

Two Words- By Stan Southwick



cost. In all the VE processes I have been through over the years, the only goal has been to reduce costs. Inevitably the function of the project is also reduced. There has been no value gained. This should be called “Cost Cutting”, not “Value Engineering”.

Imagine a young couple shopping for an engagement ring. The young woman selects a really nice, quality diamond in a beautiful setting. The young man looks at the price and says, “We need to do a little value engineering.” He asks the jeweler to decrease the size, reduce the clarity and the cut of the diamond and to put it into a cheaper setting. Does the “value engineered” ring have more value than the original? Has the couple’s relationship gained value? This relationship is off to a bad start!

The VE process always seems to occur at the end of the project when in reality it only works if implemented at the beginning. If the young couple discusses what type of ring they want and how much money they want to spend, do a little comparison shopping, adjust the quality and budget until the two meet, then their relationship will be off to a much better start. The same is true in design. We can add more value to our lives, our jobs, every task we undertake by conscientiously engineering them from the start.

“In all our deeds, the proper value and respect for time determines success or failure.”
— Malcom X

Favorite Flora:
Acacia anuera- Mulga Tree- By Matt Durham



There are a lot of great plants from Australia that we can grow here in the Las Vegas Valley. The Mulga tree (*Acacia anuera*) is one that fills a niche as far as desert trees go. Its small size, evergreen foliage, upright form and sturdy branches make it an outlier when compared to Mesquites and Palo Verdes that we are all familiar with. In its native habitat the Mulga tree can take the form of a multitrunked shrub, a single trunked tree or anything in between. In nurseries it is typically grown as single trunked tree. It can grow 15-20 feet tall and 10-15 feet wide. Its gray green “leaves” are actually phyllodes or flattened leaf stalks. It forms small yellow flowers in the spring and if conditions are right, can bloom 3 to 4 times in a year. Mulga trees have much longer life spans than their Acacia cousins, living up to 400 years. This tough plant can grow deep taproots. A 4-inch seedling can have up to a 10-foot taproot if needed. In drought conditions Mulga’s can slow or even stop their growth. Mulga trees have very hard wood that are used to make a variety of items. The name ‘Mulga’ is derived from one aboriginal groups name for the shields they made from its wood.

Grow the Mulga tree in full sun or part shade. Its size makes it ideal for tight spaces. It is very drought tolerant and pairs well with other low water use plants such as Agaves (*Agave spp.*) Knife Acacia (*Acacia cultiformis*) and Moss Verbena (*Verbena tenuisecta*).

There are two words that I like... if used separately. Value- I want to make sure everything I do has value. Engineering- All of our built world has been engineered. But put those two words together and it makes me shudder. Value Engineering (VE), for those of you who aren’t familiar with the term, is a systematic method to improve the “value” of goods or products and services by using an examination of function. Value, as defined, is the ratio of function to cost. Value can therefore be increased by either improving the function or reducing the

Consultant of the Month

KGA ARCHITECTURE
Craig Lucas, Architect at KGA, is May’s consultant of the month. It is a pleasure to work with Craig and the organization he brings to a project. His communication skills are excellent, listening to and building upon any input we may have from start to finish. Thank you Craig and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Photo of the Month



A View Downstream
Hoover Dam, Arizona/Nevada
Cassi Dawes