

MARKETING

Insight and intelligence for architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms

RIGHT | NOW

Firms making waves on the radio

Regular spots on radio stations a unique, but successful, approach to attracting clients.

For those who wonder whether AM radio can still provide anything in the days of BlackBerries, iPhones and other high-tech gadgets, just ask the marketing staffers at

Friday from 8 to 11 a.m. CST on WZFG-AM (www.am1100.tv) in Fargo, North Dakota, and several affiliates across the state, reaching about half of North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, South Dakota, Winnipeg, Canada, and beyond.

"We're hitting the places where we do business," says John Dietrich, senior vice president of marketing at Ulteig.



"We wanted to get as creative as we could in becoming more powerful and more robust in the market."

Making waves is a normal part of life at Ulteig Engineers. In the photo Chris Thorson and Kris Carlson, both Ulteig engineers, and radio host Scott Hennen during a show at the firm's office in Detroit Lakes, MN.

Ulteig Engineers, Inc. (Fargo, ND), a 450-person engineering, planning and surveying firm, what they think.

Ulteig staffers have become regularly featured guests on "The Scott Hennen Show," a morning program starring a politically conservative local host and self-proclaimed president of The Common Sense Club. Once a week, Hennen focuses on energy, which is where Ulteig's connection was launched.

Hennen's show runs live Monday to

How it happened

Dietrich and the marketing department started thinking late last year, as the economy slid further into a recession, about new ways of generating business and better penetrating the markets in which they worked, especially as the competition for jobs heated up.

"We wanted to get as creative as we could in becoming more powerful and more robust in the market," he says. "The goal

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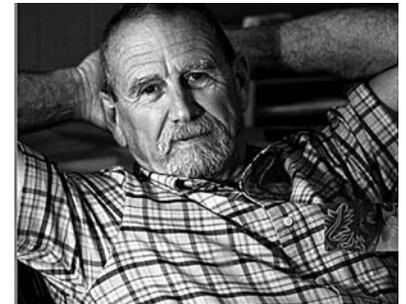
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WHAT'S | WORKING



Inspire young girls and harness clients



Happiness loves company



Oh, the places you'll go!



Being resourceful

From bridges to trains **Pages 6-7**

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INSPIRE YOUNG GIRLS AND HARNESS CLIENTS

Nitsch Engineering (Boston, MA), a 60-person, consulting engineering and land surveying firm, has capitalized on a national initiative not only by introducing girls to engineering, but by also partnering with clients and engaging its staff with the public.

Running for the eighth consecutive year, "Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day"—a national program of the National Society of Professional Engineers (Alexandria, VA)—has allowed, for example, 100 girls aspiring to one day become engineers to get a personal, guided tour of Boston's Tobin Bridge, and visit Boston University. Nitsch Engineering worked with their clients at the university, HDR, MassHighway, Massport, and the Executive Office of Transportation to put on this year's event.

"I look at it as a marketing opportunity in one way and an outreach opportunity in another way," says firm President Judith Nitsch. "Clients are invited to bring their daughters and nieces to the event, which reinforces relationships."

In a profession where "engineer" and "woman" is not the first thing that jumps to mind, women-owned Nitsch Engineering sees its role as an essential one.

"Engineering has not reached the parity that architecture, law, other professions have reached with women," Nitsch says, adding that only 10% of practicing civil engineers are women.



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Stories of success around the initiative abound.

For example, a young woman who recently graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in mechanical engineering attended the event at Logan International Airport five years ago, when Nitsch Engineering partnered with Massport's women engineers.

"We had one 10th grade girl this year, who has attended for five years," Nitsch says. "Guaranteed, she's going to be an engineer."

Besides the opportunity to engage and partner with clients, the initiative also allows the firm's young female engineers to develop project management and interpersonal skills, Nitsch says.

Young engineers participate in panel discussions and are drafted to serve as project managers for the initiative.

"I wouldn't categorize myself as a cubicle engineer," says Erin Joyce, PE, who was project manager for this year's event, but the event served as an opportunity to "interact at a non-project level" with clients. **E**

HAPPINESS LOVES COMPANY

For this year's annual open house, **Hickok Cole Architects** (Washington, DC), a 65-person architecture firm, wanted to express a cheery feeling without ignoring the gloomy atmosphere that was not only present in the market but also inside its own office. As with most firms this year, marketing faced new constraints for planning the event with a slimmer budget, so organizers needed to plan a leaner invitation, party, and catering budget without giving up the fun.

While brainstorming ideas relating to happiness, mixing, and colorful objects, the in-house team thought a pinwheel was a fun idea. The pinwheel illustration on the invitation to the Spring MMIXER mimics the color palette and pattern from Hickok Cole's 2009 New Year's holiday piece. Principal Yolanda Cole wanted to make some acknowledgement to the economic climate by saying "Feelin' down? Come MMIX it up!" and "Happiness Loves Company," a couple of positive ways of not expressing the misery that was on everyone's minds. The invitation was a single flat card with rounded corners and was sealed in a clear envelope. The card's cost came in at less than half what the firm normally spends.



To carry the pinwheel imagery further, Sarah Barr, director of graphic design, designed and produced pinwheels in the MMIX color palette, inserted in flats of grass, as centerpieces for the party. In attention to grabbing attention, the firm saved a bundle by creating 12-inch pinwheels to use in lieu of flower arrangements.

Beyond the pinwheels on sticks, to continue the happiness theme, the front entrance had hundreds of bright yellow balloons floating from

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the ceiling and a continuous loop recording of *Here Comes the Sun* ran all night long. The firm had one-third more guests than normal, "and we don't think any one of our 500 friends noticed that we had made such significant cost cuts," Barr says. **E**