



PWC-NY holds PDAC's third quarter event on September 10th; Focused on salary negotiations and promotions

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Wendy Zang,
Helbling & Associates

Lee Grandovic,
Helbling & Associates

New York, NY PWC's Professional Development Advisory Council's (PDAC) third quarter event held on September 10th at AllSteel Showroom tackled the industry's most elusive topic: Compensation. The event focused on advice and role-play scenarios related to salary, raises and promotions.

The program opened with Wendy Zang and Lee Grandovic from Helbling & Associates, an executive management recruiting firm that specializes in the AEC industry. The pair presented industry trends and noted the construction business is very busy. In fact, industry conditions are so favorable, there is a “war on talent” currently where employers are competing against each other for candidates. Retiring Baby Boomers are one major factor in the shortage of experienced senior staff. Consequently, employers are taking a broader view on hiring, creating more opportunities for women and minorities.

Zang and Grandovic reviewed new salary disclosure laws enacted under the New York Salary History Ban, which protects candidates from having to reveal current pay. They addressed whether candidates should reveal this information to recruiters and/or potential future employers, as doing so might set a benchmark for compensation. Their advice is to consider salary needs and expectations over current salary, and decide which information will benefit the salary negotiation.

Zang and Grandovic advised candidates to view compensation as a whole package and not just as a dollar amount. Resources such as Glassdoor and PayScale might be starting points, but generally they do not provide “real-time” data. Estimates do not include certain market trends, benefit package details (paid time off, retirement, healthcare, personal satisfaction, etc.), or a candidate’s intangible skills, such as collaboration and communication. While technical skills are the basis for many positions, soft skills are setting candidates apart in this competitive market.

One of the best ways to obtain and consider competitive data is to engage trusted colleagues or other peers for an open conversation about salary. The two hardest questions to answer, Zang and Grandovic noted, are “What do I want?” and “Why?” Considering the answers to these questions should clarify priorities and set candidates on an effective path for substantive and satisfying negotiations.

After the presentation, PDAC orchestrated four role-play scenarios, each ending with feedback and tips from Zang and Grandovic, as well as audience members. The role-play scenarios were written by event co-chair Cathy Dolan-Schweitzer and paired volunteer PWC attendees with pre-selected interviewers at various levels of experience and title within the construction industry to re-create challenging but necessary real-life conversations about compensation.

To learn more about the role play portion of this event, go to the Professional Women in Construction’s website and find details under the news section.

The next PWC PDAC event is “Understanding Contracts” and will be held in November at AECOM. It will be a workshop on ways to understand contracts, create clearer contracts, and better negotiation tactics.

On November 1, from 8:30 to 11 a.m. will hold its Transportation Forum at Manhattan Manor, 201 W 52nd St., Floor 2. The event will feature a panel discussion on “Alternate Contracting Strategies in

Transportation.” The event is co-chaired by Denise Berger, FAIA, chief of operations, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; and Áine O’Dwyer, CEO, Enovate Engineering. Sponsorship opportunities are available!

On December 10, PWC will hold its Holiday Party from 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Bryant Park Grill, 25 W 40th St. Submit your nominations for PWC’s 20 under 40!

For more information, please visit <https://www.pwcusa.org/events>.

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