



## **CFM Strategic Communications Proposal to AGC's Workforce Recruitment RFP**

CFM Strategic Communications is responding to Associated General Contractors, request for proposals to assist AGC to develop a workforce strategy to meet the needs of its members.

CFM was founded 29 years ago and has since grown into Oregon's most respected public affairs and communications firm. We maintain offices in Portland, Salem and Washington DC, and represent a very diverse set of clients and interests. Although AGC may know us best as a lobby firm, CFM's practice includes a full slate of communications and research capabilities that allow us to mobilize our deep experience to help clients identify and solve their most complex challenges. We have particular expertise in workforce in helping companies and industries develop policies and programs to create effective linkages to our region's workforce training and education systems.

### **AGC's Opportunity to Make a Difference**

The workforce challenges faced by AGC members are shared by nearly every other business sector in Oregon and Southwest Washington – and the nation.

- There is not enough skilled labor to meet AGC member needs, now or in the foreseeable future.
- The youth education and training supply pipeline to the construction trades (and most others demanding physical labor) is insufficient to meet demand.
- Too many job seekers do not have basic soft skills necessary to suit-up and show up every day.
- Many applicants cannot perform basic calculations and lack simple workplace communication and comprehension skills.
- Too many job applicants cannot pass required drug tests.
- The systems responsible for training and education, including exposure to career opportunities in our school systems, are disjointed and difficult for business to engage and harder yet to influence.

Employers are the end customer for our workforce training systems and therefore should play a central role in ensuring the system responds to their needs. Despite this, the realities of today's workforce and employment environment have left many employers understandably frustrated and unable to influence system outcomes. The result is the perception among many business owners and organizations that we've had a decade-long conversation without a clear pathway to the kind of workforce employers need today and in the future.



AGC's commitment to create and implement a comprehensive workforce strategy is an important first step. AGC has recognized that building the kind of workforce its members want will take time and consistency of effort. The effort must be targeted, sustainable and ultimately scalable. It must understand that the systems that provide training are part of a large, complex and interconnected ecosystem, including apprenticeship programs, community colleges, K-12 education, private and nonprofit training organizations and workforce boards. AGC is large and influential enough to be a change agent, capable with focused and purposeful efforts to move from conversation to a plan that moves the needle.

### **CFM's Approach to Strategy Development**

CFM understands AGC has recently added workforce policy and program development expertise to its staff. The organization is seeking help to develop a workforce strategy and a communications plan to support it once launched. Creation of a practical, sustainable and scalable strategy, rooted in industry best practices, will be accomplished in a few months. However, implementing the strategy will take patience, commitment and resources over many years to produce the kind of results AGC members desire. This means AGC's board, staff and members must have a high level of commitment to the adopted strategy to achieve measurable success.

Below are the key steps we believe will be critical to the creation and implementation of a statewide AGC workforce plan.

- Meet with AGC workforce development staff to develop a cooperative approach to the development of an AGC workforce strategy, its benchmarks and timelines.
  - Identify clear and realistic goals
  - Define short and long-term success
  - Identify key strategies and partners and focus on populations with the highest potential for recruitment into the industry
  - Identify best practices and public/private resources that can be leveraged through greater engagement by AGC members
  - Identify how and where AGC engagement should focus its attention and resources
  - Identify and suggest approaches to surmount barriers to success
- Gain AGC board approval and commitment to the proposed strategy, its underlying assumptions and its principles.
- Conduct internal research to assess organizational capacity to sustain the proposed workforce strategy over time and the willingness of AGC members to participate in sustained activity.



- Refine the proposed workforce strategic plan for AGC, identifying goals, tactics, resources, management plan and partners that will be necessary to meet AGC workforce goals over a five-year period. This will include an ongoing research methodology designed to measure the effectiveness and guide innovations and adjustments as the proposed strategy is implemented.
- Develop a multi-year communications strategy, identifying the resources necessary to support the AGC workforce strategy.
- Assist internal workforce development staff to present the strategy, implementation plan and a five-year budget to the AGC Board.
- Assist, as needed, to present the plan to AGC members and potential partner organizations.

### **The CFM Team Qualifications**

Three CFM partners will work with AGC to develop its workforce strategy and supporting communications programs. The CFM team also will include Andrew McGough and the staff of Worksystems, Inc. (WSI). WSI will provide technical and analytical capabilities to support the development of AGC's workforce strategy.

CFM partner Norm Eder will lead the CFM team working with AGC. He joined CFM in 1999 after a long career with Oregon Graduate Institute and has worked extensively in the workforce and education arenas. Norm helped create and leads the Manufacturing 21 Coalition since its founding 14 years ago. MFG 21's strategic vision is to work quietly and effectively to strengthen and bring to scale R&D and workforce systems manufacturers need to succeed in a globalized economy. MFG 21 does not run programs; it shapes them through informed advocacy and partnership.

MFG 21 drove the development, adoption and implementation of the Portland/SW Washington workforce plan which targets regional workforce training resources to manufacturing, construction, health care, and IT. The coalition launched the Pathways to Manufacturing program and the Certified Production Technicians training certificate now offered through Portland, Mt. Hood and Clark community colleges.

MFG 21 laid the groundwork for creation of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center, now taking shape in Scappoose, and helped Worksystems, Inc. develop and launch Connect2Careers, a web-based youth recruitment and training system. Most recently, MFG 21 has brokered a new pioneering relationship between WSI and the Beaverton School District to integrate and bring to sustainable scale the combined resources of the public workforce and K-12 systems.



Gary Conkling, CFM's founding partner, is among the most respected strategic communication professionals in the Pacific Northwest. He began his career as a daily newspaper reporter and editor, worked as a staff director in Washington, DC for two Oregon Members of Congress and served as public affairs director for Tektronix when it was Oregon's largest private employer.

Conkling co-founded CFM in 1990 and has practiced as a federal and state lobbyist and public affairs professional. He represented AGC in the Oregon legislature and was involved in earlier research and communications efforts for AGC on workforce development. As a volunteer, Conkling was a co-founder of the Business Education Compact that promoted experiential educational opportunities and educator experiences in real-life work environments.

Tom Eiland manages CFM's research practice. His approach to research is to get information decision-makers need for successful marketing and communication efforts. He has helped clients in a variety of industries such as health care, transportation and energy, but his passion is education. Eiland has worked with public and private groups to help with recruiting and promoting workforce training.

Clients that have turned to CFM to conduct research to help with workforce training programs include AGC, WSI, Business Education Compact, Oregon Metals Industry, Manufacturing 21, Portland Development Commission, several labor unions and the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council. He has worked with more than 80 school districts, a dozen universities and several community colleges to help each with reputation management, communications and student recruitment. Tom is skilled at using all research techniques, phone and online surveys, focus groups and stakeholder interviews.

Andrew McGough is executive director of Worksystems, Inc., the workforce board for Multnomah and Washington counties. WSI is Oregon's largest workforce board and has deep relationships with training providers across the Portland region. Eder is a member of the WSI board of directors. McGough is well connected to the workforce boards across Oregon and SW Washington. He and other WSI staff will identify national best practices, appropriate skill-based certification programs and other necessary technical analysis, including information leading to the identification of available, under-skilled labor pools in the region. We expect WSI will become a key partner with AGC as the association's strategy is implemented.

Project	Deliverables	Price
Regional workforce training program and supporting stakeholder evaluation, including a stakeholder survey	Report on certification processes, program financial health and best practices for training programs, stakeholder survey findings.	<b>\$6,000</b>
Analyze ways to enhance and expand regional construction training programs	Recommendations for a practical, sustainable and scalable AGC workforce training strategy	<b>\$9,500</b>
Assess the most promising targets to recruit for construction trade jobs	List of top targets for recruitment; identify key partner organizations	<b>\$7,500</b>
Conduct focus groups (3) of most promising recruitment targets	Report on focus group findings, including key influencers	<b>\$22,500</b>
Evaluate current AGC communications tools, including Build-Oregon.com and AGC's website and social media, and review effective strategies and tools used by other AGC chapters	Strategic communications plan with specific recommendations on content, channels and influencers to reach target audiences	<b>\$5,000</b>
Identify ongoing research methodology to measure strategy effectiveness and guide innovations and adjustments	Recommend ongoing research methodology to track progress and inform adjustments	<b>\$1,500</b>
Work with AGC staff to develop 5-year budget to support workforce training strategy and communications and assess internal capacity to execute and sustain the strategy	Proposed 5-year AGC workforce training, recruitment and communications strategy	<b>\$7,500</b>
Interface with AGC Workforce Development Committee on training program and communications plan	Clearly established reporting and consultation procedures; presentations to AGC board	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(Eder, Conkling, Eiland and WSI)</b>	<b>\$64,500</b>