

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A PRESIDENT'S JOURNEY...



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It is with honor and humility that I represent ICRI as your President. I am proud to stand at the helm of this remarkable organization which has greatly so impacted my life and career. I am also eager to share my journey here with you.

Just about 20 years ago, at the behest of my employer, I became a member of ICRI. My task was simple: represent our company at conferences, speak on behalf of our technologies, and contribute to technical documents which affected our business. The only other instruction I was given (delivered with a hint of a smirk) was "...and have fun with it!"

At the time I was a young, confident (albeit slightly "green") professional ready to take on the world...or at least my corner of the construction industry. I certainly embraced my ICRI membership as a means to meet and network with other industry professionals. But to be brutally honest, to this twenty-something professional, it simply sounded like "fun"—travel, entertainment, conferences; what was not to like? Little did I know or anticipate the tremendous value and impact this organization would have on my career and my life.

I'm sure you remember the feeling of walking into your first convention. It is overwhelming and you cannot help but feel a little out of place. My experience was no different. I recall entering the room, weary after experiencing the "glamour" of business travel, not knowing a soul. I looked around at all the experienced professionals in the room and thought, "Who am I kidding, what am I doing here?"; "What do I have to offer all these really knowledgeable people?"; and "What place does 'a girl' have in the construction industry outside the safety of the corporate environment?"

Foolish? In retrospect, yes! But certainly honest and terrifying at the time.

A few minutes into my first committee meeting, the glaze over my eyes began to clear and I realized there were a few familiar faces (relief!). I immediately sat next to someone I vaguely recognized and made my awkward introduction. I sought solace in being able to say, "It's my first meeting," as an excuse for...well, just about everything. By the end of the day I was introduced to a dozen people, received an invitation to join a networking event, and was asked to participate on not one but two technical committees. I was thrilled to be included and needed! (Did I mention I was "green" and naive?!) Over the years, I have come to appreciate the value of diving right in at that first meeting. The commitments were hard work, but

so incredibly worth it. I felt an immediate sense of belonging and value. Over time, the growth of ICRI as an organization paralleled my own personal and professional growth. I am so grateful for the opportunities and experiences I have shared with so many incredible industry professionals, even if I WAS bamboozled into it!

Since I joined this organization, there have been many people who have shaped my development in this industry. I'd like to share with you what I have found over the past two decades:

- I have found outstanding technical minds who selflessly shared their experience, helping me to grow in knowledge and leadership;
- I have found some challenging personalities who tried my patience, but who helped me grow in diplomacy and accountability;
- I have found strong women leaders, whose example helped me grow in confidence and strength;
- I have found mentors and colleagues, who helped me grow in teamwork, collaboration, and trust;
- And I have also found friends: amazing people with soul and integrity, not to mention some great storytellers!

It was among this wise group that I found one of the most impactful mentors in my career. I cannot effectively communicate the value of relationships which allow you to send a professional 360 review and get honest, "the-truth-hurts" kind of feedback; relationships which offer insightful guidance and an occasional smack upside the head for being my (sometimes) stubborn self. The people of this organization have made me a better individual and a more competent leader. As an employer and a mentor myself, today I strongly encourage people to participate in ICRI—locally and nationally. The skill sets it helps develop are invaluable: teamwork, collaboration, accountability, negotiation, and leadership. No MBA or HBR can teach that for less!

The greatest gift this organization offers us is personal and professional prosperity achieved from the relationships and inspiration of those around us. As we enter new era of strategic planning, implementation, and the evolution of ICRI into a more outstanding industry organization, my recommendation for you is to prosper with it. Engage early. Be involved. Volunteer for something new—with eyes wide open (I won't even bamboozle you). Be a mentor. Be a coach. Share your strengths. Learn something new. I promise, you won't be sorry you made the investment.

Oh, "...and have fun with it!"