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65 YEARS

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Associated Builders & Contractors develops strategic plan through 2020; 6 major parts of plan worked on by 60 volunteers and staff

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For the past four years, members of the ABC chapter presidents executive council, the ABC national executive committee, ABC national staff and ABC national committee chairs have been working on an ongoing strategic plan for the association. The purpose of the plan is to allow the association to better meet its value proposition that, "Based on the Merit Shop philosophy, ABC helps its members develop people, win work, and deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which they work." There are six major parts of the strategic plan. In last month's issue of the New England Real Estate Journal, our article covered the first three parts. This article covers parts four, five and six.

Strategic Goal #4 - Workforce: ABC will be the leading force in the construction industry for workforce development and training. It is estimated that once the country's economy fully recovers from the Great Recession, there will be a shortage of skilled tradespeople in excess of 1.7 million. This is due to the fact that the workforce is aging, and the fact that many former construction workers moved on to other careers over the past six or seven years. ABC plans to ensure that trained craft professionals coming out of its training facilities are technologically advanced and productive. ABC will be a medium by which its members become more aware of and get exposed to the latest technology. In addition, ABC, along with other construction associations, needs to make sure that young people know that construction is a prosperous career. With anywhere from two to four years of training, construction professionals can easily earn north of \$65,000 per year. Compare that to the starting salary of a school teacher with a bachelor's degree. ABC's goal is to graduate 200,000 new, skilled craft workers per year.

Strategic Goal #5 - Membership Growth: ABC is in the process of overhauling its dues structure to promote the highest return on investment for members, including membership satisfaction. In so doing, the association is identifying and collaborating with strategic external partners who will add even more value. Although ABC is primarily a construction company association, many of its members are in industries that serve the industry, such as rental equipment companies, CPAs, attorneys, bonding and insurance companies, etc. The goal, over the next five years, is to grow the portion of ABC members who actually do the work...general contractors and subcontractors. ABC National measures the 70 chapters across the country by the percentage of contractor and subcontractor members they have. Over 60% is considered desirable. ABC Rhode Island currently has 68% contractor and subcontractor members.

Strategic Goal #6 - Information & Technology: Utilizing quality data will allow ABC to be an effective

and efficient fact-based decision making organization. By using technology, ABC plans to do an even better job of telling the "ABC Story" with accurate, relevant and timely facts.

To that end, ABC National and the 70 chapters are in the process of converting to a new, state-of-the art, web-based database that will allow all chapters and national to operate in "real time" to bring the newest and best services to our members...and the ability to benchmark all performance metrics, in order to demonstrate that programs ABC offers to its members are effective and valuable. This database conversion is both expensive and time-consuming, but the national board of directors has determined that it is essential to the growth and success of ABC members, and the construction industry, as a whole.

Running a trade association is more than just holding networking events and training new recruits. The goal is, and will continue to be, providing value-added services to the industry in ways it cannot otherwise find them. To learn more about ABC membership and its many advantages, visit www.abcni.org, and click on "membership."

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