


Engaging members

Since joining the PCI Executive Committee, especially during the immediate lead-up and transition to the chairman role, I have spent a considerable amount of time talking about growing the industry through communication and collaboration and restructuring PCI and the regional affiliates to help accomplish this. What I would like to focus on at this time is the specific topic of membership engagement.

When people get involved with PCI committees, the board of their regional affiliate, the PCI board, and so forth, they will often say that they are doing so to give back to the industry. While I definitely believe this is a good position to have, I've experienced firsthand a selfish motive as well, and that's the opportunity to learn. One of the things I really enjoy about the precast concrete industry is that I believe there is a greater-than-normal amount of pride in what we do and how we do it. In direct correlation, I believe there is also a greater-than-normal amount of discussion in the various meetings (or more likely, the hallway after the meeting) regarding specific issues that someone is facing or has just solved. Whether it's a bridge design, the mixture proportions for a parking structure double tee, or even how to make a precast concrete building resemble a ship's hull, there's inevitably a small group engaged in problem solving somewhere in the building.

By and large, most of us are very proud of our respective staffs and capabilities. That said, I've found it invaluable to interact with people from around the country who face marketplace issues, some similar and some dissimilar, just like us. It's not that any of the parties necessarily do things better or worse, it's just a collection of people with multiple points of view and that tends to stimulate creative thinking.

This message may sound like a series of obvious statements, but I don't think I appreciated the magnitude of what can be learned from others until I became active in PCI and especially since I joined the Executive Committee. Direct involvement naturally creates working relationships, and that's where the real benefits are gained. In the last issue, I made a plea for people to get involved with their regional affiliate so that we can collect meaningful input on the successes and challenges we experience as we compete against other building systems. Hopefully, whether it's with your regional affiliate or PCI national, you will consider getting more engaged and experience the immediate benefits I've referenced as well contributing to the long-term industry growth we are shooting for. 



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