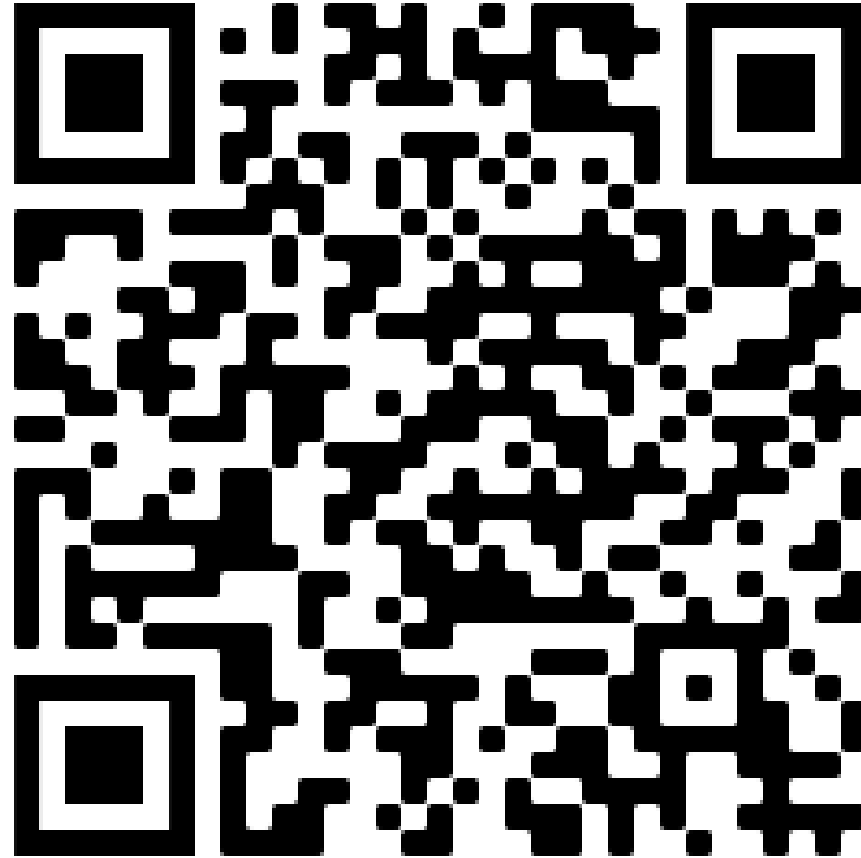
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More questions?

Did we run out of time? Snap this QR code and enter in your question!



THE SH((()) RTLIST

all things
AEC
marketing

MIDDLE *of* SIX

marketing consultants

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Listen to our podcast, The Shortlist!

www.middleofsix.com/theshortlist

Check out the following episodes for topics related to this presentation:

2, 3, 6, 15, 16, 17

And for those who are their firm's sole marketer, Episode 12 is dedicated to you!