



Forum

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President's Page

In the January 2001 issue of the *Forum*, I addressed the matter of why the DRBF doesn't do more to place members on Dispute Review Boards.

I indicated that the DRBF was created to support and promote the DRB concept and its usage in the construction industry worldwide, and that they DRBF was not in a position to assist in placing its members on DRBs. I discussed our marketing efforts which are intended to expand the use of the process and thus make more opportunities for members to serve on DRBS.

The key to enhancing your chances to serve as a DRB member is **networking**. I promised to share networking ideas from some of our most active members. I canvassed our Board of Directors, who between them have served on hundreds of Dispute Review Boards, for networking advice. Here it is:

1. Get as much training as you can. You'll hone your skills and learn every time you take a training class. And you'll expand your network of people in the DRB business.
2. Sell the DRB process every chance you get. Groups are always looking for speakers. To list a few: Contractor association, Sub-contractor associations, Architect/engineer associations, Owner who are about to build a project, Public works associations, State highway departments, Universities with expansion plans, Construction lawyers who write contracts, City/state attorney, and Service clubs. If you convince these folks to specify a DRB for a project, when it comes time to choose the DRB members they will remember you.
3. Publish articles about the DRB process in professional and trade journals, including the *DRBF Forum*.
4. Talk to people you know who are already on DRBs and express your interest and ask for their advice.
5. Actively volunteer in organizations such as the DRBF where you will gain face-to-face exposure to people who are in a position to (a) get you on a DRB directly, or (b) introduce you to others who can get you on a DRB.
6. Tailor your resume to look like an ideal DRB candidate, with an emphasis first, on number of years experience in the construction industry generally, and second, years of experience in dispute resolution.
7. Constantly seek to expand your network of professional associates. Face-to-face contacts are better than telephone calls, and telephone calls are better than mail. From every new contact you make, try and get the names of one or two more.

8. Stay current on what jobs are in the pipeline in your area of expertise. Talk to the designer and/or construction manager and find out if there will be a DRB, and if so, will an RFP be issued, or will nominations be by word-of-mouth.
9. Come to the Dispute Review Board Foundation annual Conference in Las Vegas on October 6 and 7. It is **total networking**.
10. And finally, we need your help! DRBF committee work where personal marketing opportunities abound include the following:

Membership Committee: By presenting the procedures, objectives and benefits of DRBs and DRBF membership to people within your network of owners, contractors and engineers who may or may not be currently employing DRBs on their projects, identifies you as someone: Knowledgeable about DRBs on their projects, A resource for additional information and assistance to them on DRB matters; and A candidate for future DRB member selection.

Marketing Committee: Work on this committee offers opportunities to interact with potential users of DRBs and to establish acquaintances and networking among businessmen and women involved in, or likely to become involved in, the identification and selection of future DRB members.

Data Compilation Committee: Through regular periodic contacts with owners, contractors and DRB members engaged in the use of DRBs, you have the opportunity to expand your network and enhance your qualifications by learning more about existing DRBs, their effectiveness and difficulties, and the nature and success (or failure) of approaches employed by DRBs in resolving difficulties and meeting objectives.

It's hard work, but that is what it takes.

Good luck!

William B. Baker



The Dispute Resolution Board Foundation is a not-for-profit, worldwide volunteer organization of over 600 construction industry professionals interested in promoting the avoidance and resolution of construction disputes through a Dispute Board process. For more information, visit www.drb.org.