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PUBLIC WORKS

Report

Consulting engineers set sights on future development

Richard Crowe, ACEI president; Gina London, Fuzion; Rohit Talwar, Fast Future; and Dr Sarah Ingle, ACEI secretary general at the ACEI Conference 2017.

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland Conference 2017 took place in March in Chartered Accountants House, Dublin. With a theme of 'The Future Business Environment for Consulting Engineering: Directions and Development', the aim of the event was to address emerging trends in the industry and provide a clear focus on the importance of outward communication with Government and the public



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Conference delegates included staff from the Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI) member firms; colleagues from other professional associations such as Engineers Ireland, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIA) and the Construction Industry Federation (CIF); along with those working in related areas including the Construction IT Alliance (CitA). Nine speakers and three Q&A panels were facilitated by broadcaster Philip Boucher-Hayes. The opening presentation, with a sub-theme of 'Communication and Regulation', was provided by ACEI's president, and CEO of Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd, Richard Crowe, who outlined the strengths of the sector and the importance of continuing engagement with clients and communities. Steve Brown from Steve Brown Associates spoke about adjudication in the UK and how careful preparation and communication is crucial. Emmy award-winning former CNN correspondent Gina London, Fuzion, continued the communication theme, explaining the importance of this issue for

consulting engineering firms in particular, relating her talk to communication with clients, colleagues and professional partners.

The second session of the day focused on 'Innovation and Development', beginning with ACEI's secretary general, Dr Sarah Ingle, who spoke about the need for consulting engineering practices to actively address and reward innovation in their firms in order to address future sectoral challenges. Maria Gavin from Enterprise Ireland outlined the benefits of firms applying for the agency's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programme.

The last speaker was global futurist and CEO of Fast Future, Rohit Talwar, who addressed the forces shaping tomorrow and how consulting engineers could – and should – respond.

In the final segment, 'Directions in Technology', ACEI welcomed Enrico Vink, managing director of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC), who spoke about the technology and tools needed by firms to improve

their businesses. Seán Giblin from Cylon Controls outlined one such new, inspirational technology; an automated, mobile-enabled, building management system. Completing the session and the day, were two speakers from ACEI member firm, Arup, Zita Langenbach and Robert Ryan, who explained their experience of working on challenges and solutions within construction projects using building information modelling (BIM). Wrapping up the discussions, Philip Boucher-Hayes thanked corporate sponsor, Griffiths & Armour, and conference sponsor, Beale & Company, for their continuing support of ACEI and its activities. The ACEI is a voluntary, self-regulatory professional body representing the business and professional interests of firms and individuals engaged in consulting engineering. It assists in resolving important issues for both consultants and their clients. ACEI also contributes to the development of relevant public policy through its involvement in relevant working groups, Government committees and related fora.