

Chuck Prussack

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

People are **PCI**

I attended the recent PCI CEO Summit held October 14, 2015, in Louisville, Ky., in conjunction with the PCI Committee Days and Membership Conference. There were about 30 attendees. We were split into groups of about five per table and asked to answer two questions with our tablemates at the beginning of the summit. The two questions were "What keeps you up at night?" and "How do we move the needle?" to grow this business. Even though each group was thinking independently, the hands-down issue that keeps us up at night is PEOPLE! It was surprising to hear the similarity of responses from table to table.

We were asked to vote on our largest concern, and this subject got the most votes. Here are some of the other concerns that were expressed:

- Who will our workforce be, and where will they come from?
- Who will design our products in our plants?
- Who will specify our products?
- How will we retain talented people?
- How will we attract and train workers in an industry that may not be perceived as glamorous?
- Who will erect our products?

These questions resonate with me because we share these concerns at our plant. The next questions are, what can we do about this? What role could or should PCI play? Considering my theme for this year, being good stewards of this industry, what would good stewardship look like?

To put it simply, as good stewards, we need to teach our successors and workers how to do what we do. To that end, Hagen Harker, president of Mid-States Concrete Industries and one of the attendees of the PCI CEO Summit, stepped up to lead the effort on positive steps we can take related to plant workers. A meeting was held December 8, 2015, to brainstorm ideas, with more conclusions and information to come.

With respect to training engineers, PCI now has many training opportunities, including seminars, webinars, committee work, networking with peers, and relevant printed literature. From a management perspective, our job is to bring new engineers into this PCI arena. When I was brought into PCI early on, I learned a tremendous amount from my PCI involvement. Related to architects, the PCI Foundation's design studios are showing architects around the country the possibilities for precast concrete. I think this type of activity will move the needle with young architects as they see the possibilities of what can be done with our products. This is a worthwhile cause to put your money and energy into. Soon there will be 14 design studios across the country! The only limitations to adding more studios are finances and local producers' willingness to get involved.

Although there are several training classes for PCI plant personnel, such as the QC schools and PCI Productivity Tours, there may be more that PCI can provide, such as piggybacking onto the NPCA plant training classes as part of colocating with NPCA at the PCI Convention. Stay tuned for more information on all of these potential training opportunities through PCI. [1](#)



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