

2014 National Capital Business Ethics Awards
Comments of Judge Donna Eacho
Facility Engineering Associates, P.C.
Small Company Recipient

It is a pleasure for me, along with my fellow judge, Shyam Giridaradas, to recognize Facility Engineering Associates as this year's award winner in the small business category. Founded on a commitment to a culture of transparency and the highest ethical standards, FEA has made a positive impact on multiple stakeholders: clients; employees; owners; their industry; and our society.

The personal interest that FEA takes in their clients, the excellence that they demonstrate in managing client projects, and their commitment to ensure client satisfaction are not mere exhortations mounted on a poster for others to see but a 'way of life' at FEA that percolates through their ranks. So it is not surprising that over 80% of their workload comes as repeat or referral business. It was striking to note that beyond engineering and consulting services, they build the institutional skills of their clients by providing free training programs to them via Webinars. As a result, clients see them as trusted advisors.

Shyam and I were especially impressed with FEA's ability to maintain a consistent culture of excellence throughout a workforce that is very geographically dispersed. By consciously focusing on ethics and culture in monthly webinars, programs for new employees, and professional development programs, and then using surveys to monitor employee's understanding of FEA's culture and ethics, they have succeeded in maintaining an admirable consistency of mission and values.

Their commitment to the development of their human capital is outstanding for any company but truly remarkable considering their size.

FEA's commitment to diversity is also impressive. Fifty percent of their project managers are women. They are working hard to improve ethnic diversity, taking the extra step of expanding their recruitment efforts to include universities that have greater diversity.

While many small companies falter in maintaining a strong culture through successive generations, FEA has successfully transferred their values to now the third generation. How? FEA opened up ownership opportunities to employees and they have been able to engender the same level of commitment in the third generation of leaders as the original founding members had. Currently 2/3 of employees are owners. And, the owners are completely transparent in sharing the financial health of the organization with all of the employees.

FEA stands above other companies in its commitment to the development of the highest professional standards for its industry. FEA professionals have volunteered

over 1000 hours to industry associations, teaching and promoting best practices. Despite being a small company, this desire to give back to the profession has won FEA the admiration of competitors, clients and educators.

Impacting our society is another FEA commitment. The Corporate Sustainability Officer ensures that the company is taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint, and FEA helps its clients meet their sustainability goals. And finally, FEA has demonstrated a commitment to handle ethical dilemmas with transparency, integrity and fairness

Facility Engineering Associates' actions exemplify their commitment to each of their stakeholders in a manner that belies their size and, in our opinion, could proudly serve as a role model for all firms – big and small – across the United States.

Congratulations to FEA!