

PROCESS

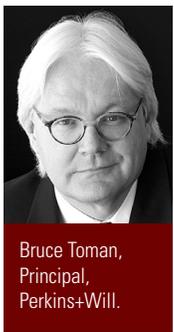
Standard operational procedures needed

Has your firm determined the best possible way to do a particular operation in your business?

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Standard operational procedures, also known as SOPs, make life easier for firms. Firms with multiple locations pose multiple challenges. For example, is technical staff using the same design and technology solutions across the board? How about staffing? How is that handled? Are there specific SOPs that must be followed? Why does all of this matter?

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION.



Bruce Toman,
Principal,
Perkins+Will.

Bruce Toman and William Schmalz, both technical directors and principals at **Perkins+Will** (Chicago, IL), a 1,500-person multidisciplinary architecture and engineering firm, say the company has created initiatives with representatives from

each office to develop standards that are based on corporate knowledge for project management, project delivery, contract document development, computer-based building information modeling, and office operations management.

“Our standards for project management and document and BIM development comprise our Project Delivery Manual (PDM), which is available to all employees on our intranet,” says Toman. “Our firm-wide quality program provides all employees with the appropriate tools to perform their tasks. Project deliverables are reviewed for conformance with our standards and our quality program by senior project architects before the completion of each project phase.”

Staffing is consistently managed by the operations director in each office, who works with the project principals and



William Schmalz,
Principal,
Perkins+Will.

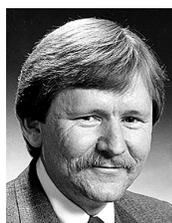
project managers to determine appropriate staff utilization and to monitor costs.

“As a function of our people’s creativity, we allow for an iterative, non-linear design process while managing the development of deliverables to match our contracts and stan-

dards,” Schmalz says. “Because communication between team members and clients is so important to the design process, our initiatives enhance effective team communications and interdisciplinary collaboration within internal and external teams.”

Perkins+Will prefers that the creativity of its people be invested in the architecture and interior design of client projects, not in reinventing processes that have proven successful over years of corporate experience.

Toman and Schmalz agree that communications through Perkins+Will’s initiatives, recording its standards in its Project Delivery Manual, and consistent application of those standards and its quality assurance process are effective methods of corporate risk management.



Mark Jones,
COO, HKS, Inc.

Mark Jones, chief operating officer for **HKS, Inc.** (Dallas, Texas), a 950-person international architecture firm, says the company’s offices operate on the same drawing, design, and modeling software platforms.

In order to ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to projects and staffing, each week, all offices attend staffing meetings via video conference. This allows staffing resources to cross-utilize based on immediate and longer-term scheduling needs.

“It is this consistency that allows our product to be uniformly and efficiently

WHY ARE STANDARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES IMPORTANT?

SOP MD, owned by Select Tech Professional Services, provides process creation services, workforce development support and 5S consulting (5S stands for Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain). SOP MD was created to provide businesses with an effective tool for establishing their expectations of how things must be done to be as proficiently and efficiently as possible in all areas of their operation. It explains SOPs as what you and your team have determined to be the best possible way to do a particular operation in your business. SOPs help a business to have predictable end results, something that can be repeated again and again. SOPs enable you to work smarter, not just harder.

developed at all offices,” he says.



Caitlin Carpenter,
Director of
Communications,
Enermodal
Engineering.

GREEN GIVES GUIDANCE.

At **Enermodal Engineering** (Kitchener, ON), a 100-person consulting firm exclusively dedicated to creating green buildings and communities, Caitlin Carpenter, director of communications, says that Enermodal uses the LEED EB:O&M (Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance) standards as a

baseline across all of its offices – even though only the Kitchener office is certified EB:O&M Platinum.

“These standards cover purchase policies for everything from toilet paper to pens, alternative transportation such as bike racks and showers, and building operations (such as composting, landscaping and housekeeping),” Carpenter says. “Our staff can – and is encouraged to – go above and beyond these baseline standards to improve their operations from employee health and wellness and sustainability perspectives.”

Carpenter explains that it’s important to have a baseline level of acceptable

See STANDARD, page 8