

New Marketing Organization Dedicated to A/E/C Community

By Mark Tawara, CPSM
2008-2009 SMPS Hawaii Chapter President
Director of Marketing, Belt Collins

With literally dozens of professional organizations out there vying for your attention, wouldn't it be nice to know that there's one local group with national roots that is focused specifically towards helping build your firm's business? That organization is called the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS), which celebrated its first anniversary of the founding of the Hawaii Chapter back in August.

SMPS is a professional organization dedicated to providing professional development, educational, and networking opportunities for marketing and business development professionals in the engineering, architecture, and construction industries. SMPS was created in 1973 by a small group of leaders from several professional services firms who wanted to sharpen skills, pool resources, and work together to create business opportunities. Today, SMPS represents nearly 7,000 marketing and business development professionals from thousands of architectural, engineering, planning, interior design, construction, and specialty consulting firms in the United States and Canada. SMPS and its 55 chapters benefit from the support of 3,250 design and building firms, encompassing 80% of the Engineering News-Record Top 500 Design Firms and Top 400 Contractors.

From Three to 33 in One Year

The SMPS Hawaii Chapter was founded in 2007 by **Cathy Handen** (Rider Levett Bucknall) and **Michelle Skupin** (formerly with Peter Vincent Architects) who took the initiative to start up a Hawaii chapter by forming an organizing committee together with **Gail Atwater** (R.M. Towill Corporation), **Marcie Farias** (Architects Hawaii), **Scott Gossett** (formerly with Durrant Media Five), and **Mark Tawara** (Belt Collins). Some of the chapter's accomplishments in its first year include increasing its membership base from three to 33 (the fastest growing chapter in the country), conducting bi-monthly educational programs, bringing a nationally-touring workshop to Hawaii, creating a new web site (www.smpshawaii.org) and establishing e-mail distribution and event registration services. Some of the educational programs included a client panel discussing how owners and developers select A/E/C firms, case studies on building your company's brand, how to get more media exposure for your firm, and a national workshop on business development.

Membership Benefits

Some of the benefits of being an SMPS mem-

ber include being able to network with other professionals in the design and construction industry, participating in local and national programs, webinars and educational workshops that are geared specifically towards the building industry, and gaining access to various publications and other resources that highlight the latest trends and best practices in marketing and business development for our trade. A few months ago, the Hawaii chapter initiated bi-monthly lunch webinars on marketing and business development that members can attend for a fraction of the regular price. There are dozens of webinars that are available from the national chapter, all focusing on marketing and business development for the professional services industry. Nowhere else can you find another marketing organization that is focused specifically towards the professional services industry.

How Can SMPS Help Engineers and Surveyors?

Since most of Hawaii's engineering and surveying firms are small businesses, many do not have the resources of a dedicated marketing support staff that the larger offices can afford. Because of this, principals in these firms are often the ones that have to focus on marketing and business development, not to mention running projects, managing the office, and maintaining the firm's finances. Additionally, most of the principals are trained as engineers or surveyors (not marketers) and therefore may not have the knowledge to implement successful marketing or business development programs. Many smaller firms also rely on secretaries or other administrative staff to perform marketing-related tasks, such as preparing SF330s, brochure materials, or proposals. By becoming a member of SMPS, smaller firms can obtain the tools necessary to prepare a comprehensive marketing plan, implement a successful direct mail campaign, or create head-turning proposals that increase hit rates, and ultimately, the firm's bottom line. Through SMPS, networking opportunities also exist for business developers, marketers, owners, clients, and principals in the design and building industry.



2008-2009 SMPS Hawaii Chapter board members/directors (From left to right – Julie Chen, Vice President/President-Elect; Mark Tawara, President; Howard Wolff, Director at Large; Gail Atwater, Treasurer; Marcie Farias, Secretary; and Eamonn Kinsella, Membership Director. Not shown – Cathy Handen, Past-President; Michelle Skupin, Director at Large.



Julie Chen, Vice President/President-Elect of SMPS Hawaii, oversees the chapter's exhibit booth at the 2008 AIA/CSI Pacific Building Trade Expo held in October.

In addition to seminars, workshops, networking opportunities, and educational programs available through SMPS, the national SMPS bookstore contains thousands of books focused on marketing for the built environment. Many of these books were written by "professional services marketers" with many years of experience in the A/E/C industry.

What's a "Professional Services Marketer"?

In line with the Professional Engineer (PE) or Professional Land Surveyor (PLS) designation, SMPS provides a certification program to enhance the professional standing of professional services marketers with their employers, their peers, and the public. The Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM) is recognized as an individual who has met a rigorous standard of experience and expertise in marketing profes-

(continued on page 11)

NEW MARKETING, from page 1

sional services and who agrees to adhere to the ethics and responsibilities of the profession as outlined in the CPSM Code of Ethics.

There is currently just one CPSM registered in Hawaii, but that number is expected to increase in the next several months as more SMPS Hawaii members plan on taking (and passing) the CPSM exam.

What Happens in Vegas...

SMPS hosts a national conference annually in major cities across the country. The conference attracts over 1,000 attendees from hundreds of engineering, architecture, and construction firms. The intensive three-day conference is packed with around 30 powerful learning sessions, dynamic keynote speakers, and networking opportunities. This year's conference will be held in Las Vegas from July 15-18, 2009 at the JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort & Spa at Summerlin. More information on the 2009 SMPS National Conference can be found at www.buildbusiness.org.

Recessionary Marketing Opportunities

During this time of uncertainty and debate about whether we're heading towards (or already in) a recession, many professional services firms are starting to look for ways to cut costs. Quite frequently, as seen in previous downturns, one of the things that have a tendency of getting cut is marketing and business development expenses. Cutting marketing and business development costs should NEVER happen during a recessionary period. If at all possible, marketing and business development costs should be kept at a constant level during this time in order to help your firm weather the storm and prepare for the recovery stage.

Some inexpensive ways to continue marketing during this period are (1) **Publicity** – some people call this “free marketing” because it is inexpensive and can generate tremendous and positive exposure for your firm if done right; (2) **Client Maintenance** – it costs seven times as much to earn a new client than it does to retain an existing one; (3) **Network** – get out there and meet more people that can help open doors to new business opportunities during the recovery period; (4) **Join SMPS** – attend all of the educational programs that SMPS Hawaii has to offer and sharpen your marketing skills so you can accomplish (1), (2), and (3) above.

New Year's Resolutions for SMPS Hawaii

Some of the goals for SMPS Hawaii in 2009

2008-2009

SMPS Hawaii Chapter Officers:

Mark Tawara, CPSM, President
(Belt Collins)
Julie Chen, Vice-President/President-Elect
(Earth Tech I AECOM)
Gail Atwater, Treasurer
(R.M. Towill Corporation)
Marcie Farias, Secretary
(Architects Hawaii)
Cathy Handen, Past-President
(Rider Levett Bucknall)
Howard Wolff, FSMPS, Director at Large
(WATG)
Michelle Skupin, Director at Large
(Fibrebond)
Eamonn Kinsella, Membership Director
(Suntech Hawaii)

SMPS Mission Statement: To advocate for, educate, and connect leaders in the design and construction industry.

SMPS Vision: For premier professional service firms to recognize SMPS as their most trusted resource for building business and achieving success.

SMPS Hawaii Chapter Web Site:
www.smpshawaii.org

SMPS National Web Site: www.smps.org

include increasing the chapter membership base, providing more educational and networking opportunities for members, and increasing its exposure to the design and construction industry through articles (like this one), partnerships, and affiliations with other professional organizations, including HCES and the numerous engineering societies it represents. On the mainland, most design and building professionals know about SMPS, yet here in Hawaii, SMPS is virtually unheard of. By practicing what we preach, hopefully SMPS Hawaii will become a larger, stronger, and more valuable professional resource, both to its members and others in Hawaii's A/E/C community.

Mark Tawara, CPSM, is president of the SMPS Hawaii Chapter and director of marketing for Belt Collins. A Certified Professional Services Marketer, he has 16 years of experience marketing professional services for some of Hawaii's largest engineering and architecture firms. Mark can be reached at 521-5361 or mtawara@beltcollins.com.

CFSEI, from page 7

know, the membership dues for the national SFA and HPSFA will be separate beginning in 2008. For those affiliating with the Hawaii Pacific Steel Framing Alliance, the chapter members have been categorized with special rates as our chapter dues are still forwarded to the national CFSEI which is the technical arm of SFA. We encourage you to renew your membership to both organizations. For more information about membership, please visit www.cfsei.org or www.steel-framing.org for the application form. For more information, please contact Marvin Mestanza.

SEAOH, from page 7

in conjunction with CRSI, Final 2006 IBC State Building Code briefing by Gary Chock.

– The next SEAOH Board of Directors and Officers meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. Contact SEAOH President Ian Robertson (956-6536, ianrob@hawaii.edu) for more information.

Disaster Response Committee:

Comments by the SEAOH Board of Directors were provided to the Disaster Response Committee on the first draft of SEAOH's internal guidelines for response to disasters. The guideline is specifically geared towards response to Hawaii-only disasters and addresses reconnaissance by the SEAOH Disaster Response committee.

Building Code Committee:

The State Building Code Council has voted to adopt the 2006 IBC with amendments as the State Building Code. Next, adoption of the State Building Code is now in the process of being adopted as administrative rules. This process includes review by the Attorney General, Small Business Association, the Governor's office and requires a public hearing. Once the 2006 IBC is adopted as the State Building Code, each county will have two years to follow.

Other Business:

SEAOH will be providing nominations to HCES for the 2009 Young Engineer and Engineer of the Year awards as well as for the Lifetime Achievement award.

Nominations for the 2009 SEAOH Board of Directors will be presented at the next General Membership meeting scheduled for December 2, 2008. At the General Membership meeting, nominations from the floor will also be taken. Members will receive their ballots in early December.

Professional Directory

<p>Tim Waite, P.E. Sales, Engineer Mobile: 808-479-1216 Email: twaitte@strongtie.com Simpson Strong-Tie Co., Inc.</p> 	<p>SHIMABUKURO, ENDO & YOSHIZAKI, INC. Civil, Environmental & Structural Engineers  1126 12th Avenue, #309 Honolulu, Hawaii 96816-3715 Phone: (808) 737-1875 Fax: (808) 734-5516 Email: seyeng@lava.net</p>	<p> INTERNATIONAL 501 Sumner Street, Suite 620 Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 Ph (808) 531-1308 Fax (808) 521-7348 Project Managers, Planners, & Engineers www.ssfm.com</p>	<p> WES THOMAS ASSOCIATES Land Surveyors 75-5749 Kalawa St., Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740-1817 Tel: 808 329-2353 Fax: 808-329-5334 Surveying Hawaii Since 1975</p>
<p> WALTER P. THOMPSON, INC. SURVEYING & MAPPING 720 IWILEI ROAD SUITE 425 P.O. Box 3351 HONOLULU, HI 96801 PHONE: (808) 536-2705 FAX: (808) 599-4032</p>	<p> R. M. TOWILL CORPORATION SINCE 1920 www.rmtowill.com</p>	<p> URS Engineers Scientists Program and Construction Managers Environmental Planners 615 Piikoi Street, 9th Floor Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-3141 Ph: (808) 593-1116 Fk: (808) 593-1198</p>	<p>WALKER INDUSTRIES, LTD. Precast Concrete Products  CONSPAN BRIDGE SYSTEMS Frederick K. Wong, PE P.O. Box 1568 Kahului, Maui, Hawaii 96732 Maui (808) 877-3430 Fax (808) 871-7282</p>
<p>YOUR AD COULD APPEAR HERE FOR \$235 A YEAR</p>	<p>Weston Solutions, Inc. Suite 2301 841 Bishop Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Phone: 808.585.0448 Fax: 808.585.7378 www.westonsolutions.com</p> 	<p> WILSON OKAMOTO CORPORATION www.wilsonokamoto.com</p>	<p> YKE YOGI KWONG ENGINEERS, LLC 615 Piikoi St., Suite 1605 Honolulu, HI 96814 Tel: (808) 596-2928 Fax: (808) 596-2409</p> <p>Geotechnical Engineering Trenchless Technology Construction Management</p>