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In a relay, the combined effort of the team is what wins (or loses) the race. Each leg is run by a member who has a particular skill or ability suited to that leg. A strong, technically adept starter sets up the race, while the strongest participant is normally assigned to the final leg. In each leg, the exchange of the baton is critical; misjudge or fumble the handoff, and the whole thing comes apart. The last-place team still finishes ahead of the disqualified team (I can still hear the voice of Coach Lowe reminding us of that). So as much as a team builds strength and speed through conditioning, they must also drill on the handoffs—the critical element to a successful race.

Last month I wrote about the RCI Foundations and the work they do to advance the building enclosure consulting industry. Much of the Foundations' focus is centered on students who will one day be the core of a burgeoning IIBEC. These young people have become increasingly visible at IIBEC events and are entering the ranks of industry professionals in growing numbers.

IIBEC is making a focused effort to attract younger members and develop member benefits (online resources, an interactive website, an online flip technical journal, internet forums/discussion, etc.) that appeal to younger professionals. The Emerging Professionals (EP) Committee has also been working with local chapters, reaching out to universities, meeting with young professional networking groups, and spearheading much of the IIBEC "youth movement." The RCI Foundations are providing resources for university contacts.

Of the 382 new members who joined IIBEC so far in 2019, 104 (27%) reported their age, and the average age of those reporting was 44 years old. The most recent IIBEC member demographic survey (in 2017) found an average age of around 57.

IIBEC staff send a quarterly survey to new members under 40 to ask what motivated them to join, how they heard about IIBEC, their desired member benefits, etc. "Word of mouth" and "referred by an older colleague"—typically a longstanding member—are by far the most common responses for how younger professionals learned about IIBEC.

The EP Committee was also amused during their last teleconference by a survey response. (Q): "What strategies can IIBEC implement to attract younger members and students to our association?" (A): "The sport of golf is dead in the millennial generation. Instead of IIBEC golf tournaments, look into having activities that young people play." Boomers, better start learning ultimate Frisbee® and get in shape!

Like it or not, we all will "age out" one day (does this sound at all familiar?). The good news is that there are many sharp young people willing to take the baton from us and continue the effort to advance our industry. Our main job is to give them the strongest lead we can and to avoid bungling the handoff.

If you know of students or young professionals with interest in this industry and association, please make time to help them become acquainted and grow into a more influential role in IIBEC. They are literally the future of IIBEC.

Cheers!