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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT DIGEST

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Letter from the Editors

By Donald Simpson, AIA and Dave Richards, AIA

In our first edition for 2014 we are taking a look to the future and the trends in our industry that affect the way we practice architecture. Over the course of this year we will be exploring more of these and other trends in depth with webinars, conferences, and future PM Digest articles.

We begin with an article from Ray Kogan, AIA that identifies four large categories of future trends affecting the world and therefore our practices. The Firm of the Future must successfully address these big-picture trends.

Karen O. Courtney, AIA, FSMPS brings us insights from a Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) research initiative whose purpose was "to predict the future" by identifying trends and forecasting changes related to business development in the architecture, engineering and construction fields.

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As the Practice Management Knowledge Community, our mission is to advance the practice of architecture through discovering, generating, organizing, and sharing insights, resources, and tools that enable architects to practice more effectively.

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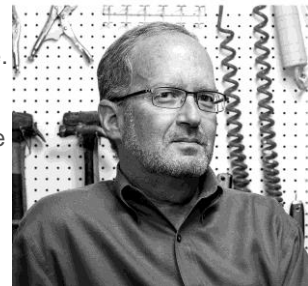
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Features

The Firm of the Future: Big-Picture Trends Shaping the Future of Architecture Firms

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Future Trends in Business Development for Architecture Firms

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Game Change: An Evolving Role for Healthcare Architects

By Charles Griffin AIA, FACHA, EDAC- Healthcare is headline news. Politics aside, the healthcare industry is undergoing radical change as healthcare providers face three major challenges: the unsupportable cost of care, the desire for quality care and the demand for accountability.

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Public-Private Partnerships – Threat or Opportunity?

By David Barkin, AIA- Public-Private Partnerships, or PPPs are being discussed with greater frequency these days. This article is meant to introduce readers to existing AIA resources that address this form of project delivery and provide paths to additional information. Over the past months the AIA's State and Local Relations Team has published several papers to help architects and local components understand Public-Private Partnerships.

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Choosing the Best Finish for Your Design Project

By Allegion - The finish on door hardware is just that—the final touch that turns a functional piece of hardware into an attractive design element. But not all finishes are the same.

While the "look" is important, it should not be the deciding factor on door hardware—particularly for commercial use.

Read more »

Best Practices

One of the PMKC's initiatives is to continuously improve the AIA's Best Practices. AIA Best Practices represent the collective wisdom of AIA members and related professionals. We like to highlight one or two new best practice articles in each issue of the Practice Management Digest. We encourage you to read this edition's pick:

Managing Crisis Communications
This Best Practice outlines steps to take in order to be prepared for, manage, and avoid a crisis.
www.aia.org/practicing/bestpractices/AIAB100972 (PDF)

Membership: The Best Practice Committee currently has openings for new members. If you have interest in serving the profession in this way, contact the Chair of the committee, Dave Richards, to express your interest and find out more about the work of the committee. Dave can be reached at

PMKC Programs at the 2014 AIA Convention in Chicago

Join us at the Convention!

Practice Management Luncheon: Excellence by Design
Friday, 6/27, 11:30 – 1:30
Keynote: Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA, founder Leers Weinzapfel Associates
How does a firm maintain a culture of creativity and excellence as it grows from a start-up to a nationally recognized mid-sized firm? Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA will share her insights and her "secrets to success" in building a firm worthy of winning the AIA Firm of the Year Award in 2007 and widely known for its design excellence.
For more information Click Here

PMKC / SPP pre-convention workshop: Profitable Project Management for Small Projects
Wednesday, 5/25, 1:00 – 5:00pm
Most firms design at least some small projects, which fall into a range of building types. This workshop will provide tools and strategies to help firms of all sizes manage small projects profitably.
For more information Click Here

Get a Free Marketing Communications Check-up
Thursday and Friday, June 26-27, 2014 | 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Fee: Free
Gain valuable feedback on the effectiveness of your firm's marketing communications. Bring your marketing plans and collateral to AIA Town Hall on the convention expo floor to take advantage of a 15-minute communications checkup with a seasoned marketing professional. This event is brought to you by the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community and the Society for Marketing Professional Services.

a/e ProNet Scholarship 2014 Now Open

The Practice Management Knowledge Community is accepting applications for the a/e ProNet David W. Lakamp Scholarship program. Two students who best demonstrate strong interest in practice management will receive a $5,000 award.

The **deadline to submit is May 16, 2014**. The results will be announced mid June 2014.

Please direct any questions or inquiries to pmkc@aia.org.

Download Application

Resources

Online Benchmark Survey: Equity in Architecture

AIA San Francisco is conducting the Equity in Architecture Survey. Please join them in this groundbreaking study that they hope will feed the discussion for equitable practice and result in positive benefits for the profession at the local, state and national level. They are hoping to first gain a better understanding of the issues that influence the recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of our profession's best resources at every level of practice. We encourage you to participate and help spread the word about the Equity in Architecture research study. Women and Men who have graduated from an accredited program are eligible to participate. For more information about the project and to take the survey, please go to http://themissing32percent.com/.

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Letter from the Editors – 2014 Spring Edition
By Donald Simpson, AIA and Dave Richards, AIA

In our first edition for 2014 we are taking a look to the future and the trends in our industry that affect the way we practice architecture. Over the course of this year we will be exploring more of these and other trends in depth with webinars, conferences, and future PM Digest articles. Join the conversation with us as we seek to find ways to practice more effectively.

• We begin with an article from Ray Kogan, AIA that identifies four large categories of future trends affecting the world and therefore our practices. The Firm of the Future must successfully address these big-picture trends.

• Karen O. Courtney, AIA, FSMPS brings us insights from a Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) research initiative whose purpose was "to predict the future" by identifying trends and forecasting changes related to business development in the architecture, engineering and construction fields.

• Charles Griffin AIA, FACHA, EDAC focuses on the future of healthcare and identifies three major challenges facing the industry and how architects can and should be a part of meeting those challenges.

• David Barkin, AIA addresses the rapid growth of projects executed as Public-Private Partnerships, or PPP's. He seeks to introduce AIA resources that address this form of project delivery and to provide paths to additional information.

Upcoming Issue

The next edition will examine BIM and the Future of CD's. If you have expertise or information in that regard to share with the AIA PMKC Community, please contact Donald Simpson at dsimpson@kpsgroup.com. The deadline will be here before you know it so send me your thoughts this week.

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The Firm of the Future: Big-Picture Trends Shaping the Future of Architecture Firms
By Ray Kogan, AIA

(The content in this article is excerpted from an AIA Practice Management webinar presented by Ray Kogan, AIA, on December 3, 2013.)

The future is upon us, and every firm and every firm leader with whom we work in our strategic planning practice feels the pressure. This article takes a step back from the day-to-day crush of business deadlines and encourages you to take a long view of your firm, of our industry, and of the world in which we will be practicing...before you know it.

You may be able to control what happens within the four walls of your office, but the outside world continually buffets your firm with forces far beyond your influence. As futurist John Naisbitt said in his seminal book, Megatrends, "Trends, like horses, are a lot easier to ride in the direction they are already going."

With that in mind, here are four broad categories of trends to consider as you anticipate and plan for the future of your firm:

- Demographics
- Projects
- People
- Transitions

Demographics

Trends tend to influence one another, akin to throwing a handful of stones into a still pond and watching the ripples overlap. Within that metaphor, demographics are the biggest rock thrown into the water.

Boom and Bust. Demographics is the study of populations and groups of people, their movements, migrations, and the impacts of their aging. Unlike many other trends, demographics are fairly predictable. We know, for example, that because of its size, the aging baby boom generation will continue to have a substantial demand for facilities and infrastructure much as they have had throughout their lifetimes. In addition, statistics clearly illustrate that there is no population "boom" nearly as large as the baby boom to follow on its heels; and this smaller population following the Boomers will also have its effect on everything from the demand for facilities to the supply of architects to design them.

Regional Growth. Populations shift geographically, as well as unevenly. In the future, fewer Americans will be living in small towns. Instead, according to www.America2050.org, ten urban megaregions are emerging, which by mid-century will contain encompass 70% of the U.S. population. Further, while the overall population of the U.S. will grow by 50% from 2000 to 2050, the southern and western regions will experience 85% of that growth, due to relocations to those areas as well as through immigration, while the population of other areas of the country will remain flat or even decline. Combined with regional growth, the largest single driver of overall U.S. population growth will be immigrants or the families of recent immigrants.

Urbanization. Within regions there is a pronounced trend toward urbanization, placing a new spin on the American dream of home ownership. Stemming in part from the trends of aging Boomers tiring of their suburban consumptive lifestyle, younger Millennials preferring to live in cities, and supported by a growing interest in smart land use, the

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traditional concept of a suburb is rapidly becoming passé. The most recent census data reveals that population growth in fringe counties has nearly stopped while urban counties have grown faster than the nation as a whole.

Projects

Projects are the fuel of design firms, and for many years projects were executed fairly predictably—at least compared to today and into the future. Until recently, design-bid-build was mainstream and dominant, and exceptions were few enough to be notable.

Project Delivery. Looking ahead, contractor-led design-build will become ever more popular as owners increasingly look for a single source of accountability. Whether in design-build or design-bid-build, contractors will continue to employ BIM more often—and be compensated for employing it—responding to clients' growing emphasis on delivering projects on schedule and on budget. By convincing owners that they can save them time and money through the use of this tool, ultimately contractors will gain control of more of the entire design and construction process. Further, integrated project delivery (IPD) and other "non-traditional" variations of project delivery, while catching on slowly today, in the future will facilitate—sometimes even force—collaboration among historically non-collaborative project team members. This will foster the further integration of design, fabrication, and construction—all enabled by BIM and other technologies, but because design-bid-build and even design-build will remain so deeply entrenched within the comfort zone of owners, design firms, and contractors, IPD and its siblings are unlikely to displace these as the dominant project delivery systems.

As project delivery continues to evolve, design firms will have to decide between two alternatives: either make themselves more valuable to their clients by broadening their palette of services beyond the traditional phases of design-construction documents-construction administration, or find themselves further marginalized by other, more entrepreneurial players in the construction industry.

Commoditization. Another dark side of the industry pressure on design firms is the trend toward commoditization of architecture. Unfortunately, too few design firms have been able to successfully illustrate the value of their services and their distinguishing characteristics. As a result, made more acute stemming from the recession, owners understandably revert to cost as a deciding factor in selecting firms, and business terms in contracts are simply a logical extension of their selection thought processes. Regrettably, while most firms continue to complain about this trend, only a few will find ways to demonstrate their value—ideally using metrics to which clients can relate—to rise above the fray. Already today, the science of evidence-based design—originally founded in patient outcomes tied to hospital design—is expanding into other project types to illustrate how design can beneficially impact the ultimate purpose of buildings.

The Technology Gap. BIM has become so mainstream that it barely deserves notice any more as a standalone force within our industry. However, looking forward to its impact on the staff composition of architecture firms, BIM will effectively drive a wedge into the "technology gap" that already exists between tech-proficient young architects and their often tech-deficient senior managers who find themselves managing people who are doing tasks that they themselves cannot do. This uncomfortable and risky scenario will persist until Boomer managers and principals retire, as the older they get, the less likely they are to become BIM-facile.

People

The People Shortage. Illustrating the cyclicality of our profession, after making painful staff cuts in order to survive the recession, architecture firms will soon once again face a skills shortage, and some firms are even now seeing the leading edge of this wave. As aging Boomers anticipate their retirements, they will leave fewer post-Boomers in their wake to fill their roles. Also, many potential employees have been flushed out of the profession by past and current recessions, and nobody will know how many high school students never gave architecture serious consideration in the first place as the profession lost its luster through the downturn. Exacerbating the situation, compensation in design firms continues to be meager compared to other professions—due in part to subpar profitability—so the profession will continue to struggle to attract the talented young people it needs to meet the changing needs of a still growing population.

Recruiting and Development. The people shortage will extend beyond just the quantity of employees and extend to the quality of their skills. In the face of growing competition for talent, it is becoming increasingly obvious that more firms should devote increased attention and resources to developing their staff. The fabric of firms' staffs is changing

too; looking ahead, architecture firms' employees will not envision their career progression as a linear career ladder, but rather as a "career lattice." By necessity, firms will become much more flexible in providing employees a variety of experiences as well as the opportunity to work "wherever." In the end, increasingly scarce high quality human capital will be the only real differentiator among competing design firms.

Transitions

Leadership Succession. In our strategic planning work, leadership succession is the most common challenge we see in firms today, and we are just at the beginning of the demographically-driven surge. Considering the overall talent shortage at the staff level, the situation will become even more acute for firm leadership. In addition to the factors already described, significant differences in generational values between Boomers, post-Boomers/Gen-Xers, and Millennials will play out as firms seek to identify their future leaders. Several studies of post-Boomer generations plus the anecdotal observations of numerous firm principals show that many of the post-Boomer generations do not aspire to firm leadership positions with the same ambition as Boomers did. Yet on an intellectual level we all know that every design firm today will need at least as many future leaders as it has current leaders, and with the world and our industry changing and becoming more complex and competitive, the future leaders will have to be smarter, more entrepreneurial, and generally better than their predecessors who may be reading this article now.

Because so many firms are currently led by Boomer principals approaching the ends of their careers in the next decade, many more firms should be making plans for leadership succession than actually are. This deficit of leadership succession planning will become a primary factor forcing many firm sales.

Ownership Transition. The challenge many firms will face in leadership succession could be exacerbated by ownership transition challenges as retiring owners find potential incoming owners unable to afford to buy them out—and/or are unwilling to take on that financial burden—especially in the numerous firms that still have kept their ownership concentrated among a small group of principals leaving the firm within a short time span.

The impact of these combined leadership succession and ownership transition challenges should not be underestimated. Much of the industry consolidation and firm acquisitions that have occurred in recent years have had their catalyst in these scenarios, and we have seen only the tip of the iceberg.

A Closing Thought

While these trends present many challenges for architecture firms, they also provide opportunities for your firm to excel. Obviously there is more happening in the outside world than this short article can describe. But like it or not, these trends—and others—are happening. Architecture firms that ignore them in their strategic planning do so at their own peril.
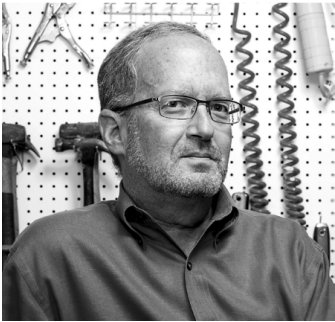
About the Author

Ray Kogan, AIA is the president of Kogan & Company, specializing in strategy and management consulting for design and construction firms. He brings more than 35 years of experience in the practice, marketing, and management of architecture, engineering, and construction services, including his work with many leading firms in the industry. Ray has also been a member of the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community Advisory Group as well as the editor of the Practice Management Digest. He can be reached at rkogan@kogancompany.com.

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Future Trends in Business Development for Architecture Firms

By Karen O. Courtney, AIA, FSMPS

Since the late 1970s, architecture firms have been allowed to obtain work by actively seeking new business. This proactive, methodical and strategic approach is commonly referred to as business development, often shortened to BD. With BD firmly entrenched in many design firms after almost 45 years, the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) Foundation, embarked on a research initiative whose purpose was "to predict the future" by identifying trends and forecasting changes related to business development in the architecture, engineering and construction fields in the coming years. These results culminated in the 2013 publication of the book, "A/E/C Business Development: The Decade Ahead" published by the Society.

Over 100 interviews were conducted with buyers and sellers of professional AEC services and segmented into categories based on their procurement behavior ranging from formal procedures to more entrepreneurial styles. Personal interviews were conducted using a baseline set of questions so that results could be compared across categories.

Several key findings of this research are worth consideration by design firms as they plan for the decade ahead and contemplate strategies for marketing and business development as well as staffing and training.

Buyer trends yielded some subtle changes in how design firms should approach clients about doing work. Relationship building continues to be the key to advancing the process, and buyers like the traditional ways of selling, including face-to-face meetings, to establish rapport and build trust. And yet, it is more difficult to get appointments to gain this access, both for public and private clients. Cold calling is strongly disliked by buyers as are generic sales presentations.

Some buyers are adopting a "don't find us, we'll find you" philosophy and are using the internet to research design firms to make their initial selections. This change suggests that design firms focus more on inbound marketing strategies and the importance of differentiation as demonstrated on a firm's website and other social media channels. Buyers also reinforced the importance of reputation and references and the preference to select those who have done similar work before.

Project delivery is another area where buyers are experimenting, albeit not taking big chances. They want firms to educate them on delivery options and help them carefully chose innovative approaches. Then to complete the work, clients are demanding best-of-class project managers who can deliver the project, often asking in contracts that firms bind the project team to the duration of the work. With project managers being critical to long term client relationship success, buyers are asking for them to improve their general business skills, as well as soft skills.

Innovation is another area that buyers of architecture services want from their service providers. This is manifested by clients' desire to hire thought leaders for specific services within markets sectors. Buyers indicate that seeing published articles and research-focused white papers, plus speaking at industry conferences, is an indicator to them of this special status. Hence, design firms need to embrace thought leadership tactics to build brand recognition and work creatively to communicate this to clients very early in the relationship stage.

Coupled with the trend of thought leadership development is the increasing importance of data-based reasoning to help guide decision making on projects. Gathering statistics, measuring the results of design decisions, and the migration of "evidence-based design" to markets other than healthcare were all seen as future trends by clients. Buyers want to

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be helped by architects in ways that offer value beyond just performing design services. This includes helping buyers find funding for projects as well as educating project stakeholders. Design firms must innovate internally to offer these value drivers and also help staff acquire the skills to be better and more creative advocates for their clients.

One of the findings of the research involves the role of the nontechnical business developer in the ongoing client relationship process. With buyers having limited time to meet, they want to talk to those who will be part of a future project team, such as principals and design or technical staff. Initial prospective client meetings need to go beyond touting a firm's capabilities and learning about an organization to focusing on a buyer's specific project and ways that a design firm can help and add value.

The dilemma is that most clients acknowledge that nontechnical business developers often have better conversational and listening skills that others in the firm lack. Design firms need to consider bringing technical staff into the client development process earlier and provide the training and time to make this successful, often with the BD professional as mentor. Conversely, BD professionals need to bring more insight into these meetings about ways that their firms can add value and solve client problems.

Architecture firms need to consider these research findings as they develop their business development and marketing strategies for the future. Compelling websites, inbound marketing tactics and differentiation will all be important components in a firm's future marketing mix. In addition, creating thought leaders, strengthening soft skills and BD training for technical staff, plus creating innovation and adding value to clients' concerns are a must to ensure a stronger tomorrow for today's design firms.

About the Author: Karen O. Courtney, AIA, FSMPS, is Director of Business Development for L'Acquis Consulting Engineers of Indianapolis. A Fellow of SMPS, she is the past national president of SMPS and was named the Society's Weld Coxe Marketing Achievement Award winner in 2013.

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Game Change: An Evolving Role for Healthcare Architects

By Charles Griffin AIA, FACHA, EDAC

Healthcare is headline news. Politics aside, the healthcare industry is undergoing radical change as healthcare providers face three major challenges: the unsupportable cost of care, the desire for quality care and the demand for accountability.

Drivers of Change

While the arrival of the Affordable Healthcare Act has accelerated the pace of reform, multiple forces are driving transformation. As Booz Allen Hamilton's Kevin Vigilante pointed out in his presentation to the Academy of Architecture for Health's 2013 Summer Leadership Summit "Health Care Reform — Harnessing the Triple Aim to Drive More Accountable Care" the list includes: the availability of healthcare professionals, the increased fragmentation of care with hyper-specialization and multiple networks and payers, the high cost of and slow progress in research, advancing technology in every aspect of care from diagnosis and treatment to information, rising consumer expectations and persistent concerns about quality. At the top of nearly everyone list is increased cost.

Healthcare spending in the United States is currently running at approximately 18 percent of GDP and growing. It's not sustainable and it's not effective. The Center for Health Design's fact sheet includes a number frankly frightening annual U.S. Healthcare stats related to quality of care issues including deaths from medical errors, hospital acquired infections and the associated costs.

One of the key ways that healthcare institutions are addressing these concerns is through greater accountability.

Prodded by current and coming changes in reimbursement where fee-for service is being replaced with models that reward improved outcomes, quality of care and wellness, healthcare professionals— administrators and clinicians — are necessarily focused on accountable care.

"Reimbursements are a big part of what's keeping healthcare professionals up at night," said Debra J. Levin EDAC, president and CEO of the Center for Health Design. "And that creates greater need for facilities that are designed to positively affect outcomes and for studies and research that provide healthcare institutions with the information and measurements that they require to meet new standards."

Meeting the Challenge

For years medical planners and healthcare architects have been designing facilities that support the delivery of quality care — from entire medical campuses to single patient rooms. Yet, in the current conversation, the focus is often on the high cost of facilities, even though design and construction are only 10 to 12 percent of the life cost of a building with the balance of the cost in ongoing operations. The opportunity for healthcare architects is to continue to create facilities that meet the changing needs of caregivers, patients and families while helping to reduce costs.

The good news is that many architects have adopted powerful digital tools including BIM to improve the design and documentation process, reduce schedules and improve constructability, which translates to savings. Another advantage of BIM for healthcare facilities to its capacity to embed detailed information, which can then be accessed by all users including the facility managers tasked with improving ongoing facilities operations.

Cost concerns are also driving the embrace of alternative delivery methods including

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design-build and Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) on the part of owners. Although cost is most often the primary driver, healthcare organizations are also looking for better integration and collaboration among team members. Silos of specialists plague nearly every profession and healthcare administrators seeking to breakdown walls in their own processes have decreasing tolerance for anything but an integrated and effective team and delivery process. There are real opportunities for architects who understand the pro and cons of the alternatives and can act as a client advocates.

The demand for improved speed, safety and efficiency, pressured by those rising operational costs, has made lean thinking and design part of healthcare's new tool kit. Derived in part from Japanese improvement models like the Toyota Production System, lean processes help practitioners identify and reduce or eliminate wasted motion, space, supplies and underutilized equipment in order to improve flow and capacity in healthcare operations. Whether it's rethinking an existing department or designing a new facility, architects with lean training can help healthcare organizations achieve significant benefits with minor architectural intervention. LeanThinking

With the requirement for greater accountability comes the need for tested methods and metrics. Here healthcare architects have been at the vanguard in their efforts to conduct and incorporate research into their designs. Speaking at first International Conference on Healthcare Leadership on October 21,2013, David H. Watkins, FAIA, chairman of WHR Architects and co-author (with D. Kirk Hamilton, FAIA) of Evidence-Based Design for Multiple Building Types reminded the audience of the architect's responsibility for the decisions they make and impact that their designs have on the people who use them. Making the case for evidence-based design he said, "It is a process for the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence from research and practice in making critical decisions, together with an informed client, about the design of each individual and unique project."

Accountable Architecture

Accountable healthcare needs accountable architects. Since its launch in 2008, The Center for Health Design's Evidence-based Design Accreditation & Certification (EDAC) has certified more than 1300 professionals — individuals on the frontlines of healthcare design.

According to CHD's Levin that's exactly where we need healthcare design professionals. "Architects are trained to integrate disparate information from a variety of sources in new way to create solutions. With the ongoing structural transformation in healthcare delivery, architects need to be prepared to sit at the decision-making table, not simply react to change."

Architects have an exceptional opportunity to play a critical, challenging role in helping healthcare institutions achieve the Vigilante's "Triple Aim" of population health, quality and cost control. It's time to step up to the table.

About the Author: Charles Griffin, AIA, FACHA, EDAC, is a Senior Principal at WHR Architects. With over 30 years of experience in healthcare design, he is the president of the Academy of Architecture for Health.

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Public-Private Partnerships – Threat or Opportunity?

By David Barkin, AIA

Public-Private Partnerships, or PPPs are being discussed with greater frequency these days. This article is meant to introduce readers to existing AIA resources that address this form of project delivery and provide paths to additional information.

Over the past months the AIA's State and Local Relations Team has published several papers to help architects and local components understand Public-Private Partnerships. The two articles referenced here are:

Public-Private Partnerships, What Architects Need to Know:
http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab099605.pdf

Six Ways to Successful Public Private Partnership Policies:
http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/document/aiab100299.pdf

The National Council for Public-Private Partnerships defines a PPP as "a contractual agreement between a public agency (federal, state or local) and a private sector entity. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public. In addition to the sharing of resources, each party shares in the risks and rewards potential in the delivery of the service and/or facility."

As of September 2013 there are five states that have passed comprehensive legislation authorizing the use of PPPs: Virginia, Texas, Maryland, Florida and North Carolina. Internationally the process has been used in varying ways for twenty years, notably in the UK, Australia and for the past 10 years in Canada. Typically PPP legislation would allow "… governmental entities to contract with private developers to design, build, finance, operate and maintain public facilities." The strongest argument in favor of this arrangement is giving a public entity access to private funding when there is insufficient public financing available. The promise of private financing coupled with a design / build model can streamline the project delivery from the client's perspective but also carries some significant concern.

Similar to the design-build methodology, PPP shifts the role of architect as sub-contractor to the developer and not owner's trusted advisor. Inherent in such a shift is the ever increasing risk of our services becoming commoditized. One marketing methodology for this approach is the promise of an expedited and simplified project delivery by not relying on publically bonded monies and a sole source for design / construction / financing and sometimes operations. While sophisticated government entities (likely larger in size) will realize the need for careful and knowledgeable oversight and create the requisite criteria documents that a PPP entity will propose services on, smaller towns and municipalities won't necessarily want to invest in those upfront costs and not understand how much control is being relegated to the Private entity.

The first article referenced above lists multiple challenges both for the profession as well as clients and they are worth understanding. The following are six challenge topics:

1. *QBS laws are inapplicable*

2. *Profit considerations on the part of the developer / operator as it relates to building access*

3. *Unlinking of the architect – owner relationship*

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4. Conflicts in priorities when the PPP contract doesn't include long term operations (think lowest first cost)

5. Unsustainable pursuit costs for architects – especially effecting smaller organizations

6. Lack of familiarity by architects of this process

The second article referenced above includes 6 key provisions to PPP agreements that should be included in model enabling legislation:

1. Require long term maintenance and operations to help insure higher quality systems

2. Development of suitability requirements before public entities can consider this methodology (for instance $60M as the minimum per project cost)

3. Requirements that the public entity has independent consultants or in house experts to act as the public watch dog

4. Comprehensive Statutory guidelines to insure consistency and fairness in the project process

5. Requirements that encourage direct communication between design professionals and end users during the RFP phase

6. Provisions to enable small businesses to compete: restrict the use of design competitions, limit the number of competitors and award a reasonable stipend to unsuccessful bidders

Whereas smaller firms may not have the horsepower or financial wherewithal to make the upfront investment in PPPs that a large firm could absorb there is opportunity to provide advisory services to the public entity. Under the worst scenario the private entity holds all the cards and is self-policing. The public entities need to recognize this inherent conflict of interest and therefore require expert oversight to protect the public interest and taxpayer monies. Architects and engineers have the knowledge and expertise to serve in this capacity as they do when they create criteria documents for design / build. Enabling legislation should require such representation.

Relevant corollaries of the PPP approach are Energy Service Contracts (ESCOs) or Performance Contracting which can also use private financing to deliver projects where payment for the project is based upon energy savings. These forms of agreements need to be carefully constructed to assure the client is getting the value that was initially represented to them.

There is a wealth of information on the AIA.org web site by simply searching on Public-Private Partnerships. As a profession the best way to prepare ourselves for inevitable change is to be educated and properly positioned.

About the Author: David Barkin is Chief Architect for the State of Connecticut Division of Construction Services and a member of the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community Advisory Group. Prior to joining State government he was a principal at a medium sized regional firm based in Connecticut.

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Choosing the best finish for your design project

The finish on door hardware is just that—the final touch that turns a functional piece of hardware into an attractive design element. But not all finishes are the same.

While the "look" is important, it should not be the deciding factor on door hardware—particularly for commercial use.

Consideration #1: Application

In commercial facilities, the application of the building is often the primary driver in finish selection.

Case in point: A hospital, for example, needs a finish that withstands daily exposure to a high volume of people—not to mention carts, gurneys, daily cleaning and more. Stainless steel or satin chrome finish options are the best on the market today for this type of application.

Stainless steel—a steel alloy mixed with chromium— does not readily corrode, rust, stain or show fingerprints. However, its shiny appearance doesn't always fit with the design look of the building. Satin stainless steel or satin chrome are often chosen as alternatives.

"Satin chrome remains our highest-selling finish for commercial facilities," explains Jim Sweney, manager of finishing/engineering services. "Its brushed appearance is more appealing for some designs. Plus it is very durable and withstands more wear-and-tear than its counterparts."

With this finish, chrome is plated over another metal to provide extra hardness and resistance to corrosion. For all these reasons, Sweney says satin chrome is often selected for schools and universities.

Older schools and historic buildings often have to consider the original or vintage design of a building when selecting a finish. "Daily traffic must still be considered, but older buildings or buildings with that look—such as museums, theaters or high-end condominiums—also need a finish that blends with the unique design," Sweney says.

Oil-rubbed bronze—which boasts a more artistic look—is often the first choice in these cases. As a living finish, it is chemically darkened or blackened for an "aged" look. It has some downsides, though. For starters, the dark bronze coating wears off with time, to expose the dull brass/bronze material beneath. The process used to create the look can also cause variation in the finish––from dark chocolate to a dark gray with copper undertones. In some facilities this is the intended look, but in other buildings it comes as a surprise to see the wear pattern where the hardware has been touched.

Because of these limitations, Sweney says the aged bronze finish is becoming the natural alternative to oil-rubbed bronze. Aged bronze maintains the vintage look of oil-rubbed bronze but, because it uses a mechanical process to remove the black at key touch points, it lasts longer and shows less wear.

He says aged bronze and satin nickel are popular in mixed-use and office buildings. "Both have a warmer look to them—without the institutional look of stainless steel or the blackening degradation of oil-rubbed bronze."

Consideration #2: Geographic region

If you design buildings in a coastal city, salt and moisture make it a real challenge to find a finish, particularly for exterior doors.

"Bright chrome is the best finish against salt and moisture—if the application can handle that look," says Sweney.

If not, he recommends oil-rubbed bronze or one of the powder coats.

Powder coating—a tougher alternative to conventional paint—is made of a thermoplastic or thermoset polymer with a hard finish that protects against corrosion.

"We've seen good performance with the flat black powder coat on Von Duprin exit devices," he says.

Sunbelt states pose another finish challenge: extreme UV rays.

"UV rays degrade clear coating finishes," says Sweney. "Almost everything but chrome or oil-rubbed bronze has trouble withstanding the rays over time."

Finishes with clear protective coating have improved recently to provide better UV protection. This invisible coating generally protects metal from damage, tarnish, corrosion and oxidation.

Consideration #3: Suite potential

In most commercial facilities, door hardware finishes are typically selected in tandem with lighting and plumbing. For the most part, Sweney says, the same finish options are available, but the lighting industry offers greater flexibility.

"There are many decorative finishes in lighting that do just not hold up in a door hardware application," he explains. "Some faux finishes or metallics used for lighting have not been adopted on the door hardware side, either because it is too cost-prohibitive or technology hasn't advanced enough that it will last on a door handle or exit device used hundreds of time a day."

Consideration #4: Durability

When it comes to selecting a finish, aesthetics are very important. However, if a finish wears off, corrodes or tarnishes after just a few years, then the aesthetics of your room will be out the door!

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"There are significant differences in performance between finishes," says Sweney. "I've seen beautiful finishes on door hardware looking pretty rough just five years after install—it's important to understand that more expense doesn't always make a finish more durable."

If you need help choosing a finish that meets your design needs and holds up over time, contact one of our architectural consultants for assistance.

605 US3	606 US4	609 US5	612 US10	613 US10B	619 US15	625 US26	626 US26D	629 US32	630 US32D	643*/716 US11
Bright Brass	*Satin Brass*	*Antique Brass*	*Satin Bronze*	*Oil Rubbed Bronze*	*Satin Nickel*	*Bright Chrome*	*Satin Chrome*	*Bright Stainless Steel*	*Satin Stainless Steel*	*Aged Bronze*

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