

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anonymous

Everyone around me is Crazy... Stay Focused!

There is No Light at The End of The Tunnel... Stay Focused!

Since COVID, Nothing is Better than before... Stay Focused!

Yes... The World and everything in it is "CRAZY" right now and seems to have been that way "FOREVER"...

As the world continues to spin "out of control" and we look to somehow make sense if it all... I remind myself daily that the world is what it is and I can only make the best of what I myself have control over... and that, my friends, is very little.

Inspiration comes from this "little ditty" I read every day. I found it along life's path, and I read it every day. It rang true the first time I saw it and continues to ring true today and every day.

I want to share it with you for your "Inspiration" as well...

ENTHUSIASM! It's like a disease... highly contagious... and no one is immune from it. If you have it, everyone around you is sure to get it. It spreads like wildfire! If you've got it, you show it... to everyone you meet, and everyone to talk to. If you've got it, you feel it! It lights up your face, puts spring in your step and a twinkle in your eye.

ENTHUSIASM builds power into us. It pulls us out of the mediocre and commonplace. It makes us sing!!

ENTHUSIASM is that "certain something" that makes us great! It makes friends, makes you smile, and makes others smile with you. It builds confidence in yourself and those around you.

ENTHUSIASM makes "fun" out of hard work. It changes things: people, situations, attitudes... even prejudices. It changes the procrastinator into a producer. The pessimist into an optimist... and the loafer into a go-getter.

ENTHUSIAM tells things about you, the company you work for as well as the goods and/or services you promote. It tells everyone you meet that you like what you do, that the "outfit" is top of the line, and that what you "promote" is **THE BEST!!!**

ENTHUSIAM opens doors and closes more deals. It turns prospects into customers. They catch it and pass it on to others. You cash in on it!!

If you've got it... give it to everyone!!! And Thank God for it!!!

If you haven't got it... get down on your knees and pray for it... For without it... You're Dead!!!

Yet, Another Birthday...
Stay Focused!

The World is in Chaos...
Stay Focused!

My World is Upside Down...
Stay Focused!



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WREN'S WESTERN OUTPUT

Hot Topic: AI

Full Disclosure: I am not a fan.

Reality: I and we have no choice but to accept AI in some form.

By Annette Wren, FCSI, CDT

Example 1: Did we humans protest when AI replaced humans in our calls to utility providers? The utility company phone systems serve as a bottom line cost saving mechanism using AI. Reality is that if you CALL them, you have a problem! I hate the comment from the electric company AI voice to “go online” when I do not have electrical power. And, I do not want to waste my computer power during the outage. When I call the dreaded electric company, do I have the power to reject their robo questioning and lame suggestions? No. In some cases, you can eventually get a human to help you. Just think of all the folks who lost their lives in Paradise, California in 2018. Many lost their lives in a wildfire caused by electrical lines that sparked. Their calls for help to such a system may have cost them their lives. It certainly did not help. Recently, I had the distinct pleasure to get a human on the phone at Southern California Edison. I did experience quite a delay to reach a human. The call was regarding the power outage at my mom’s house during her last days on Earth. The only home on the entire cul-de-sac without power! They had no idea why the power was off! In fact, a year later they could not account for her lack of power, which cut off her oxygen. This was one of many calls I made to address this issue. This call was a distinct pleasure because I was canceling service.

Example 2: Are utility providers justified in using AI instead of humans? We are experiencing a great lack of common sense in our World. It turns out that powerful utilities have an issue in hiring considering the current gene pool in humans. They have the monetary resources to replace humans with AI easily. It is amazing to interact with some utility employees with abilities that are “ten bales short of a load”. I believe the utility companies are justified to use AI. Unfortunately, if you have a serious issue, reaching a human to help you is almost impossible. Then you have an issue with the “quality” of that human. The fact is that most utilities have immunity in terms of their incompetent actions. If you are a commercial client, your problems for quality service are not exactly enhanced. Do human citizens have any power to change this “train wreck”?



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Example 3: Now the “biggie” in our AE community. Will AI replace the majority of architects in our community? Basic answer: If I had a child that wanted to be an architect today, I would demand the child become an I.M. Pei, Frank Lloyd Wright, Michael Graves or Antoine Predock type of architect. Or, that child should be encouraged to be a niche architect. Humans need to lead with their strengths. The tasks for hundreds of architects at desks in firms today can be replaced by AI. Firms will no longer have HR issues using AI. In addition, the cost savings with benefits and taxes are numerous. There are multiple advantages for the principals of firms to use AI. Geez. Do humans have the power to turn this around?

We humans did not intervene when AI replaced simple tasks. Some techies were thrilled by this. They did not need to interact with humans. I wonder how thrilled they are today with tech companies initiating major layoffs? Be careful what you ask for.

I do not have the answers for this dilemma. We all need to be aware as we give up our human power to exist.

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SPECIFICATIONS Proprietary (Sole Source) Product Specifications

Michael D. Chambers FAIA FCSI CCS

I have observed that most manufacturers and product reps are not very strategic about getting one-of-a-kind, sole source, or proprietary products specified for public “or equal” types of projects. Of course, almost everyone can get their product specified by conventional means. One way is to write a “No Sub” specification by adding the words “no substitutions” after the product name. Another is to write a performance specification whose requirements can only be met by their product. While both methods appear to offer successful outcomes, they are the easiest to break by offering a lower cost, superficially competitive, substitute product. Unless the Owner has specifically required or requested a sole source product, no sub specs are merely a red flag indicating easy substitutions.

It is possible to argue that if the architect or specifier had any guts they would stand behind and hold their specs. The reality is that most specifiers are not knowledgeable enough about specific products and industry issues to successfully argue holding a spec, especially against a lower cost but functionally equivalent product. Most product reps try to “sell” specifiers features and benefits rather than real, industry based, technical info focusing on use and application. Since each product’s features and benefits are different, it is typically impossible to hold a spec. When specifications are based on competitive “apples-for-apples” technical data, the ability of the specifier to hold the spec against non-competitive pricing is significantly enhanced. Experience indicates that well researched (read product rep supported) competitive specifications are practically impossible to substitute against.

What happens then, when a manufacturer has innovative, solution driven products that have no direct competition or reasonable functional equivalents? Writing performance or no sub specs in a highly competitive market is rarely successful. What then is the answer, do we give up bidding public work or architects whose policy requires competitive specs? No, the answer often can be found in a series of specification scenarios that have been used successfully to bid proprietary, sole source products in a required public “or equal” specification.

Multiple Product Specifications as Alternates

The U.S. Post Office Department constructed a 1 million square foot General Mail Facility in California. USPS projects are required by law to be “or equal” specifications and sole source products are not acceptable. In

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