



**By Chris Dawkins, PE  
President**

# How Relationships Can Enhance Your Effectiveness

## GREETINGS, IIBEC COMMUNITY!

A great friend of mine lives by the principle that in life, "relationships are everything; the rest is just details." I totally agree. Here are two brief stories from my own experience that illustrate how relationships enhance the effectiveness of our professional practices and improve our service to clients.

About 10 years ago, a client asked my firm to help them assess and develop a retrofit plan for a leaking, multistory mass-masonry building in San Francisco. We were licensed in California, but we had not practiced there in a long while, and we needed support from a local contractor for our investigation. I called Pat Downey, F-IIBEC, CCA, here in Georgia. Pat has long been an inspiring mentor to me through our local chapter, and I knew he was far more nationally connected than I was. He gave me the name and telephone number of a San Francisco IIBEC member and consultant. I made a call, and that consultant was gracious enough to connect me with an associate, who provided several contractor references. We were able to vet those contractors and quickly hired one of them. With their help, our investigation went off without a hitch, even though we were about 3,000 miles from our home base.

More recently, about a week before writing this column, I was investigating the original copper roof of a 96-year-old, historic building here in Atlanta that needs some repairs. The investigation revealed that this was not your everyday roofing project; it would need a contractor with some very special skills. Fortunately, I knew just the right contractor to help us, a past member of the IIBEC Georgia Chapter board of directors. Because we had an established relationship and I knew of his

technical acumen, I was able to identify and reach out to this contractor to help our client move forward with the specialty roofing repairs.

So what's my point here? Without these long-standing relationships that came from active participation in IIBEC, I wouldn't have had these contacts or mentors who readily helped me help my clients. I could provide many similar stories, but these two make the point. I'm sure that every engaged IIBEC member has their own stories of this kind, as IIBEC membership provides many opportunities to forge relationships that are personally fulfilling and professionally beneficial. That's why I encourage every member to get involved with IIBEC educational activities at the local, regional, and international levels. During those activities, you are provided with excellent opportunities to connect and build meaningful relationships, learn from your peers, and keep up with technology changes within our industry.

An upcoming and impactful IIBEC resource for building and growing relationships, while also continuing to learn, is the annual IIBEC International Convention and Trade Show. The 2026 convention, which will be held March 12-15 in Sacramento, California, is shaping up to be one of the best events in IIBEC's history. I hope you'll attend and bring along a new-to-IIBEC member and/or a friend or associate you want to introduce to IIBEC.

Best to all of you in your practices. I'm looking forward to trading stories and getting to know you better at the convention this March. Cheers!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Dawkins".

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