Fall Conference – Bend Oregon September 30-October 1, 2022

Report to Chapter 99, Silicon Valley

By: Laura Grabar, 2021-2022 President

Attendees for Silicon Valley Chapter 99 – Kayla Alvarado, Shawna Alvarado, Ashley Barnes, Laura Grabar, Pam Henley, Marlene O'Donnell, Angie Ramos, Brittany Sandy and April Vicchrilli.

The conference began Friday morning with a welcome to the conference and a welcome to Bend by Melanie Kebler, Bend City Councilor. This was followed by Region business consisting of Adoption of Conference Rules and Agenda, review of summary of actions from the national board from April to September, and last year's budget. The region budget for 2022-2023 NAWIC year was presented, voted and passed.

The first speaker presentation was "Rising Together: Foundations for Thriving at Work" by Lori Eberly. There are five areas for thriving at work. They include collective orientation where all are heard, seen and valued. Variability I know my needs and know your needs are different. Adaptive where creativity, curiosity and change are welcome which creates flexibility. Shape shifting for personal and professional growth, we are changed by experiences. We value learning and transformation. Finally nourishing abundance for all, where you are filled up or happy with your work. We ask others what can I do for you? What do you need help with? You nourish others. It is important to have self-care practices to refresh you when fill empty or overworked. This prevents burnout and employee turnover.

In order to thrive at work there needs to be a healthy company culture. Companies that have a healthy culture have actions that are congruent with what is said and done. The company mission statement or purpose is clearly stated. They are continuously cultivating trust and psychological safety. When issues arise they are faced and dealt with together. Issues are not ignored or brushed away. This allows employees to feel safe coming to work. There is no threat real or perceived of being harmed. There is a collective orientation where all feel seen, heard and valued. There is variability where the company is aware of its needs but also aware that the needs of the employees may differ and allows for these difference to work together. Good companies are adaptive and flexible. Creativity, curiosity and change are welcome. Personal and professional growth is encouraged, learning and transformation are highly valued and encouraged. Company culture is nourishing with the idea that you should enjoy your work. Upper management reaches out to their employees to see what they need or what the company can do for them. The company cares about self-care practices. It is important to take care of yourself in order to continue to thrive.

Unhealthy company cultures may be missing one or more of these ideals. When employees don't feel heard, appreciated or safe they no longer want to come to the work. This can lead to burnout, apathy and a high turnover of employees.

When companies have a high rate of employee turnover, they need to look at what might be causing these issues. Review the follow areas collective orientation, variability, adaptive, shape shifting, nourishing, congruent actions, clearly stated mission statement or company purpose and cultivating trust and psychological safety. Speaking with employees to see why they are leaving often reveals what is lacking in the company culture. However, if they do not feel safe they may not explain the real reason for leaving. One it is determined what elements are missing you can work to correct the issues. You should only work on one or two issues at a time.

We next heard stories from two women about working in the field in a "man's world". What they had to overcome in order to be accepted in the field. It is sad to say that women are still having to work twice as hard as a man in the construction industry to prove themselves. We have made steps to improve this culture but there is still more that needs to be done.

We then applied speed networking techniques to meet other women at the conference. It is a fun way to meet the other attendees.

The evening culminated with the dinner gala and dancing with karaoke.

Saturday began with the unfinished business from Friday. This was followed by a quick presentation on Lessons in Safety. Fall protection is still the most common injury in construction. Of those injuries seventy five percent were not tied off and thirteen percent used faulty systems. Annual inspections are required for fall protection and must be documented for OSHA purposes. Older employees are at greater risk of death or injury. They tend to get complacent thinking “That would never happen to me”. They tend to take short cuts because they feel confident in what they are doing. New employees are at greater risk of being injured because they are usually trained by older seasoned employees that may have become complacent. The older employee often trains the newer employee with shortcuts and does not fully train them.

When completing safety training you need to train for compliance. You should reinforce safety culture in the company. Explain why you want them to be safe. You need to tell real stories for examples. Use stories that you know. You should not yell, make fun of them or punish them instead of correcting their behavior. These tactics do not engage workers and do not reinforce the safety culture of the company.

Mary Wang Goekner gave a quick overview of Siteline. Siteline is a construction management software program that simplifies construction billing. It has pay apps that make it easy to manage billings. Everything is in one place which also speeds up the payment process.

Our final speaker was Ciarra Pressler on “Pregame Your Network”

Pregaming is all about celebrating. People are the whole point. Bust the myth you can’t do it alone. Acknowledge those that help you get things done. Eighty five percent of jobs are through networks and eighty percent through personal connections. This is why building your network can be important.

To build the relationship you need to stay in touch. There are many ways to connect these days, social media, email, phone call or even snail mail. Next you need to make the effort and add value. This can be done several ways. First by either sharing content or creating your own content with your network. You need to participate in the conversation. You can also share your own or someone else’s projects or achievements. Lastly you need to show leadership by sharing your experience, volunteering, rallying the crew, or hosting an event. You don’t need an agenda done is better than perfect – Congratulate and Celebrate. It is important to build your relationships you never know when you may need help and what better help than friends. Keeps notes to follow up with someone. You may forget what someone said, but you never forget how they made you feel.

When you have a speaking engagement it’s all about the audience focus on them get out of your head. When you’re in your head you get nervous.

The conference concluded with an invitation to Anchorage Alaska for Forum May 5-6, 2023. Upcoming conferences, Fall Conference 2023 will be in Montana. Forum for 2024 will be a joint venture with Pacific Southwest in Hawaii. It was then open for bids for Fall Conference in 2024. Silicon Valley was the only chapter to put in a bid, therefore we will be hosting Fall Conference 2024.