

Words Hold Water – Raising the Communication Bar in the Dams and Levees Industry

Thursday, May 3rd, 2018 – 8:00 am to 12 noon

Overview

Recent events, such as the Oroville incident, have brought greater public and regulatory awareness to the dams industry. This provides us a unique set of opportunities and challenges, as we share our expertise with audiences new and old. The ability to clearly communicate and adapt technical knowledge is critical to our industry's continued success.

To sharpen participants' skills, this half-day workshop will include an introductory presentation followed by round-table breakout sessions to focus skills needed to communicate to industry's four key audiences – public, dam/levee owners, construction practitioners, and fellow engineers. It will feature mock scenarios and group discussions where participants will learn tips, techniques, and best practices to strengthen their technical communication skills. Additionally, industry leaders will provide their recommendations for creating engaging presentations geared towards technical audiences.

Organized by the YP Committee, this workshop is intended for the entire USSD Community. Presenters will include YPs, industry leaders, and representatives from each of the four key audiences. The format will mimic the previous Advocacy Workshop where interactive sessions between the moderators and participants provide an opportunity for open discussion and development.

Facilitators:

- **PUBLIC** – **Sharon Powers** (USSD Executive Director) and **Johnathon Atkins** (Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality)
- **DAM/LEVEE OWNERS** - **Dan Wade** (San Francisco Public Utilities Commission) and **Rachael Brooks** (Seattle City Light)
- **CONSTRUCTION PRACTITIONERS** - **Del Shannon** (Barnard) and **Dirk DeGroot** (Global Diving)
- **FELLOW ENGINEERS** - **Amanda Sutter** (United States Army Corps of Engineers) and **Kim de Rubertis** (Consultant)

Objectives:

Participants will learn to adapt their communication style for their intended audience, implement techniques to enhance the clarity and appeal of their technical presentations, and tips for improving their public speaking skills.

Proceedings

All proceedings, as well as additional resource material, will be distributed electronically to attendees. Proceedings will include technical references, videos, and published guides related to improving communication skills for technical professionals.



Agenda

8:00 - 8:30	Introduction (Emily Schwartz and Yulia Zakrevskaya)
8:30 – 10:55	Rotating Sessions in Breakout Groups (with facilitators noted above):
8:30 - 9:00	Session 1
9:05 - 9:35	Session 2
9:35 – 9:50	Break
9:50 - 10:20	Session 3
10:25 - 10:55	Session 4
10:55 – 11:10	Break
11:10 - 11:50	Debrief (Yulia Zakrevskaya and Facilitators)
11:50 – 12:00	Closing Remarks (TBA and Kim deRubertis)