

"Perhaps the ultimate test of a leader is not what you are able to do in the here and now - but instead what continues to grow long after you're gone"- Tom Rath, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*

If you have been diligently reading these President's Letter, you are noticing that I tend to quote Tom Rath's book...a lot. In July at our SMPS Chicago Board Retreat, each director received a copy of the book and bringing it full circle, I found myself reflecting on the quote above on the heels of our chapter's sell-out, standing room only AIA/SMPS Holiday Party with a whopping 307 attendees. How did this happen? How fantastic it was to experience a room full of creative thinking professionals yet who think very differently. The success of the event – the number of people, the quality of the program, and the fantastic partnership of AIA Chicago – did not happen over night, however. As Mr. Rath mentions, it is because of the leaders we have had that laid the ground work for us. Who are these fine folks, you ask? Good thing we keep track...also because once you become a leader in SMPS, you never want to leave us! Check out the past presidents here: <http://smps-chi.org/learn/chapter-history/>

We also need to recognize the incredible work of the SMPS Chicago Special Events Directors Katie Stilts with Baxter + Woodman, Tom Petermann with Eriksson Engineering as well as Nikki Dvorak with Primera and Brie Yaksic with GSG Consultants – this group of individuals have worked tirelessly since September to make this holiday party an incredible celebration of our chapter, of the members of both AIA, SMPS and an evening filled with great conversation between designers, leaders of firms, marketers, architects, business developers and friends. That is what made the event such a success and it is because of your Chicago directors that it happened.

As we look forward to less snow days and sunnier ones I am proud to continue to boast about your board and the spring of fantastic programming they have created for all of you. Brand new programs to fit every marketing and business developer in your firm:

- Are you a coordinator, new to the industry and perhaps missed the sold out Marketing Bootcamp? Join us for the Marketing Coordinators Sessions that will be launching in March; short programs before or after work that will not take away time from the office and still prime you for bringing valuable ROI as a member
- Are you a leader, senior level marketer or business developer? Looking for a small setting to think-tank about the industry, collaborate on best practices, and discuss experiences? Join us for the members only "BEE: Business Executives Exchange" : <http://smps-chi.org/events/62/business-executives-exchange/>
- Are you a member who has been in A/E/C for at least 5 years, always heard about the CPSM exam, just never looked into it? Not only is the CPSM study group free for you,

but we would like to pay for your exam! We offer a scholarship to help get you the success you deserve: <http://smps-chi.org/events/61/cpsm-study-group/>

- Build Business: The SMPS National Conference – do I need to say anything else? In case I do, the Co-Chair is Chicago’s very own Jenifer Johnson with Thornton Tomasetti and Programs Co-Chair is Matt Rebro with Pepper Construction. This will be a not to miss event and join the Chicago attendees with a discounted rate before Feb 14th! <http://www.smeps.org/buildbusiness/>

Lastly, we have had a record Sponsorship year with Carrie Mandelin, CPSM at the helm and our fantastic past Sponsorship Director, Leann Dockins, CPSM laying a great network to grow from. If you could not join us as an annual sponsor this year, we hope you can join us as a program sponsor, for those opportunities, please contact Carrie: carrie.mandelin@mortenson.com

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meg. Briars", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Megen Briars

Director of Marketing, OKW Architects, Inc.

mbriars@okwarchitects.com

@megenbriars

SMPS Chicago 2013 - 2014 President