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Why I Love IIBEC's Project Excel

AS I WRITE this column, we have reached the halfway point in my year as IIBEC president. It's been a very quick six months, and we've certainly been busy as we work to improve and expand member services and promote the value of building enclosure consulting to owners and the construction industry. One of my personal highlights of this time has been being a part of IIBEC's Project Excel, the new IIBEC program that Amy Peevey, my predecessor as IIBEC president, envisioned as a way for members young and old, new and seasoned, to be matched in a mentor-mentee relationship.

I was one of the first to sign up as a Project Excel mentor, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the mentee I was paired with. He is a great IIBEC member, based in Colorado, who started his career on the contracting side and is newer to the consulting side. I'm based in Florida, so most of our conversations have been over the phone or in Zoom/Teams meetings. However, when I was on a quick business trip in Denver, we were able to meet in person for dinner.

Our conversations have been wide ranging. Among other topics, we have discussed his business, the process of applying for IIBEC credentials, and general consulting matters. We have also had a few text exchanges and calls about technical issues that my mentee faced, where I was able to impart some knowledge from my over 20 years of experience as a building enclosure consultant. I look forward to remaining in contact after our official IIBEC mentorship relationship is over.

Being on the mentor side of the mentor-mentee relationship through Project

Excel has been a great experience. Throughout my career, I have also benefited from mentors who took me under their wing as a mentee. Although we were not paired in an official mentorship program, I particularly remember and appreciate the guidance of Luther Mock, whom I met in 2002 at the RCI Convention in Galveston, Texas. At the time, I was new to the industry, whereas he was a more seasoned consultant and soon to become president of RCI. We first started talking over cocktails and developed a friendship. Each year at the annual convention, we would chat, and he would offer support, advice, and insights. I don't know if Luther ever realized that I considered him to be my mentor, but I deeply value what he did for me in my early years in the building enclosure industry.

I hope I have been as good a mentor to my mentee as Luther was to me, and I also hope that my mentee got as much out of Project Excel as I did. I feel fortunate to have been part of the first group of mentors, and I want to participate again. However, I still have about half of my career left in this industry, and I think that in this next round I will fill out an application to be a *mentee*. There is such a wealth of knowledge among our members, and I still have a lot to learn.

I encourage everyone to consider joining Project Excel. We will be looking for new applicants for mentees and mentors in the near future, so look out for the announcement soon.

Do you have thoughts about Project Excel or mentorship in general? I would love to hear them—let's chat!

Robért Hinojosa

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For Project Excel resources and a timeline of the program's first year, visit:

<https://iibec.org/iibec-project-excel-mentorship-program>