

PIPELINE

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**enhancing
the
communication
process**

Seeing the Value of Communication

Communication is the single most important skill that every person must learn in order to live a successful and productive life. It is one of the most difficult skills to teach and to develop consistent results due to our varied personalities and childhood upbringing. Communication involves speaking, listening, paying attention to body language, and documentation. Within WSB, we teach many different communication skills in our WSB University, and continually share the lessons we learn through our daily interaction with our clients, partners, and stakeholders. In our ever-changing technological environment, we are on the lookout for new tools and ways to be more efficient communicators.

“The problem with communication is the illusion that it has occurred.”

~ George Bernard Shaw

As WSB celebrates 15 years of serving our clients, we reflect back on the staff-developed values that the company was built on – the WSB Way. In this publication of the Pipeline, we are highlighting a few of the new initiatives

developed to enhance our external communication and strengthen the clear communication component of the WSB Way – Change Responsibility Assignment Matrix, Project Based Client Satisfaction Interview, and IssueTracker. Your feedback has initiated these new ideas and improved the way we do business.

We are fortunate that our clients care about us and help us to improve each day. We would appreciate your help in completing a brief survey. Your participation is very beneficial to our success, and what you say can be submitted confidentially. Please log onto our website – www.ws beng.com. I want to thank you in advance for your constructive feedback and the past comments you have provided.

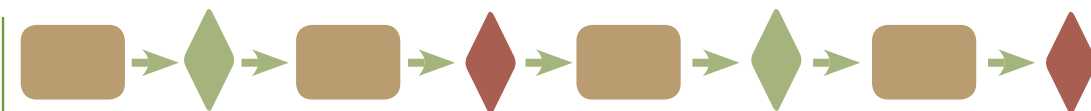
Let's continue to share ideas – communication is a two-way street!



Bret A. Weiss

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the
management



At WSB, our goal is to provide our clients with the right project, on schedule, for the right price. To make certain of our ability to deliver you - our client - a successful project, we have developed a process to anticipate changes and effectively communicate these scope adjustments with you and the entire project team. We have already begun implementing this new process, and will expand its use in 2011.

of Change

by Andy Brotzler, PE,
Principal/Senior Project Manager

At the beginning of a new project, the WSB project manager meets with the client and together, they create a Change Responsibility Assignment Matrix. The matrix defines who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed (RACI) for any project changes. This includes changes to project scope, schedule, budget, and costs. This matrix is then provided to the team members, reinforcing the appropriate chain of communication established for the project.

We are excited about this new process and the Change Responsibility Assignment Matrix. These tools will make certain change decisions can be made thoughtfully, by the appropriate staff. They will be instrumental in carrying out our promise to you of advance communication and approval before any project changes are implemented.

PROJECT BASED CSI: CLIENT SATISFACTION INTERVIEW

by Morgan Dawley, PE, Municipal Project Manager

“PERFECTION IS NOT ATTAINABLE, BUT IF WE CHASE PERFECTION, WE CAN CATCH EXCELLENCE.”

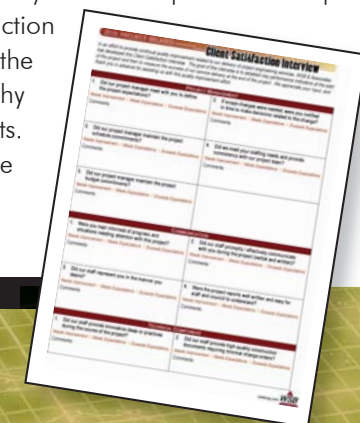
– VINCE LOMBARDI

As mentioned in our last publication, WSB is developing and using various metrics to track our performance, improve our product as well as our service delivery, and better understand the specific and unique needs of our clients. One tool we have recently implemented is a Client Satisfaction Interview, or CSI (apologies to the television series, but it is a catchy acronym!), for individual projects. Using key criteria our clients have found important, the brief ten

minute interview is conducted in two parts – at the beginning of the project and again at project completion. Project management, communication, public relations, technical quality, as well as general performance are all evaluated by the client through a series of questions that promote proactive discussion and help establish key performance indicators. Our hope is that this two-step process will not only help us deliver future projects that exceed the expectations

of our clients, but will also make certain we understand and deliver a successful project each time.

At WSB, we pride ourselves on not only providing the highest levels of client satisfaction, but on being committed to continually improving the quality of our services. We understand that if the experience is different than intended, we are 100% responsible for closing that gap. By actively engaging our clients with these quick interviews, while measuring and tracking the performance of our efforts over time, we know we can identify and focus on finding innovative techniques to improve ourselves and “catch excellence.”



WSB's *i*ssuetracker

by Mark Erichson, PE, Associate/Senior Project Manager

Since WSB's founding, staff at WSB have focused on providing excellent customer service to our clients. Today, WSB represents more than 50 communities as either a consultant city engineer or as an engineer/scientist/designer/surveyor on a project specific basis. One thing we have learned is that effective communication (both verbal and written) is a key component to providing a high level of customer service.

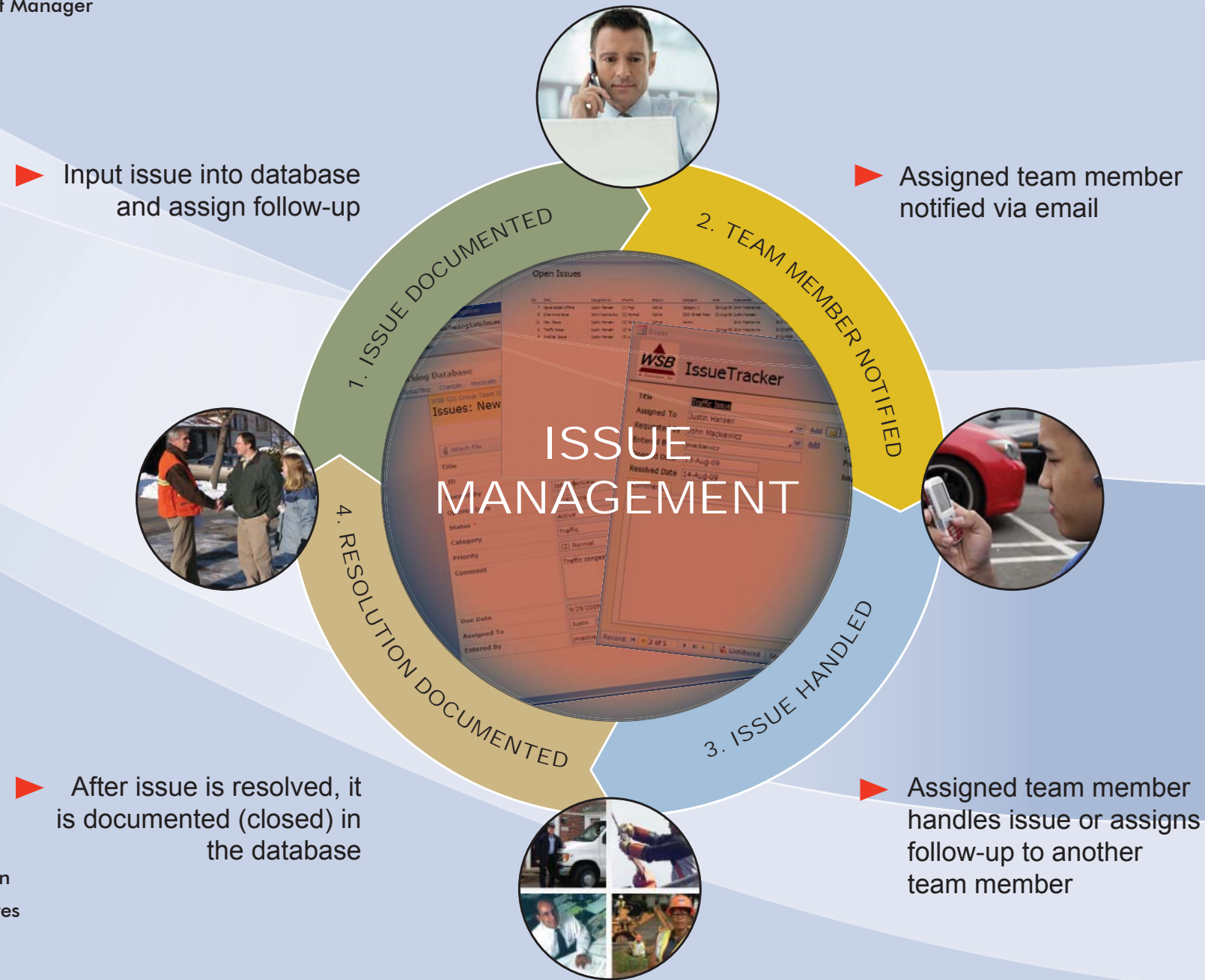
In an effort to enhance our communication efforts, WSB recently developed IssueTracker - a database application that provides a documented communication loop related to day-to-day or project specific issues. IssueTracker efficiently and effectively transfers information to appropriate individuals within any organization, and can be customized to each organization's needs. This web based communication tool makes certain that efficient communication occurs between our staff and our clients, which has resulted in effective issue management.

Some of the benefits of IssueTracker are:

- Immediate issue notification to the appropriate person(s) via emailed assignments
- "Chain-of-custody" for all documented issues
- Easy prioritization and identification of critical issues
- Permanent record of all issues and their resolution
- Internal and external communication audit features

In 2010, WSB launched IssueTracker in the City of Minnetrista. The City is already seeing benefits from implementing the system. Senior City Planner Breanne Rothstein states, "IssueTracker helps the City stay on top of residents' concerns and provides an organized way to identify reoccurring issues in specific areas over time. Also, it allows us to track who is following up on issues, when they were resolved, and how. It enables our City Hall staff to maintain high customer service standards to which we aspire and our residents deserve".

Effective and transparent communication with residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders is critical for achieving governmental success.



IssueTracker can be customized to fit the needs of any organization. It can be used to enhance both the internal or external communication process by providing publicized, consistent messages coupled with streamlined documentation. By adding a link to the city's website, constituents are also able to provide input on projects and monitor the actions being taken, resulting in a more informed community.

This communication system, hosted by WSB, requires no additional IT support, and is provided with training. For more information or to set up a demonstration, contact John Mackiewicz at 763.287.7194 / jmackiewicz@wsbeng.com.

ASK THE ENGINEER



In this issue, Jay Kennedy, PE, answers a few questions on public hearings. Jay has been providing professional engineering services for almost 20 years, and is the Municipal Group Manager at WSB and a Vice President.
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What is the most important factor related to the success of a public hearing?

Successful public hearings are often the result of clear, straightforward communication with the impacted property owners in the early stages of a project. A neighborhood meeting is a terrific venue for that kind of communication. The city and consultant need to present complete information related to the project needs and impacts in a clear fashion. For example, displaying visual information related to the project using charts, figures, or renderings are helpful visual aids that often times result in a heightened public understanding of the project goals. Also, in my experience, having a city council member or two in attendance, hearing first hand the questions and concerns from the public, is a valuable tool that leads to project success.

How do you prepare for a public hearing?

I begin with active listening during the planning process. Each member of the project team must actively listen to the city council's goals for the project along with the public's concerns. Developing a strong understanding of these two items allows me to anticipate most of the questions that come up at the public hearing. Addressing these anticipated questions and comments during my presentation, at the start of the hearing, also prevents project misconceptions from being voiced.

Another way to prepare for the public hearing is to mail a brochure to the public after the neighborhood meeting. The brochure emphasizes the project facts and addresses the frequently asked questions. I have found sending this out prior to the public hearing has reduced the amount of questions, concerns, and misconceptions - because they already have the answers.

What other tips do you have regarding public hearings?

Keep your audience in mind. The information being provided needs to be specific and relevant to the property owners - so don't use unnecessary technical jargon. I have attended public meetings where the presenter lost their audience simply by confusing them. The result was that the truly important issues were not discussed and addressed at the meeting.

Again, the real key to a successful public hearing is communication. Not only at the hearing itself, but more importantly before the hearing is held. If we can establish a trusting, cooperative relationship with property owners, we can make even the most challenging project a success!



15 Years of Services

In October, WSB celebrated our 15th anniversary. Bret Weiss, Pete Willenbring, Don Sterna, Ron Bray, and Bernie Mittlesteadt - the founders - started WSB with the desire to become the best client driven, staff focused consulting civil engineering firm. Today, as a 150 member team providing services in ten primary areas, we are just as committed to our clients and staff as we were 15 years ago. Thank you for being a partner in our journey.

EXPANDING OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM



We are proud to announce the promotion of Todd, Andrea, Jay, John, Brian, and Mike to group managers. These six individuals have played key roles in helping to advance WSB's reputation as a leader in the engineering field. Their remarkable leadership and contributions toward WSB's success make them a great fit for their management roles. Also, joining WSB's management team is new staff member Jennifer Hildebrand.

(from left to right)

Todd Hubmer
Vice President and Water Resources Group Manager

Andrea Moffatt
Environmental Planning and Natural Resources Group Manager

Jennifer Hildebrand
Manager of Environmental Compliance

(from left to right)

Jay Kennedy
Vice President and Municipal Group Manager

John Mackiewicz
Information Systems Group Manager

Brian Bourassa
Business Services Group Manager

Mike Rief
Vice President and Construction Services Group Manager



TWITTER EXCHANGES

Since early 2009, WSB has been sharing tweets about our company and staff. If you aren't already doing so, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/WSBEngineering. Maybe you'll find your own reasons to tweet. But even if you don't, you'll be a part of the conversation.

WSB STAFF

active in our communities and industry

Over the past four months, our staff has been active in our communities and industry. Highlighted below are a number of presentations and articles that our staff has participated in and written. If you are interested in seeing any of their materials, email us at info@wsbeng.com.

ST. ANTHONY VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET, JULY 2010
Paul Hudalla – Rainwater Harvesting and Reuse

FINANCE & COMMERCE, SEPTEMBER 2010
Bret Weiss – When Hiring a Consultant, Be Choosy

ENGINEERING INC., SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010
Todd Hubmer – Stormwater Runoff and Filter Backwash Water Reuse Project, St. Anthony, MN
* project recently won the 2009-2010 Minnesota Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention

MINNESOTA GIS/LIS CONSORTIUM CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS, OCTOBER 2010
Heather Bergen – Making Better Maps
Justin Hansen – ArcPad 8: Customizations and Forms
John Mackiewicz – Planning and Implementing an Enterprise GIS

MRWA WASTEWATER OPERATION & MAINTENANCE TRAINING SESSION, OCTOBER 2010
Kevin Newman and **Joe Ward** – The Operator's Role in Successful Lift Station Projects

MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 2010
Todd Hubmer and **Jupe Hale** – Twin Lakes Parkway: Transforming Black to Green
Peter Willenbring – Results of Golden Lake Phosphorus Load Reduction Demonstration Project

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS – MINNESOTA SECTION MEETING, OCTOBER 2010
Andrea Moffatt – How to Balance the Needs of the Owner and the Requirements of the Regulator in Construction Stormwater Management

APWA MINNESOTA CHAPTER WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 2010
Todd Hubmer – Maintaining Pipes and Ponds: How Did It Get So Complicated?
Paul Hudalla – Water Sustainability/Conservation
Andrea Moffatt and **Jed Chesnut** – Just Break the Drain Tile: The Sordid Tale of the Swamp Lake Wetland Restoration Project
Pete Willenbring – Stormwater Pond Maintenance: The Do's and Don'ts

Meet WSB's Newest Staff!



Since July, WSB has welcomed four new staff members to our team. Their diverse talents and new ideas are continuing to expand our groups and services.

Jeremy Kilbo – Information Technology Support

Jennifer Hildebrand – Manager of Environmental Compliance

Alison Harwood – Environmental Scientist

Monica Heil – Municipal Project Engineer

Receive by email?

If you would like to receive the Pipeline via email, please contact Teresa Stoup at tstoup@wsbeng.com.



2010 APWA National Award Winner

The American Public Works Association named Pete Willenbring the Professional Manager of the Year in the Water Resources category! This honor is a tribute to and validation of Pete's ongoing achievements and innovation in the management of both flood control and water quality.



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