

TIME TO CELEBRATE

By Mark Santos, PE

If you've watched the Super Bowl, your evening might have included a gathering with friends, excessive amounts of food, laughter, and tears during the variety of commercials, and maybe even a glance or two at the actual football game. I enjoy watching football and have for a long time. Big defensive stances, amazing Hail Mary passes, and unique play calling make for an intensely exciting viewing experience. You can see that the players and the team feel that excitement, and they show it in the form of a high-five, a rehearsed touchdown dance, or even a team hug.

The point is, they celebrate—little victories and big ones. Can it get excessive? Sure. We've all seen those moments we could do without, watching a grown man pounding his chest, pointing at the heavens, and shouting in his opponent's face. But celebration in moderation should be commended.

Celebration is the result of a job well done. It is a way of elevating our team members, recognizing quality work, and giving a well-deserved pat on the back. As a parking consultant, I believe there is something that can be learned from this type of celebration and camaraderie among team members.

Our days are filled with meetings, site visits, conference calls, lots of emails, and of course, producing deliverables, from reports to construction documents. We devote our days (probably some nights and weekends too) to producing high-quality work for our current projects and the acquisition of future projects as well. It's only natural to be reactive and deal with what's presented in front of us, and it can be challenging to see the bigger picture. But if we take a step back, we can see that together with clients, we form a team. Clients are the team members responsible for initiating the project, along with procuring our services. Without the client, there is no project. Internally, I hope that we do enough to celebrate hard work and effort. Team lunches and staff recognition go a long way for morale. But do we do enough to elevate our clients?

Celebrating Clients

During a project, didn't clients and consultants work as a team to achieve a common goal? Weren't countless hours poured into designs, drawings, presentations, and meetings? Isn't the end result something new, impressive, and exciting? The appropriate form of celebration is recognition. To ensure your client is recognized for their role, consider an award nomination as an important finale.

We have all worked with clients in the parking arena



who are well aware of the awards and accolades available to superior work within the industry. But what about those clients who don't come from parking backgrounds? It is our job to educate them about these potential awards.

When partnering with a shopping mall owner and a multi-campus college, both clients were pleasantly surprised to learn about the award programs for parking projects and initiatives when we submitted our work to the state parking association. They were extremely grateful when they received state association parking awards and have each shared the news of their accomplishments within their organizations. The shopping mall owner will feature an account of their award in their internal corporate newsletter, and the college's executive leadership provided praise and accolades to the campus' management staff. Yes, as teams, we had produced work we were proud of. We celebrated among ourselves—high-fives and chest bumps all around. However, elevating clients was in itself a personal reward.

Perhaps professional sports can teach us a little something about teamwork. In short, celebrate more—our projects, our team members, our clients. Hoist your client on your shoulders and let him feel a sense of pride in choosing your firm for their project. Award nominations are an extremely successful way to generate multiple levels of recognition for all involved. After all, I'm unaware of any penalty for excessive project and client celebrations.



MARK SANTOS, PE, is a parking practice builder with Kimley-Horn and a member of IPI's Consultants Committee. He can be reached at mark.santos@kimley-horn.com or 305.535.7705.