

Yes, you have your own brand

"If you don't brand yourself, other people will, and they may not get it right." That's what SDA members heard from Peg Marckworth when she presented a workshop on how to stand out from the crowd. The opportunity for an afternoon of focused, introspection was time well spent.

What's your brand?

Yes, you have a brand. Do you know what it looks like? If not, do you know how to find it?

Your brand is based on three key elements:

1. Who you are, what you do, and what makes you special

2. Who you want to attract, and who you don't want to attract

3. What you promise

Your promise is important. Without consistent follow-through on your promises, you lose credibility, clients, and connections.

Your brand is more than just your professional expertise and competence. Your brand is the set of assets that define how you stand out in a crowd of people having similar skills and knowledge.

There are four categories of brand assets:

1. What makes you unique
2. Why you are believable to others

3. What makes you memorable

4. Why you are important

Determining the attributes that make you unique, memorable, believable, and important, help you to define your brand. When you can define those attributes, you can easily create talking points about your brand (who you are).

So, what makes you believable to others? Do you speak with authority? Do you always follow through on what you say you will do (you keep your promise)? And what makes you memorable? Do they know you can be counted on during meetings to always

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Don't ask that; ask this. Behavior-based questions

People who routinely interview potential employees know the laws regarding the interview questions you should not ask, the ones that are clearly discriminatory. For example, asking someone if their spouse's work causes them to move often should have no bearing on their job skills, and if you ask that, you could find yourself and your firm in legal hot water. Everyone is searching for the best interview questions to

ask, the ones that don't get the interviewer or the firm in trouble; the questions that help you determine the best person to hire for your firm.

Google "interview questions" and you could spend all day reading the gazillion sites listed. Try this instead: Forget about the typical interview questions you've asked or have been asked in the past, and think about what it is you are needing to hear from each applicant.

Then develop questions that will elicit behavior-based responses instead.

Why behavior-based questions?

Behavior-based interview questions help you focus on what is important, which is the information that tells you about the applicant's skills and experience for the position you are filling.

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Hold the Date!

December 11: Subconsultant/Subcontractor Interface in the Pre-award Process (www.dbianwc.org)

December 12: Seattle chapter holiday social. 6:00pm at FareStart restaurant

January 16: Chapter program on FARs

February 20: Chapter program TBD

March 20: Chapter program on Records Management

April 17: Chapter program TBD

May 14-17: EDSymposium 14 Nashville, TN

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Don't ask that; ask this. Behavior-based questions (continued from page 1)

Lynne Lazaroff (The Leadership Dimension) shares samples of "old-school" and behavior-based interview questions.



Don't waste your time with these questions; they don't add any value:

- What can you tell me about yourself that makes you think you would be good at this job? *The response will tell you what the candidate believes his/her job qualities are, not what they have been capable of accomplishing.*
- What qualities would you bring to this office? *The answer does not tell you about the applicant's accomplishments; it tells you what they think their qualities are. They may tell you about some past experiences to back up their claims, but why not just ask about their past experiences?*
- What do you think of your present manager? *The response provides information on the candidate's opinion of their present manager. You may find out what they look for in a boss, but you don't*

really learn more about how they could perform in your job vacancy.

- The office opens at 8:00am sharp. Do you arrive at work on time? *This is simply a yes/no response, and what candidate is going to tell you that they are not punctual?*
- What things do you think contribute to your effectiveness as a supervisor? *The applicant will tell you what they believe their supervisory strengths are. They may share some examples to support their claims, but you can save time by asking for these examples up front.*
- What do you think of your current employer? *This answer gives you the candidate's opinion of their present company. It may tell you whether the candidate would choose to speak ill of their employer, in other words, how discreet they are, but it does not tell you whether they can perform the duties of your open position.*

Ask these behavior-based questions:

- Describe one of your biggest accomplishments at your last job. *This answer will tell you about something significant the candidate has done, and what the candidate considers significant, the*

extent of the responsibilities they held and the complexity of the work they have been accountable for.

- Tell me about a time when an upper management decision or policy change held up your work. How did you handle it? *The answer tells you how the candidate has coped in the past with the need for change. This past experience is a good predictor of how they will cope in the future.*
- When you had to do a particularly uninteresting task, how did you deal with it? *This question is behavior-based because it asks what the candidate has done. This answer tells you how the candidate keeps themselves on track.*
- Tell me about how any of your background and activities have given you experience that would help you on this job. *You are asking what the candidate has done. This type of question is helpful with candidates who have been unemployed or are re-entering the job market.*
- Tell me about an important goal you set in the past and how successful you were in reaching it. *This question asks about past behavior, telling you about the candidate's goals and how they approach them.*

- Tell me about something you have done in your last job that required creativity. *This is behavior-based, requesting information about past experience, in particular, about the candidate's ability to perform work when ordinary means were not available.*
- Describe a situation in your last job when you could structure your own work schedule. What did you do? *Behavior-based, to learn how the candidate organizes their work.*

Past behavior is a good indication of future behavior, so take the time to develop behavior-based interview questions that will trigger candidate responses describing their technical skills and their performance skills.

Permission to use from:

Lynne Lazaroff

The Leadership Dimension

Training, coaching & consulting in leadership at every level. Inform, Inspire & Innovate.

Contact Lynne via LinkedIn (click here), or at lynne.lazaroff@dimension.org.

Four best practices for leading when you're not the manager

Employees who want to be a company leader, but just don't have the opportunity to have their voice be heard or acted upon, can help lean toward a leadership role by adopting four best practices. This is *leadership without professional authority*.

- 1. Cultivate and demonstrate personal leadership qualities.** Qualities such as persistence, clarity of purpose, flexibility, a collaborative approach, straightforward vision, moral code, competence, compassion, good communication skills, and the ability to detach yet be passionate about the possibilities of the future.
- 2. Coach up.** Support the company's leaders in

carrying out the firm's vision, and live by the firm's values. Many bosses know it is critical to listen to feedback, but staff are usually afraid to tell them the truth. Ask the leaders if they are open to feedback; if they say yes, you have the opportunity to coach up, meaning you can hold them accountable to lead well. If they say no, find other ways to support them in being the type of leaders you want to follow.

- 3. Ask effective questions.** When things get off course, ask questions such as: What is our main objective in doing this? What is our desired outcome? How can we focus on the solution rather

than expanding the problem? How does this fit into our vision, mission, and values? What strategy might work better than this one? After some well placed questions, you can clear the confusion and people will look to you for leadership.

- 4. Share your vision.** Most people have a vision for what the company could become, yet very few are asked about their visions. Often those inspiring visions get lost in day-to-day operations and the bottom-line focus. If you are a leader, with or without positional authority, you need to share your vision for the organization. Share it with everyone around you,

above you, and below you. This, of course, means you need to put it into words first.

You may not have enough positional power at your firm, but don't overlook your strength. Strength is more sustainable than power. Your strength comes from your commitment, clarity and willingness to say what others won't or cannot say. The key is to use a charge-neutral approach (not hyped-up or suppressed). If you wait until you are angry and blow up, or if you sulk and withdraw when things are going poorly, you might never be seen as a leader.

Excerpt from an SDA white paper, "Coach's Corner: Leadership without Positional Authority," by Anne Neal; www.sdanational.org.



Technology Transfer: Counting Contents of Cells (Excel)

Use the "countif" formula to count what's in the non-blank cells in your spreadsheet. Here are sample counts, using the cell range A1:T100 as an example:

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| How many cells contain the abbreviation "CDFA"? | enter formula | =countif(A1:T100,"CDFA") |
| How many cells contain text? | enter formula | =countif(A1:T100,"*") |
| How many cells have a value greater than 50? | enter formula | =countif(A1:T100,">50") |
| How many cells contain the text "ABC Design Firm"? | enter formula | =countif(A1:T100,"ABC Design Firm") |
| How many cells start with "st" and have exactly 6 characters? | enter formula | =countif(A1:T100,"st????") |

President's Message



Summer has blown away in a flurry of leaves and wind storms into the fall, and now the holidays are upon us. I've been pondering what I am grateful for in my life. The big three are family, friends, and career. I am especially grateful to SDA for playing a big part in the development of two of those things. My career would still be just a job without the skills, focus, and clarity that I learned at

SDA. You would think that after 18 years of attending seminars, I would reach a point where I'd heard it all before, yet I managed to learn something new from the excellent programs we have held so far this year. Our November program featured Dorothy Skans (MS Word guru) showing us how we can utilize Word's Quick Access toolbar to be more efficient at the office. I still try to make software work the way it worked when I first learned it. Presentations like this are particularly revelatory for me. Along these lines, the Board is really proud to be planning a Saturday seminar on how to use Facebook and LinkedIn. This will be a several hour session, and you may choose to attend one, or both,

sections. Attendees will be able to bring their own laptops or tablets and try the lessons as they are presented. It's this type of programming that helps move my career along and keeps me current about the workplace of today.

SDA has also been instrumental in the friendship category of my life. Quite a few of my closest friends began as SDA colleagues. As we have done before, we are setting aside time to celebrate those connections. On December 12, we will get together for a social event at FareStart. There will be a white-elephant gift exchange, and the opportunity for those budding acquaintances to move along the path towards

becoming friendships.

When you think about the things in your life you are grateful for, I hope SDA makes the list. And soon enough, when it's time to make those New Year's resolutions, I hope one of yours will be taking more advantage of the many growth opportunities available through your SDA membership. If you do, you may find you have a few more career accomplishments and friends to be grateful for this time next year.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

Stacy Rowland, C.DFA

Question of the quarter: If money was no object, what would you be doing?

A number of SDA members across the country responded to this quarter's question: *If money was no object, what would you be doing?*

Shannon Soady (Seattle) would travel the world as an itinerant tour guide or a Peace Corps volunteer. **Betsy Nickless** (Orange County) would become the lifetime chairperson for the chapter's Canstruction® event.

Amanda Hardeman (Seattle) would go back to school to get a B.S. and work in the renewable energy engineering field. **Marie Tomala** (Minneapolis) would tour the country playing music in a classic rock 'n roll band with her husband. **Martha Szekley** (Orange County) would become a nutrition coach, working to instill a better eating lifestyle using a

plant-based nutritional program. **Carrie Thompson** (Seattle) would be doing a lot of different things, but mostly volunteering: as a dog-walker at a no-kill shelter, at a nursery working with plants and learning more about different species, at a retirement home leading arts and crafts sessions, working on a horse farm, or reading stories to children in the

hospital. **Barb Steinberg** (Pittsburgh) would look to combine all of her passions, radio, writing and concert-going, into her career. In the meantime, she is relishing in her 15 minutes of fame as a volunteer radio host on Sunday afternoons. **Lois Diemert** (Seattle) would be doing genealogy full-time, including research, collecting

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Spotlight on members: Shannon Soady and Pakalana Patterson



Shannon Soady, CDFA, joined SDA in 2002. She has served on the chapter board in numerous positions, including President, and she is also active at the national level.

What do you do at DLR Group?

Shannon: I started at DLR Group in 1999. I am the office manager, as well as a project administrator, and I also do some accounting.

What motivated you to join SDA?

Shannon: Stacy Rowland's enthusiastic endorsement, and my interest in learning as much as possible about the design field.

If there was one class (or seminar or workshop) that you could take that would allow you to perform your job more effectively, what class would that be and why?

Shannon: Mind reading. And since that's impossible, InDesign, because it's being used more and more by our marketing and other staff for

reports.

What challenges you with respect to work/life balance?

Shannon: There is always way more work than hours in the day. I tend to spend more time on "work" than "personal," but I am trying to change that.

What activities or hobbies do you enjoy in your spare time?

Shannon: Reading, gardening, and travel, but most of all being with my granddaughter, Lily, who is eight years old. She's a character, and I'm looking forward to traveling with her as she grows older. As for reading, my top choice is historical fiction or non-fiction. I also enjoy books about strong women battling against societal expectations. While I have a Kindle, I prefer a good, solid, hardbound book. I spend enough time in front of a screen as it is, so reading an honest-to-goodness page, and turning the page to see what happens next is very therapeutic for me. I have traveled the U.S. extensively (as an Air Force brat), and have also taken trips to England, Paris, Switzerland, and Germany. My favorite travel memory was landing in Bern, Switzerland on the train, and enjoying the Bern Symphony's free, season-opening concert of various Italian pieces (including the theme from "The Godfather"!). Sitting under a beautiful, summer starlit sky, in the cathedral plaza, while

sipping champagne and listening to beautiful music - it doesn't get any better. But, my dream trip would be to Botswana.

What are some of your goals with respect to SDA?

Shannon: I've met a number of my SDA goals (e.g., serving on the Seattle chapter board, and chairing committees); I'm still focused especially on continued education.



Pakalana Patterson, CDFA, joined SDA in 2003. She is currently serving as the chapter's President-Elect and Treasurer. She has served on the chapter board in a number of positions, including President. She was elected to the board this year as the Treasurer, and when the President-Elect position became vacant, she was asked to fulfill that role as well.

How long have you been with BHC Consultants?

Pakalana: I have been with BHC Consultants for 19 years. I must preface that by saying over the 19 years there were a few acquisitions and name changes. I have experienced working in a company of 15 employees all the way up to several thousand employees. That in itself was challenging at times, but in the end I gained extensive knowledge as a result of the various company structures I have been part of. Now we are an office of a little over 40 very talented individuals that makes BHC a great place to work.

What do you do at your firm?

Pakalana: My title is Business Manager. With that title comes some formal responsibilities such as finances, human resources, and general administration. The more informal responsibilities have at times included: chef, den mother, mechanic, taxi driver, janitor, party planner, and many other tasks that one does who loves their company and co-workers.

What motivated you to join SDA?

Pakalana: I have a strong desire to continue to grow and obtain knowledge through a professional organization. I was fortunate to have gained knowledge through the different corporate structures I have been part of over the years. However, when you are with a company for so

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Yes, you have your own brand (continued from page 1)

ask the questions everyone wants answered? Why are you important? Is it because you can always lead a team to consensus? If you have trouble realizing your brand assets within the four categories, ask a few other colleagues to answer those questions about you. How they see you sometimes indicates your true nature.

It's not just a logo

Your brand is not just a logo, a tag line, a website, or even a hashtag. Those are just the tools you use to capture other people's attention, to make

them emotionally connected to you, and to remind them of who you are. Figure out your brand (your assets), and the tools will follow in one way or another.



Stand out from the crowd

According to Marckworth, "Your brand distinguishes you from the crowd. It gives you

the right kind of visibility and builds your reputation. Strong personal brands elicit thoughts, emotions, and actions from others. Achieving your brand promise satisfies those you work with, keeps them coming back and makes you the one they recommend to others."

Excerpts reprinted by permission. Marckworth Associates can help you find your personal brand or your firm's brand. Contact Peg Marckworth: 206-919-2433 or peg@marckworth.com.

Maricela Yanez

The Society lost a dear friend and member. Maricela Yanez passed away October 10. She was a dedicated SDA member who



always lent a helping hand at the annual conventions, and who always had a warm smile and

kind word when you saw her. She served several terms as the President of the San Antonio chapter. She worked 27 years at Fisher Heck Architects and was promoted to Associate status. Our deepest sympathies to Maricela's family.

Member profiles (continued from page 5)

long, you can get stuck in a rut if you don't find resources where you can continue to gain knowledge on what is going on outside of your company. SDA has played a significant role in my professional growth over the years as a result of educational opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and professional relationships built over the years with others who share the same profession.

What challenges you with respect to work/life balance?

Pakalana: So, my challenge has always been just that... work/life balance. In years past, I have always put work

before family and life balance. What I learned growing up is that you must give your all to work which came with sacrifice. I know that what I did was probably the best for my personal situation at the time. However, I am now finding a sense of balance and am reprioritizing in life. I hope that others can find balance earlier in their careers rather than later.

If there was one class (or seminar or workshop) that you could take that would allow you to perform your job more effectively, what class would that be and why?

Pakalana: I would like to expand my knowledge on the generational differences and how to keep the generations X, Y, and Z challenged, satisfied, and motivated. I find that I am from a different "school of thought" when it comes to the work place. What fueled my drive is different than that of generations X, Y, and Z.

"SDA has played a significant role in my professional growth."

What activities or hobbies do you enjoy in your spare time?

Pakalana: I have a passion for interior design on a budget. I am always looking for a good bargain or something to re-purpose. I also enjoy being with my family and learning more about my Hawaiian heritage.

What are some of your goals with respect to SDA?

Pakalana: I want to see our Chapter flourish and I am hoping to be part of that. I want to spread the word about SDA and encourage others to share in the benefits SDA has to offer.

Adding value to your CDFA attendance record

SDA members, do you want to spice up your “CDFA Attendance Record” template to include cumulative points and provide a visual context? Here are a couple of ways to do that, using Excel 2010. Copy the worksheet that contains the main template (when you first downloaded it from the national website, it was likely Sheet 1, in the Excel file named CDFAAttendance2011). Create duplicate worksheets and name them, e.g., 2011, 2012, and 2013.

1. Create a new worksheet named “Cumulative Total” (or your own naming convention). For this worksheet, enter the structure similar to what’s shown in Figure 1. The numbers in Column B should pull from the individual worksheets (e.g., for cell B4, the formula might be =+'2011'!D44). In Figure 1, look at the formula bar to see the “over/under” results for cell C4. Instead of opening each worksheet to see total points for the year, all you have to do is open the **Cumulative Total** worksheet. Seeing “over” or “under” gives you one quick indicator to determine if you need to increase your educational attendance before the year’s end.

| | A | B | C | D |
|----|---------------------|--------------|---|---|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | YEAR | CDFA Points | Over / Under 18 Points at Year End (December) | |
| 4 | Dec-11 | 18.50 | Over | |
| 5 | Dec-12 | 29.00 | Over | |
| 6 | Dec-13 | 19.25 | Over | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | Grand Total: | 99.25 | | |

Figure 1: Capturing cumulative points

2. For those who prefer a more prominent visual indicator, create a graph, or use Excel's default icons.

GRAPH: Highlight cells A3 through B6 (Figure 1). To see how your educational points trend over the years, insert a line graph (Figure 2).

ICONS: Set a Conditional Formatting rule that inserts an icon to indicate where you’re at with the required 18 annual points. Figure 3 sets the Conditional Formatting rule. Figure 4 shows the icon results, as another visual indicator.

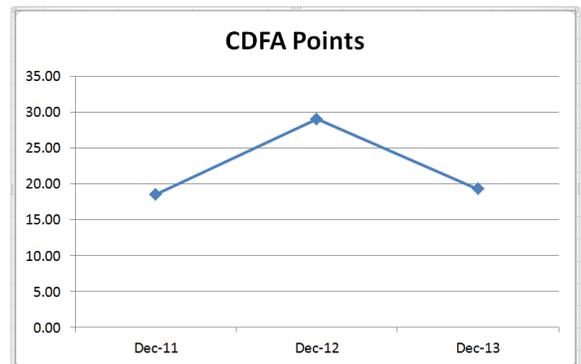


Figure 2: Trending educational points

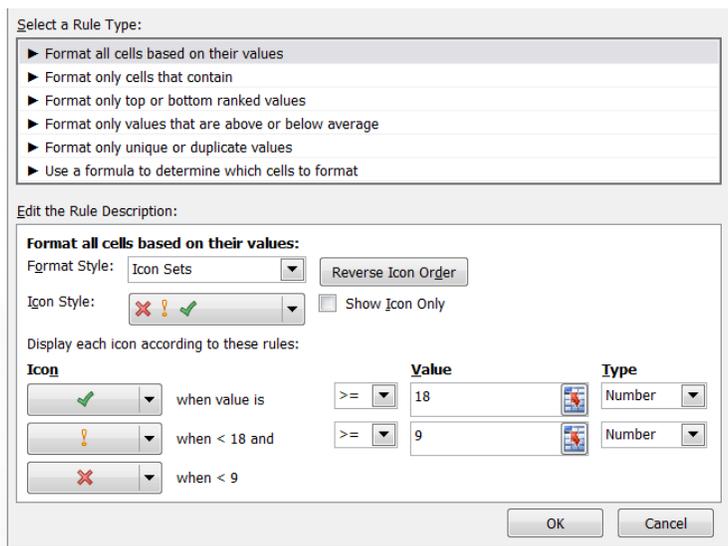


Figure 3: Set Conditional Formatting

| | A | B |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | YEAR | Over/Under 18 Points at Year End (December) |
| 4 | Dec-11 | ✓ 18.00 |
| 5 | Dec-12 | ✓ 20.00 |
| 6 | Dec-13 | ! 9.00 |
| 7 | Dec-14 | ✗ 0.00 |

Figure 4: Icons as a visual indicator

Seattle Municipal Code, Chapter 14.17: Does your firm need to comply?

Effective November 1, Seattle employers with at least one or more employees who work in Seattle must abide by the new Chapter 14.17 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), "The Use of Criminal History in Employment Decisions." Terra Staffing Group hosted a webinar presented by Karina Bull, business liaison for the Seattle Office for Civil Rights.

What does the code do?

It limits how Seattle employers can use criminal history records as a means for making a decision on whether to hire someone. Whereas in the past job applicants might not even get a foot in the door for an interview with a Seattle employer because they checked Yes on the box for "Have you ever been convicted of a crime," job applicants now stand a better chance of getting an interview, at least in terms of having the opportunity to explain the circumstances of their past situation.

Who has to comply with SMC 14.17?

The City of Seattle, and all other private firms that have employees performing work

substantially in Seattle.

Substantially means at least 50% of the employee's time is spent working in Seattle. As the employer, you do not have to have an office in Seattle, but if you send your employees to work within the Seattle city limits (if the position is in Seattle), then you need to be in compliance. The City of Seattle has no jurisdiction over federal and other state agencies, including King County, so those employers do not have to comply with SMC 14.17.

Review your job postings

Do the job ads you post say anything about how criminals/felons shouldn't bother applying, or that anyone with a criminal background shouldn't apply? Or maybe your job ad says something about being able to pass a background check. Under SMC 14.17, job postings including those words could lead to a charge and an investigation.

SMC 14.17 Conditions

Seattle employers may still conduct background checks, but there are conditions upon doing so.

- You can ask about

criminal history only *after* you have conducted an initial screening to eliminate unqualified applicants.

- You can *conduct* a criminal background check on applicants, but again, only *after* you have done the initial screening to eliminate unqualified applicants.
- You are required to provide a reasonable opportunity for the applicant to explain or correct his/her criminal history information, before making the decision to not hire.
- You must have a legitimate business reason for not hiring the applicant.

Reasonable opportunity means that the employer informs the applicant they might not be hired, and advises the applicant what information or records led to the decision. The employer must hold the job open for two business days. The employer must consider the applicant's explanations and any corrections or verifiable information of good conduct and rehabilitation.

The legitimate business reason is based on the employer's good faith that the past criminal behavior will have a negative impact on the applicant's ability to perform in the position, or will cause harm or injury to people, property, business reputation or assets. In addition, the employer has to consider the seriousness of the crime, the types and number of convictions or pending charges, the time that has elapsed since the conviction or pending charge (excludes incarceration time), and the specific duties and responsibilities, as well as the place and manner in which the position will be performed.



If you are still uncertain of what you can or cannot state in your job postings, or if you have questions about unique situations, contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at 206-684-4500 or www.seattle.gov/civilrights.

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About SDA

For over 50 years, the Society for Design Administration (SDA) has promoted education and best practices in management and professional standards of design firm administration. SDA membership stretches across the United States and Canada, and is composed of personnel working in the design industry for architectural, engineering, construction, and related industry firms.

Look, click, learn.

Seattle Chapter SDA:

www.sda-seattle.org



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National SDA:

www.sdanational.org

Portico is published quarterly. Please send comments, suggestions, announcements and articles to the Editor, Judy Beebe, at beebe@pbworld.com.

What's next?

DEC
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Annual Holiday Social. Chapter members and guests are invited to join us for a no-host dinner at 6:00pm at the FareStart restaurant (7th and Virginia, Seattle). Bring a wrapped, white-elephant item for the gift exchange (under \$10). **RSVP by December 10** to Stacy Rowland at stacy@bergerpartnership.com.

JAN
16

Federal Acquisition Regulations, presented by John Pruitt (A/E Consulting Services, Inc.). WSDOT's interpretation of the FARs may offer challenges for local consulting firms. John Pruitt can walk you through the FARs in layperson terms.

FEB
20

Chapter program TBD. Pending topics include working in Asia and the LEAN program.

MAR
20

Records Management, presented by Catherine Blake (Callison Architects).

Check our website for more details (www.sda-seattle.org). Seattle Chapter events are also published in the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, *AIA eNews*, *Seattle P-I*, and the *Daily Journal of Commerce*. For questions about any of the chapter programs, or if you have suggestions for SDA programs, please contact Renaë Howard at renaehowardbookkeeper@gmail.com.

Question of the quarter (continued from page 4)

family stories, and organizing the information. **Natalie Newman** (Orange County) would be an artist, putting paint to canvas. **Renaë Howard** (Seattle) would, in a perfect world, be a baker, preferably for children. **Anonymous** (Seattle) would teach dog-training classes. **Rachel Moore** (San Francisco) is a fiction writer who would support herself with that, along with teaching creative writing. **Judy Beebe** (Seattle) would teach children to read; if not that, she would be in the jungle with the apes and a Jane Goodall-type of guide. **Jennifer HinkleyKarnisky** (Denver) would own and run a music and art venue that serves food and drinks. **Stacy Rowland** (Seattle) would run an animal sanctuary where wild and domestic animals would receive food, shelter, safety, love and medical care. **Kathy Simpson** (Dallas) would be in the advertising business, creating wildly successful television commercials. If **Gretchen Renz** (Seattle) wasn't a design firm administrator, she would be running a catering and party planning company with her sister, specializing in corporate events and casual weddings. But if she wasn't catering and party planning, she would own a bookstore.