

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MNCREW PRESIDENT

Hello, MNCREW members!

As we welcome summer, I am thrilled to share the exciting updates and accomplishments from the second quarter of 2024. It's been a vibrant and active season for MNCREW, filled with events, new initiatives, and opportunities for connection and growth.

First on our summer bucket list is the CREW Leadership Summit in Charlotte, North Carolina. This summit, along with the Leadership Certificate series, promises to be an enriching experience for all participants. It's a chance to deepen our leadership skills and expand our professional networks.

Our second quarter programs at Mosaic were an absolute hit! The energy and engagement at these events have been incredible, reflecting our members' enthusiasm and commitment. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making these gatherings so special.

We are also excited to announce that our annual golf tournament has SOLD OUT! If you haven't secured your spot, don't worry – join the waitlist now. Speaking of golf, our new MNCREW merchandise site is live! Ordering will be available through Friday, June 21. All orders will be processed Monday, June 24 which will take about four weeks. At checkout, you can select to have your order shipped to your home upon completion (+\$15) or opt to pick it up at the July program on July 17th. [Link to order merchandise.](#)

Being the MNCREW 2024 President is such an honor. I am extremely proud of our 2024 Board and Chairs. Operating as a Strategic

Board empowers all of us to work collaboratively and effectively. Strategic Planning is well underway, and as part of our DEI initiatives, the board is actively engaging with our DEI consultant to continue this important conversation.

Our spring dine-arounds were well received, and if you missed this round, stay tuned for the fall round! Handbag Bingo remains a favorite event, with its incredible turnout and significant fundraising for CREW. Here are some exciting stats from the event:

- Over 35 bags donated
- Registration Totals: 205 attendees, with almost half being non-members!

In addition to these events, we've had a fantastic LaSalle Plaza Preview, an engaging May Program, and our members-only Conversation and Cocktails event. Our Golf Tournament registration sold out in just 1.5 hours, so be sure to get on the waitlist as space becomes available.

As I reflect on the past quarter, I am reminded of how truly special it is to be part of MNCREW. Our collective dedication and enthusiasm make everything we do possible. Let's continue to build on this momentum and make the rest of 2024 just as remarkable.

With warmest regards,
Nicole Urista
President, MNCREW



2024 MNCREW PRESIDENT

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DATA CENTERS: UNRAVELING THE TECHNOLOGICAL BACKBONE OF MODERN SOCIETY



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In late March, Melissa Bjornson, Regional Director of Business Development at Cushing Terrell moderated a discussion for NAIOP Minnesota titled: “A Closer Look: Race to Power – Inside the World of Data Center Development”. Melissa and I had a conversation discussing the topic. Below are a few highlights from our conversation:

In the digital age, where information reigns supreme, data centers have emerged as the unsung heroes powering our interconnected world. From storing your favorite apps on your smartphone to safeguarding critical healthcare records, data centers are the beating heart of our modern technological infrastructure. But why are they the talk of the town lately? Delving into this hot-button topic, we explore the intricacies of data center development, management, sustainability, and their implications for the future.

The Surge in Demand:

Across industries, the exponential growth in technology and digital services has fueled an unprecedented demand for data centers. Whether it's the proliferation of AI-driven applications or the rise of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, the need for robust data storage and processing capabilities has never been greater. In essence, data centers have become indispensable pillars supporting the digital ecosystem.

Opportunities for Growth:

For real estate professionals, the burgeoning demand for data center development presents a myriad of opportunities. Since the inception of the first data center in the 1940s, technological advancements have propelled the industry forward, with ever-increasing demands for computing power and efficiency. The scope of data center projects varies, influenced by factors such as developer preferences, end-user requirements, available power and broadband resources, and zoning regulations.

Innovations in Management:

Technological innovations play a pivotal role in optimizing data center operations and enhancing efficiency. Building management systems equipped with sophisticated monitoring tools, energy usage calculations, and temperature sensors are instrumental in preemptively addressing potential issues and minimizing downtime. Moreover, modular systems that facilitate easy scalability are highly sought-after in a landscape characterized by rapid technological evolution.

The Energy Conundrum:

It's no secret that data centers consume vast amounts of energy to power server racks and maintain optimal operating conditions. However, the sources of this energy vary, ranging from traditional utility grids, renewable energy sources, and battery storage. In colder climates, natural cooling agents like cold air are harnessed to reduce the reliance on mechanical cooling systems, thereby mitigating energy consumption.

Sustainability Imperatives:

As sustainability becomes increasingly paramount, stakeholders in data center projects are reevaluating their approach to energy consumption and waste management. Concepts such as waste heat reuse and energy storage are gaining traction as viable solutions to reduce reliance on conventional power infrastructure. By adopting sustainable practices, data centers can minimize their environmental footprint while maximizing operational efficiency.

In all, data centers represent the backbone of our digital society, driving innovation, connectivity, and economic growth. As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving technological landscape, it's critical to prioritize sustainability and efficiency in data center design and management. By embracing innovation and collaboration, we can pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable future.

TEN CURRENT TRENDS IN HYBRID MEETING SPACES



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Hybrid meeting spaces are at the forefront of the evolving workplace. As these trends continue to develop, organizations will be better equipped to foster collaboration and communication, ensuring productivity and engagement in the modern work environment.

1. Enhanced Audio-Visual Integration

High-quality audio-visual equipment is critical for “meeting equity” during hybrid meetings. Advances in this area include:

- 4K Cameras - Providing crystal-clear visuals that enhance the experience for remote participants.
- Beamforming Microphones - Capturing voices more accurately while minimizing background noise.

2. AI-Powered Tools

Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing hybrid meetings with features such as:

- Auto-Transcription and Translation - Breaking down language barriers and ensuring accurate meeting records.
- Facial Recognition - Identifying speakers and providing personalized experiences.

3. Modular Furniture

Modular furniture allows meeting spaces to be quickly reconfigured for different types of meetings, from small team huddles to large presentations. This flexibility is essential in hybrid environments where the number of in-person attendees can fluctuate.

4. Smart Room Scheduling

Integrated scheduling systems can manage room bookings efficiently, ensuring that spaces are used optimally. These systems can:

- Sync with company calendars.
- Provide real-time occupancy data.

5. Virtual Whiteboards

Virtual whiteboards enable remote and in-person participants to brainstorm and collaborate as if they were in the same room.

6. Unified Communication Platforms

Platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom are continuously evolving to offer more integrated experiences. Features like chat, file sharing, and project management tools within a single interface streamline collaboration.

7. Inclusive Meeting Practices

Organizations are increasingly adopting practices to ensure that all voices are heard, regardless of physical presence. This includes:

- Equal Screen Time - Ensuring remote participants are visible and engaged.
- Rotating Facilitators - Encouraging different team members to lead meetings to foster diverse perspectives.

8. Accessibility Features

To accommodate participants with disabilities, hybrid meeting spaces are incorporating:

- Closed Captioning - Providing real-time subtitles.
- Assistive Listening Devices - Enhancing audio for those with hearing impairments.

9. Secure Communication Channels

With the rise of remote participation, securing communication channels has become paramount. End-to-end encryption and robust authentication mechanisms are standard practices to protect sensitive information.

10. Compliance with Privacy Regulations

Adherence to privacy laws such as GDPR and CCPA is crucial. Hybrid meeting solutions are being designed to ensure compliance, protect user data, and maintain trust.

At iSPACE Environments, we believe in the integration of architecture, furniture, and technology to create productive and enabled spaces for people to work, learn, relax, and engage. With our goal of ultimate customer satisfaction in mind, iSPACE Environments has become a leading supplier of corporate furniture, architectural products, technology, and professional services. We work hard and smart to turn customers into lifetime friends. Contact us with any inquiries or to arrange a tour of our new showroom.

INTERVIEW TRAINING 101: EMPOWERING PROJECT TEAMS FOR SUCCESS



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Connect with Us!

We're always eager to engage in discussions around professional development. If you're interested in learning more about our Interview Training & Business Development 101 programs, don't hesitate to reach out. We believe that by sharing knowledge and best practices, we can collectively elevate the standards of excellence in our industry.

At Greiner Construction, we're deeply committed to professional development and growth, which is why we're proud members of MNCREW. One area where we've seen immense value is in preparing our project teams for interviews. Collaborating closely between Marketing and BD, we've developed a robust process that ensures our teams show up as their best selves every time. In this article, we'll share insights into our approach.

Problem Solved:

Before diving into our successful strategies, it's important to acknowledge the challenges we've faced. In the past, lack of streamlined communication and preparation led to missed opportunities and less-than-optimal performances during interviews. We knew there was an opportunity for a better outcome. Our team came together and found success through process, transparency, and collaboration.

Our Process:

1. Process Efficiency Through CRM Integration:

Interview preparation begins with a well-defined process seamlessly integrated into our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. This technological backbone ensures that project information is not only centralized but also easily accessible to every team member. With real-time updates and notifications, our teams stay informed and aligned, eliminating the risk of miscommunication, or missed details. By leveraging the capabilities of our CRM, we've elevated our interview preparation process to a new level of efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Transparent Collaboration and Accountability:

Transparency builds trust, improves communication, and promotes inclusivity which is essential prior to any interview preparation strategy. Through our CRM platform, we not only centralize project information but also schedule interview preparations transparently. This visibility ensures that every team member understands their role and responsibilities,

fostering a culture of accountability. With clear timelines and action items outlined, individuals can confidently contribute their expertise, knowing that their efforts are integral to the team's success. The result is a cohesive approach to interview preparation, where everyone is empowered to perform at their best.

3. Proactive Communication and Strategic Planning:

Timely communication is the core of our interview preparation process. By initiating discussions and gathering project details early, we lay the foundation for thorough and strategic planning. From understanding the project scope and client expectations to assessing team composition and interview logistics, every aspect is meticulously considered. Collaborative meetings serve as places for brainstorming and idea exchange, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and valued. Shared notes further facilitate knowledge-sharing, enabling team members to build upon each other's insights and experiences. This proactive approach not only enhances our preparation but also instills confidence in our team as they enter the interview room.

4. Cultivating Collaboration and Knowledge-Sharing

We believe in the power of collaboration and mentorship to drive success. Our interview preparation process is not just about individual contributions but also about leveraging collective strengths. Through structured knowledge-sharing initiatives, we bridge the gap between seasoned professionals and younger team members. Experienced professionals offer guidance and insights, while emerging talent brings fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. This exchange enriches our interview preparations, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. By investing in collaboration and mentorship, we ensure that every team member has the opportunity to grow and excel, ultimately contributing to our collective success in project interviews.

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It's great when you have a clear vision of your career path. However, if you find yourself unsure of your direction, don't pressure yourself. Embrace every experience along the way.

Who or what brought you to MNCREW?

I became a member of MNCREW in 2018, attracted by the outstanding networking opportunities and the diverse array of programs they offer, which continue to draw me in.

Describe your involvement in MNCREW

Over the past several years, I have been actively involved in the Signature Event Committee, MNCORK, and am currently serving my second year as co-chair.

Education/Career Path

My academic journey began at the University of St. Thomas where I majored in Art History and French. At that time, uncertain about my future career, I spent a few years in Montana, working on a ranch and bartending near the northeast entrance of Yellowstone, which was amazing! During college, I also worked as a bartender at the Turf Club in St. Paul, which deepened my passion for live music. After returning to the Twin Cities from Montana, I pursued a second degree in Interior Design at the Art Institutes International. Since graduating in 2001, my career in interior design has been varied and fulfilling. I started at Pope right after design school, later worked for another architecture firm, and taught Interior Design courses at Dunwoody College. I returned to Pope in 2013, initially as an interior designer, before becoming the Interiors Team Manager and now serving as a Principal and one of the owners of the firm. My career path has been long and diverse, but I wouldn't change it for anything.

Hobbies/Activities

Raising my two children has occupied much of my time outside of work for the past 21 years. I'm proud to share that my daughter Elsa is graduating from the University of Minnesota this spring, and my son Daniel has just finished his freshman year at St. Thomas. I also have two wonderful teenage stepdaughters, keeping our home lively. In my free time, I enjoy gardening and renovating my 110-year-old house in St. Paul. I love my neighborhood and often take long walks with my dog or bike along the river. Additionally, I'm a fan of live music and frequently attend shows at venues like the Turf Club, First Ave, and others.

Career Advice/Favorite Mentor

It's great when you have a clear vision of your career path. However, if you find yourself unsure of your direction, don't pressure yourself. Embrace every experience along the way. If you ever feel stuck or are in a job that seems irrelevant to your goals, maintain your optimism. These experiences will shape you and guide you to your desired career. Always continue to learn and grow. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of learning from numerous mentors. Seek out mentors actively and remain receptive to guidance not only from those ahead in their careers but also from peers and those who are young in their careers. Often, the best insights come from unexpected sources.

JACKI CHRISTOPHER



Jacki Christopher

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I was excited to begin building my network of women in this industry and MNCREW ended up being the perfect place to do that.

Who or what brought you to MNCREW?

When I joined Ryan, my boss mentioned looking into MNCREW. I was excited to begin building my network of women in this industry and MNCREW ended up being the perfect place to do that.

Describe your involvement in MNCREW

I chaired the Signature Event Committee for two years before applying to the board. I'm currently in my second year on the board and serve as the liaison to the Programs committee.

Education/Career Path

I majored in Spanish with a minor in Latin American Studies—not your typical path into commercial real estate! After doing marketing and copywriting for several years, I pursued a role in development and was hired onto Ryan's Build-to-Suit Development team, where I have been for the past five years.

Hobbies/Activities

I feel like most of my hobbies have gone by the wayside with the demands of work and family, but I still love Orangetheory, hiking, and running. Reading has always been my first love so I definitely find a way to do that as much as I can.

Travel

These days it's mostly work travel, punctuated by the occasional family trip. Pre-kids I took every opportunity to get on a plane, doing study programs in Brazil, Spain, and Israel, traveling extensively through Mexico, and enjoying Europe as much as time and budget would allow. As our children get a little older, we look forward to re-engaging our global exploration as a family.

Career Advice/Favorite Mentor

I cannot stress enough the value of mentors and sponsors. I have been meeting with my career sponsor every month since 2017 and I couldn't even begin to place a value on what he has done for me. I also have a mentor with whom I meet for more specific project-related advice and another who helps me think big about my life and career. In a male-dominated industry, it's invaluable to have men in your corner pushing you on, rooting for you, and opening up opportunities.

Volunteer Experience

In addition to my work for the MNCREW board, I am on the NAIOP MN board of directors, and I co-lead the Industrial Council for CREW Network.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS & TRICKS FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE



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It is important for businesses and professionals to stay up to date on the latest, ever-changing social media practices and digital marketing trends. Understanding these best practices will ultimately help to further promote a company, attract and retain new talent, and may even lead to new business development or career opportunities.

The MNCREW Communications Committee has a few tips and tricks to help MNCREW members further enhance their social media and digital marketing efforts. Please feel free to reach out if you would like additional information:

1. Define Goals and Messaging: Don't just post to post. Make sure your goals and messaging are clear before you post. Does your message add value or offer important information to your target audience? Will it help to raise awareness of your brand? Is it engaging? Keep your goals in mind as you continue to develop your social media strategy.

2. Choose Social Media Platforms

Strategically: Just because TikTok and Snapchat are popular social media platforms doesn't mean they are the right platforms to use. Will users of the platforms ultimately benefit from the messaging, and will it help to increase your brand awareness? Understanding which platforms your target audience or customers are actively using also is key to choosing the right social media platform for your company.

3. Encourage Engagement: An easy way to increase your exposure is to encourage employees, colleagues or even friends to engage (have them like a post, share or re-post) with your posts. This allows for your post to be seen by even more viewers. This is an easy way to increase your exposure each time you post and to ensure you get a couple of likes from the start.

a. For example, did you attend a recent MNCREW event that MNCREW posted about on its LinkedIn page? You could re-share the post and add a message about your own experience/thoughts from the event to further show your support and involvement. This would help MNCREW's page be shared with ALL your followers – and our mission is to help grow the MNCREW brand awareness and community.

4. Master the Art of Hashtags: Use hashtags strategically to amplify the reach of your posts.

This is a great strategy depending on what platform you're posting to. Research trending and relevant hashtags within your niche to increase discoverability. However, avoid overloading your posts with hashtags; instead, aim for a balance of popular and niche hashtags that directly relate to your content. Determine the main topics, themes, or keywords. If you're still having trouble trying to find out the best hashtags to use, check out RiteTag.com!

5. Find a Community: Surround yourself with a supportive community of peers in your industry. Whether it is joining professional organizations or online forums, collaborating with others can open opportunities for networking, knowledge-sharing, and even cross-promotion.

6. Harness the Power of Analytics: Use analytics tools provided by social media platforms to track the performance of your content and optimize your strategy accordingly. For instance, if you're a small business owner on Facebook, analyzing metrics such as reach, engagement, and conversion rates can help you identify what types of posts resonate best with your audience and allow you to adjust your marketing tactics accordingly.



**MNCREW 2024
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Questions or comments?**

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