

Building Relationships

The benefits of lifelong networks within the IRWA

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When I became President last year, I talked about making a difference in our Association, in the industries that we serve and in the lives of the people we touch. As building relationships is the backbone of making that difference, creating a rapport with people is an important place to start. It draws people toward you so that trust will take root and a relationship can begin to form.

So why focus on creating relationships at all? I've found that real success—the kind that exists on multiple levels—is impossible without building great relationships. Of course, these take time, effort and emotional intelligence. Our members have good people skills and know intuitively how to build bridges with others so that relationship bonds are robust. They are adept at engaging others and getting desirable responses. They know how to win people over and appeal to different audiences to build consensus and support. This type of influence is essential in achieving our goals and outcomes; it is also absolutely crucial

to achieving our purpose of improving people's quality of life through our profession.

Firsthand Experience

All of my life, I have worked on building relationships both in business and in my personal life. In both cases, the IRWA has been the catalyst for building these relationships. As a right of way professional, I have experienced being an influencer, as well as the recipient of strong influence. Along the way, I have tapped into the ability to build a rapport with people and therefore have developed relationships that will last a lifetime.

For instance, I met one of my best friends at an IRWA class in Santa Barbara over 25 years ago. Another relationship that developed was with someone I coached to be a right of way professional. I currently share a leadership position with her in the IRWA. In addition to being one of my employees, she was once my client and has remained a friend for over 30 years—I even coached her son in

baseball. And it doesn't stop there. The best man in my wedding is going to retire this year from a successful right of way career that spanned three decades. I talked him into this business and in turn he influenced his wife and family to follow him into this incredible profession.

Reaping the Benefits

You all have stories like these. Without the IRWA, I would not have the incredible network of lifelong friends and clients that I can share a laugh with—and that includes all of my competitors that have become my friends.

I have a tip for the newer members that are reading this. When you attend an IRWA event, the return on your investment of time and effort might not be immediately evident. But as the years go by and your bonds get stronger and more deep-seated, you will have life-long relationships that will give you an edge in business, opportunities for learning and a remarkable chance to make a difference. 🙌

