



2016 COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION RETREAT

Full throttle

Attendees
discuss
what lies
ahead
as year
winds
down

It was symbolic that attendees of the 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat toured the grounds of the raceway at Daytona International Speedway as part of a group networking event.

In a year defined by fast-paced projects on both the new build and renovation side, the atmosphere served as the perfect backdrop for the accelerated pace the industry experienced in 2016.

Many of the items on the attendees agenda were focused on continuing the industry's acceleration upward. Project management. Finding partners. Looking for opportunities. The lists, while varied from supplier to end user, were filled with items brands need to push the pace forward.

Representing all sides of the marketplace, some of the industry's leading executives took part in our annual Retreat, held in Daytona Beach, Fla., Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.

The three-day conference, sponsored by Commercial Construction & Renovation magazine, featured a roundtable discussion on industry trends and challenges. It also included a series of networking opportunities – from the raceway tour, to several lunch and dinner parties, and the always anticipated one-on-one meetings.

Included in the roundtable was a discussion, which featured insightful conversations on industry trends and challenges. Following is the first part of our two-part snapshot of the forum.

For more information, visit us at www.ccr-mag.com.



Blake Brosa
Sr. Vice President
EMG



Misty Cameron
Manager of
Construction Services
Firehouse of America, LLC



Kevin Campbell
Senior Project Manager
JLL



Darrel Chaney
Consultant/Recruiter
Prime Retail Services



Rick Connors
Dir of Construction
Primanti Bros



Steve DeBerardino
Director, Corporate &
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Cosentino NA



Michael Echeandia
Dir of Construction
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NY & Company

NEW YORK & COMPANY



Brad Gaskins
Principal
The McIntosh Group



Fatima Hakim
Facilities Manager
Ashley Stewart



Bret Hanks
Business Development
National Accounts
Ameritech Facility
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Tim Hill
Executive Vice President,
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The Beam Team



Dedrick Kirkem
Facilities Manager
John Varvatos

john varvatos



L.J. Mohan
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Scott Moseman
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Jacqueline Nation
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DKNY



Gina Marie Noda
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Business Development
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Kelly O'Brien
Director-National Account
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Herminio Pereira
Engineering Mgr.
Caribbean Restaurants
LLC/Burger King



Demetria Peterson
Construction Manager
Bridgestone Retail
Operations



Julia Versteegh
Vice President,
Marketing and Business
Development
Storefloors



Grace Daly
Shoptalk 360



CCR: What the biggest thing on your to-do list?

Kelly O'Brien, Illumatech Signs: When I joined Illumatech, my challenge was to heighten its profile on the national stage. Even though it had an excellent reputation in the Southeast region with its name and quality products, it wanted to take the next step. I've spent time building the infrastructure to get them there. So my to-do list is pretty extensive. It's raising our profile. It's letting other retailers and people in the industry know what we have accomplished. My to-do list involves double sales. It's a great rags to riches story.

L.J. Mohan, Polo Ralph Lauren: What's on my to-do list, I think applies to everybody not just me. The fact of the matter, simply, is I think we need to secure competitive advantages in everything we do. That means we have to be able to use state-of-the-art technologies, state-of-the-art developments and state-of-the-art innovations in our own particular spheres, wherever we come from.



So if it's in construction, we need to know what time management and budgeting is, and how we do a job where the funds list absolutely zero. If it's designed, we need to make sure we optimize that design and make sure the costs are relevant and that we bill something to the right extent. And if there is going to be repairs and maintenance and upkeep that we make sure it is a life cycle.

For each one of these things, there are several different things that each one of us can do. We can write chapters and books on what would be on our to-do lists. Of course, there's a personal to-do list in which we say, "I am this foxhole, and therefore I want make sure that I have my revenues increase, my sales increase and my customer increases, and so on. On the

other end, you might say you have reduced cost because, so you have to figure out how to do that, and so on.

I don't know how I handle that question other than say that we must do what's right in everything we do. And above all else, we have to make sure that what we are doing today is good enough for our children and grandchildren, who are going to inherit this world from us. That's the sustainability equation. It's always going to be in construction and design; so we have to do the right things in keeping up our facilities. That's very important.

To promote sustainability would be one of my personal objectives down the road. That is the one thing I would like to put on my to-do list.

Bret Hanks, Ameritech Facility Services: We've been around for more than 20 years, with a strong market share in restaurant facility capital improvements. I was hired to expand our business into new in-

dustries, with emphasis on retail. It is difficult to expand our restaurant client base when we deal with almost every large chain now. There are a few restaurant chains out there that we don't service, but we are transitioning our sales focus to the retail industry next.

The facilities improvements, lighting- retrofits, flooring, remodeling and re-imaging of large chains is the same stuff that we've got experience in dealing with in restaurants. With retail, we don't have to deal with kitchens, which is challenging work, so we find it easier and cleaner, which we like. The answer is simple; my goal is to develop the retail side of our industry. It truly is as simple as that.

Jacque Nation, DKNY: My list has changed significantly over the years. I think that currently seeing how things are moving forward and how technology's changing, and how sustainability is a big thing for everyone, we've been working very hard to try to make our environments friendlier and more efficient through changing our lighting and some of the materials we use. It's not always easy, and it's always evolving so that's something we're working on to find new answers to questions that come up.

My overall goal is to work smarter, not harder. I want to use the best resources I can find to get to the results that we're looking for. It's an evolution. It changes every week, every month and every year. It gets a little easier and a little better, and then maybe there's a roadblock, but you move forward. I guess the biggest thing on my to-do list is to be more efficient and

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— Rick Connors, Primanti Bros.

more effective. We're always looking to save many, do things faster, do things better, but sometimes the most efficient way isn't always the least expensive way. Sometimes the best way to get things done isn't always within your time constraints, so you have to be a little flexible.

We're trying to get things moving where we can be efficient and effective, and cost effective. We want to get things done the right way, the first time, so it's not something you continually have to go back and address because it wasn't right from the beginning.

Gina Noda, Rebcor Construction: My challenges are to learn the company, update their website, marketing materials and come up with a strategic business development plan. Rebcor has been in business for 25 years but the owner, John Files, just purchased the company about a year and half ago, most of the employees have been with the company like 15 to 18 years so the challenge is to bring the employees along with you as you move the company into a new direction. Change is sometimes very difficult for some people so it truly has to be a balancing act. They have had their core customers for many years and now they are looking to grow and expand.

My own personal challenge is I was on the GC side for 15 years and then moved to the architecture side for the past 5 years so it will take me some time to adjust back to the contracting side of the industry but I am very excited to get back to the GC side to work operations and business development again. As I tell everyone, these are all good challenges to have!

Rick Connors, Primanti Bros.: We started in 1933 as a sandwich shop in downtown Pittsburgh. I came aboard about a year and half ago to take this concept nationally. Now we're in five states. I oversee new design and construction creating budgets. My biggest thing on that to-do list is value engineering. We want to reduce cost so that our budgets can fit the financial model we've created. In doing that, we tried to use a lot of reclaimed material — a lot of value engineering.

I want to find new ways to build, because as we know, time is money. We are opening our 36th store in downtown Indianapolis, which is a big flagship for us. We are entering a new market in a new type of store that we're all looking very forward to.

Darrel Chaney, Prime Retail Services: Our company's to-do list is recruiting skilled trade workers. We're finding a difficult situation out there because a lot of kids aren't going to trade schools anymore. They just don't go. We started an electrical division about eight months to supplement all the things we're doing in construction work and we want to grow, especially that division. My suggestion would be for a kid to finish getting that trade school degree because the demand is out there. We're not only recruit electricians, but all kind of skill trades. But it's quite a challenge, so we've hired the recruiter.

CCR: Is the recruiter finding anything?

Prime Retail Service's Chaney: The recruiter has found four electricians in the last six months.

CCR: How many was he looking for?

Prime Retail Service's Chaney: We're looking for enough to supplement the work that we have right now; we're a little bit short there, so we're subbing.

Michael Echeandia, NY & Company: We looking at all of our budgets to see what projects will be done on time. We've been introducing new process and procedures within NY & Company. We have some new websites that we're working with, different portals. We've also introduced all in a structured time, so now we can take a step back and see what we've really learned from this. What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages? This way we can roll out effective next year.

We think from wholesale internally building better relationships internally within our organization, with our partners, such as operations and other departments, AP, finance. This way, they can actually come on board with what we're trying to achieve and work with us so we can find better ways for them as well.

We always have to make sure they're very happy with what we're giving them. That's the way we approach things. We're also working better with our external partners, even though they're still part of the team.

Blake Brosa, EMG: My "to-do" list since joining EMG from Target Corporation has been very focused: Transition my skill set from leading project teams and initiatives in Corporate America to becoming a trusted

business consultant partner for EMG's retail, banking, hospitality, c-store, and restaurant clients, to help them deliver their C-suite strategic project initiatives.

Two years ago, EMG acquired one of the nation's largest project management firms, QPM, and now offers an even broader range and depth of capabilities for real estate due diligence, asset management, and construction project management services.

Being the "new guy," I wanted to take a step back with existing customers and spend time with them to understand their perception of the "new" EMG. Even after nearly two years, it turned out that a majority of the time, they still just knew only one side of the business — due diligence, asset management, or project management.

Right now, I'm blending my understanding of the real estate due diligence side, offering those services to all of our clients, and then baking in a cross-selling initiative to say, "On the real estate due diligence side, we have a lot of people who need construction management services that we've not tapped into yet." And vice versa, people

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who had construction management services, we're helping with their upfront real estate due diligence.

The third piece is going back to say now that we have this new company, now that we're out there as EMG, what are our clients' perceptions? What do they know about us? A lot of times, they know one side of the business, so how do we go out and ask those really simple questions: "What's your perception of our skill set? And can we fill in any gaps that you might have with what we have to offer?"

Kevin Campbell, JLL: JLL provides real estate strategy, services and support to organizations around the globe. In the product and development services side we are always striving to build long lasting relationships which allow us to deliver more than just a project. We continue to challenge ourselves to look

analytics behind it and further enforce process. Over the last year, I've been collecting all types of data based on work order history, maintenance issues in all of our real estate, and then putting that data to use. I try to contact all my store managers and tell them that they have had three issues with locksmiths this year. Do they have a problem operating their gate? Do they understand the scope of work when they put a work order in?

I try to help them understand what goes into the maintenance. Our goal is to get 89 stores as 89 business owners. So with that process, and with the analytics and the data I give them, it helps them make better decisions. We're a very social company. My team likes to send pictures. We text pictures and before they put work orders in the team is always, "I tried to fix it. I tried to take it apart." They make the extra effort now that they understand what goes into repairs and maintenance in their stores.

I want to take that information and data we've been training them the last year with working on and overlay it on top of their P&L. A lot of times, we put sales goals to the stores and the girls are celebrating or the teams rather are celebrating because they've made the goal, but then I'll step in and ask them to evaluate everything.

We like to be able to empower them with that knowledge and help them make better decisions, help them get involved with the maintenance and repairs in the stores, and it helps us keep the cost down and enforce the process. A lot of our best store managers understand the process. They understand the actual impact it has on their store. So that helps us save money. It helps us manage things.

I'm also trying to take that data that I've collected and create predictive maintenance programs. There are some things that from those analytics that I have, I can see the patterns and create programs outside of your traditional PM services on HVACs. I see there are certain regions I'm seeing that need gate maintenance. There are some other maintenance issues in those areas that I can put into place now that I have all this information and I'm able to spin the data to say hey I see these trends and I can prevent some of these issues.

In addition, we're building our first new prototype store. A lot of our build out is simple and straightforward. There is a lot of due diligence. Every little thing needs two and three sign offs. Do they understand the functionality? Do they understand this? Do they see this picture? Do they understand what this means? I don't want to have to



at the technology and process in the industry to be more efficient to work with our client's vision.

JLL has followed a proven process from planning to close out that can be catered to suit the client's needs. We continue to look at acquisitions that make sense for our core business lines. Personally, I am always challenging myself to stay educated on top of trends or whatever the hot industry item might be at the time. I also pay close attention to business development and recruitment.

Fatima Hakim, Ashley Stewart: One of my biggest goals would be to create process. We are a company driven by math. Our CEO enforces math in the running of our business, so in addition to having a process, I like to collect a lot of data, put

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adjust anything. I don't want to change anything. I want this to be done. I want this to be the process going forward. Once you do it once, we're repeating it over and over again. So, that would be the goal is to have these projects with no punch lists. We're planning on rolling out future stores using the things we've learned from our Newark prototype store.

Steve DeBerardino, Cosentino

North America: For me, it starts with trying to be the best partner and problem solver to my customers I can be. It's about making sure that those customers are taking advantage of the low cost of ownership that we think we can provide with our materials and services, and the fact that we're very focused as a company on respecting the environment.

And when it comes to low cost of ownership as a company, we really focus on our product innovation. Our products are very competitively priced with great warranties. We cultivate a family of North American fabricators to support the installation and fabrication of these materials. We have a company-owned distribution, second to none, with over 40 distribution centers that can be leveraged.

I want the customer I deal with to know that I am easy to deal with. They can call me when they need something solved. I want them to know that I'm dependable — a true resource partner. I think we do a very good job of imagining and anticipating needs.

Demetria Peterson, Bridgestone Retail Operations: I've been with Bridgestone for a little over one year. One of the things that impressed me was their vision for 2020. We have quite a few initiatives heading in to 2020. Who is the 2020 customer? How are we going to target them? What can we do differently to attract customers? We're an automotive company. We sell tires. We do car repairs. How do we differentiate ourselves from the competition?

Bridgestone is evolving. For example, when we hire new technicians, they have to go through a very stringent training program. I am working with many different departments to create a suitable environment for this training that takes place all over the U.S. The environment involves a classroom and service bay so the technicians can immediately put into practice what they just learned. I am proud to be a part of this team as I know the output will be great technicians in our stores for our customers.

We're looking to be as innovative as possible. Coming from the QSR industry, it is apparent that we look at things differently. I feel it is important to listen to different perspectives. It's how you grow and become diverse in a rapidly changing world. Like everyone in the industry, we are also looking at cost increases and how we can streamline processes.

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— Darrel Chaney, Prime Retail Services

How can we build quicker, better and efficiently? We're taking approximately 150 days to build a store. So, what can we do to get this down to 120 days? Are there opportunities in the design phase? Is it in the preplanning or due diligence phase? Where can we just cut out some of the waste and the fat as we continue to work toward our 2020 vision? These are the most important items on my to do list.

Brad Gaskins, The McIntosh

Group: I have a real passion for accessibility, so I'm trying to help this industry be accessible and compliant. There are two reasons for this. First is that too many companies are going through lawsuits. We want to eliminate these. The second reason is that by increasing accessibility, you increase the opportunity to sell to a larger group of people. We have a Silver Tsunami coming at us, which is a bunch of elderly folks who are going to have disabilities of some kind that need help to get into our facilities.

It starts with educating the architects. We have to make sure they are working for all of us and all are educated. The second thing is to work with those architects, not against them. We want to help them make sure that the facilities they're working on are compliant. Beyond that, we want to work directly with the retail people to make sure they get what they need to make their facilities compliant.

If we can accomplish all of that, just a small portion of that, I think we will be successful in moving our country forward to accessibility.

Herminio Pereira, Caribbean Restaurants/Burger King:

We're going to be remodeling on the corporation side in the restaurants. There will be less of an impact to the restaurants and to the guests. We do a full renovation in 60 days, which is pretty good. We're always looking for energy efficient equipment or materials for those renovations and new restaurants.

CCR: Do you shut down your facilities during the 60-day remodels?

Caribbean's Pereira: Actually we never shut down. We close the dining room for four days to get it done. Closing earlier and opening a little bit later does the rest of the job. And on the four days that the dining room is closed, the drive-thru is still working.

Tim Hill, The Beam Team: To answer you on what's top on my to-do list, we're in the retail construction business. We have 800 people scheduled on projects this next week. However, during the time period between Thanksgiving and the new year, we might have less

than 100 scheduled each week. So the top of my to-do list is finding work for our employees at the end of the year.

Secondly, like many of you have already discussed, right now we are quite busy with retail projects. We are often having a difficult time hiring sub-contractors of quality. Many sub-contractors are stretched thin and recently some of their workers are brand new and not necessarily qualified.

Next, is our efforts to learn about, bid, get awarded, and plan for projects in advance. The key word is "advance". This year has been a year of "last minute projects". We have often bid and been awarded and started a large rollout project all within a 10 working days period.

JLL's Campbell: Because it's come up twice now, is it safe to assume that the lack of quality people is because we're in a surge and with construction on the rise, and we don't have the talent pool

shift in the dynamics. We rely on our partners and relationships built over the years.

Bridgestone Retail Operations' Peterson: One of our top priorities was to get some quality general contractors. The contractors would have a low bid but weren't able to meet the project schedule. So as I'm looking for new contractors, I'm always asking these questions. What do you think happened to the construction industry? How is your company adapting to the decline in quality subcontractors? What are you doing to build your bench of contractors across the U.S.?

Many of them felt like when most of the construction stopped so suddenly, trades and contractors just got out of the business. They just went to a totally different industry. It's understandable because they put everything into their company and then they lost everything in a matter of months.

So there's a little bit of that going on. Those guys are not coming back to give us another chance and have the bottom fall out from under them again. In a sense, they have the upper hand because there's more work than quality contractors. They can choose to charge more or pass on the job altogether. So, here we are, ready to build a lot and facing new challenges. The industry has changed and we must adapt quickly to stay competitive.

Primanti Bros.' Connors: I read an interesting article about the vocational schools shutting down plumbing and electrical in the state of Ohio. It talked about how many of the vocational schools were actually shutting down their construction trade departments because kids are not signing up for them. They all want to go into the technical field

— things like computer repairs. Nobody wants to learn the trades anymore and learn how to build things.



to pull from as we once did? Or are we just not seeing the quality of trade's as we used to for other reasons.

The Beam Team's Hill: I think it's two-fold. We are in a surge of retail projects right now. We've had some of the busiest weeks we've had in years. Second, it appears more young people are attending college and not a trade school or trade apprenticeship program. It seems that younger people have an expectation to go to college and get some kind of degree. It appears fewer people are learning the trades. So, yes, there's a shortage of trained trade workers. Plus, there is a surge in work that has been going on since spring.

JLL's Campbell: I'm seeing it as well. There is an increase in the construction business. It's just getting harder to get available GCs. A few years ago, you called a GC and they wanted to get started the next day. Now it seems like the tides have changed. They're in more of a let's pick which project we're going to work on because there are inundated with projects all the sudden. So it seems like there's a

Rebcor Construction's Noda: Same thing, I'm from Newark, N.J., and the churches and some of the older buildings have such amazing brick masonry work from years and years ago, and those type of workers just don't exist anymore. It's a dying breed and that's sad. I have a 19 and a 16 year old, and I don't see any kids their ages interested in any type of manual labor whatsoever. But they're brilliant when it comes to social media, technology, shopping online, etc. It's such a completely different generation.

Prime Retail Service's Chaney: I attended a summit of technical and trade schools for the State of Georgia in Clarksville. It's everywhere. From the comments I have heard, it's grown into a nationwide issue for educators. These deans and presidents all expressed concern about kids today? Doesn't anyone want to be a plumber or carpenter anymore? Now they're talking about shutting down these

schools. This was two years ago, so I know it has been a concern for at least that long.

JLL's Campbell: I think some of the educators are fighting for that money to get back into the system. But you can see that our industry is very niche. It takes on so many different parameters. We're talking about skilled trade and early education in vocational schools. When those budgets are slashed, they impact our lifecycle and our trades. We didn't think about that in 2008 when everything was coming down to the wire. But you can see the cycle has come full circle. It's an interesting dynamic to look at.

Rebcor Construction's Noda: Kids coming out of college today want to be project managers. That's it. They don't want to start as a superintendent. Years ago, people appreciated that. Now we have another struggle to get really good superintendents. It's a dying breed. They think they're entitled to a project manager position right away. You can't find enough people.

NY & Company's Echeandia: Going back to our racetrack tour this morning, some people might remember Al Hunter, Sr. and Al Hunter, Jr. Al Hunter Jr. once said in an interview that his dad taught him everything he knew, but he didn't teach him everything he knows. So I think it's a duty for older people in whatever industry to pass along to torch a little bit and don't be so proprietary about

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— Steve DeBeradino, Cosentino North America

information. Give somebody a hint or two along the way to help him become you 20 years from now.

Rebcor Construction's Noda: I think that is one of the reasons I love this industry so much, as everyone has been so mentoring to me. I went to nursing school out of high school, not college. The only reason I got into this industry 20 years ago was because my father owned a construction company and everybody I've talked to through all the different organizations, like the RCA (Retail Contractors' Association) or RDI (Retail Design Institute) or ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) has always shared information and guided me along my career path. It has been extremely beneficial for me. I also do the same thing. I always try to help others in anyway I possibly can. I am a firm believer you get out of things what you put into them.

Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan: One of the other things apart from all this stuff that we talk about, which is all very relevant, is what's really happened on the microscopic levels. After the Industrial Revolution kind of died in the United States, we came up with the Information Age — computer technology, information and communications (etc.). The real drive for people to go into basic trades has kind of dwindled. That has happened over the last 50 years.

It has not impacted the rate of the acceleration. It's not anywhere close to that of China and some of the developing nations like Korea, and so on and so forth. Coupled with that, the laws that we have had so far have encouraged manufacturing and all these things overseas with the results that the world best manufacturing plans, which involve all kinds of mechanical, electrical trades — whether it's electricians, plumbers, and so on and so forth — has kind of migrated.

So if you were to go to China, you would see a lot of people working in industrial places — plants, manufacturing (etc.). What is really happening here is that we have been importing all of this. It has dwindled, and places like Pittsburgh and manufacturing facilities in Illinois, etc., have actually died. Cities have died. If you were promised a job where you would get a paycheck for 40 hours of work on a particular basis for all your lifetime, you had some security.





But when you look at plumber today, he has a job and he doesn't have a job tomorrow. He has to market his job. He has to find a job for himself. He has to go ahead and, in some cases, be an independent businessman. So the question simply is in the difficulty associated with that. It has completely taken off the flavor and fragrance of going into these trade schools. So wanting to go to a community college now enamors kids. Let me become a computer expert or whatever it is. I'm going to get the same amount of whatever it is and I can live a comfortable living.

These are very subtle changes that are also happening, coupled with the fact that the population in the age brackets between 20 to 45 years old is also diminishing in the United States. So the curve is actually negative. There are a lot of issues that really are under a microscopic and must be tackled on both fronts. We need to revive manufacturing in this country. We want to make sure that people who go to trade schools are promised a good profession and a good career, so that they can be assured that they will do as well as people are now in the Information Age or Communication Age.

Gina Noda, Rebcor Construction: What they do with children in Asia is they go to school during the day and they have a trade school at night. That's a requirement.

Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan: Well no wonder. If you look at the United States today and you look at education, in Asia, they put an

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— **Julia Versteegh, Storefloors**

Educating customers is No. 1 on my to-do list. It's sitting down with our customers and personalizing the solution to fit their business and their needs. Everybody has different sustainability goals, cost savings goals, goals in reducing labor, and even goals in reducing maintenance. It's never a one-size-fits-all solution.

Dedrick Kirkem, John Varvatos: The biggest thing on my to-do list is budget analysis. I have to make sure we do a little bit of renovation at the corporate headquarters. I have to do some reconfiguration, move some people around different departments, small flooring work and lighting.

emphasis in the first 20 years of development in their training and growth. It is significantly higher than what we do here. So there needs to be a change.

When we talk about the manufacturing age, when Detroit was the capital of manufacturing and we were proud of our auto industry and what have you and I'm talking about, we're talking about maybe the 60s or the 50s. American was a dominant force. What has happened?

Gina Noda of Rebcor: We outsourced it.

Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan: It's really going significantly down because of all these issues. So it is a very, very complex problem. But the fact of the matter is that I need a plumber today I'm not going to get one. That's a sad state of affairs, isn't it?

Firehouse's Cameron: I have a very short to-do list. It is basically to continue to enforce brand standards in our building of our product. Also, while enforcing those brand standards, we also want to make it more cost effective for the franchisee. When a franchisee asks, we want to be able to provide an average cost of a build-on.

Scott Moseman, Graybar: Our sales force's goal is to educate our customers on how we can help accomplish their goals. Everyone talks about having to reduce cost, but at the same time everybody's putting more technology into their space and trying to be more code compliant. Find another industry where you're trying to put in more technology and reduce costs or constantly value engineer. That normally doesn't go hand in hand, but there are smart ways of doing it. You have to prioritize the technology that you need now and make sure that your cost savings in products or design allows for future upgrades.

Julia Versteegh, Storefloors: We hired a material strategist this year, and with them, we're able to meet with a lot more product suppliers. That has been really great. Every week we're meeting with somebody new. So we're able to stay competitive and lower prices by increasing the number of competitors we're working with.

On my personal to-do list, I want to make use of technology software databases. I want to increase industry intel, but also be more efficient. I have a few things in the works, so I'm really excited about implementing those. I am going to start with attending NACS in a couple weeks, the National Association of Convenience Stores. We want to start growing the segments within retail. Almost all of our business is retail, most of it within apparel and specialty, so

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— Tim Hill, The Beam Team

we'd like to grow other areas of retail, such as grocery stores and convenience.

Grace Daly, Shop Talk 360: I'm wrapping up two books in the "Inspiring Leadership" book series. These books are very near and dear to my heart because they capture and share life experiences of so many of our Industry colleagues. Having directed construction and facilities for national retail store chains for over 20 years, it became apparent to me — to fill a need to celebrate the people behind the roles of what we do. Publishing my books and recording ShopTalk360 podcasts have set a platform for our industry to share beyond our everyday businesses. It gives a glimpse of who we are, magnifies our similarities and our love for this industry. **CCR**

Where the locals go

Retreat opens with at a Daytona staple

When in Rome... Yes, when you're in Daytona Beach, you have to go where the locals go — it's the place to be seen. So, on the first night of the 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat, attendees did what most Daytona folks do — they go to the Ocean Deck. With its Caribbean-style atmosphere and hint of the ocean outside, it was a great way to kick things off. The welcome dinner was part of the Retreat, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.



I'll have the seafood

Chart House gives attendees taste of Daytona

When you carry around the nickname of "The world's most famous beach," you better be able to back it up with some great seafood. No worries there, as the Chart House, located at Marina Point in Daytona Beach, Fla., delivered the goods, and more. Situated beautifully on the water, attendees of 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat celebrated their first night with an array of amazing entrees. The dinner was part of the Retreat, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.



On the water

Attendees hit beachside haunt for lunch with a view

The locals know – Carribean Jack's is the place to be on the beach. A tribute to famed Daytona Beach icon John "Caribbean Jack" Gilbert, a local mariner turned noted bootlegger, the restaurant offers all of the charms and history the town has to offer. Following their up-close and personal tour of Daytona International Speedway, attendees of the 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat hung out on the deck for lunch. The gathering was part of the Retreat, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.



Meet you at the top

Historic lighthouse sets up challenge

1.25 million bricks. 176 feet high. 164 feet 6 inches above sea level. Do you think you can make the climb? Well, why our executives were immersed in their one-on-one meetings, their significant others took the The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse challenge. The lighthouse, one of the “must see” attractions in the Daytona Beach area, served as the perfect spot to get an ocean view and take in some history. The excursion was part of the 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.



Face to face

One-on-ones give attendees to get down to business

One of the most anticipated parts of the Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreats is the one-on-ones meetings – where vendors and end users take place in 10-minute meetings to discuss business opportunities and learn a little more about each other. The vaunted session was a vital part of the the Retreat, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.

