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Advancing the Practice of Architecture

Summer 2012 Issue

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.

Features

Letter from the Editor

By Ray Kogan, AIA

"People are our greatest asset!" How many firm leaders have glibly made that clichéd claim, to the extent that it has become Dilbert fodder? More to the point, how many firms sincerely mean it? This issue of the Practice Management Digest—which goes out quarterly to all 10,000+ members of the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community—is all about the people in your firms, who truly are your greatest asset. The following seven articles by industry experts provide valuable insights into attracting, retaining, developing, and managing your firm's employees.

- This Digest begins with the basics of human resources management in an article entitled "*Defining the Value of Human Resources*" by Barbara Irwin of HR Advisors Group. [Read...](#)
- Then, we look at HR from a smaller firm perspective with "*Employment 101 for Small Architecture Firms*" by Jane Frederick, FAIA, chair of the AIA Small Firm Round Table. [Read...](#)
- Kerry Harding of The Talent Bank then draws a fascinating parallel between the architecture profession and professional sports in "*Bridging the Talent Gap: How Good Firms Get Great People*." [Read...](#)
- Next, Sandy Blaha—who will be presenting our next webinar on June 28, describes "*How to Align Your Team with Strategic Objectives to Create a High Performance Workforce*." [Read...](#)
- Lizz Pellet of Felix Global has contributed a thought-provoking article entitled "*How to Create an Employment Brand That Attracts and Retains the Right Fit and Repels the Ones That Aren't*." [Read...](#)
- Since compensation is a key factor in human resources, Jennifer Riskus, AIA Manager of Economic Research, provides findings from the *AIA's 2011 Compensation Survey report*. [Read...](#)
- Finally, people being people, all is not always smooth sailing. Dr. Kiban Turner of Turner McNabb Consulting has provided an article with the self-explanatory title "*Resolving Partner Conflict*." [Read...](#)
- An eighth article, "*Knowing the Unknown Unknowns: Achieving Certainty in Documents*" by Micheal J. Lough, AIA, of Integral Consulting focuses on quality in construction documents and is a carry-over from our Spring issue where we accidentally provided an incorrect link to a different article. [Read...](#)

We are also introducing a new feature with this issue: simply [click here to download this entire issue](#), including all articles, as a single PDF for your ease of printing and reading later at your convenience.

Upcoming Issue

Our next issue, to be published in September, will revolve around the all important theme of marketing and business development: bringing the work into your firm. If you would like to provide an article for consideration in the next PM Digest, or know someone who would, please contact me at rkogan@kogancompany.com.

Defining the Value of Human Resources

By Barbara Irwin

Twenty-five years ago, when I began my career at an engineering/architectural firm, Human Resources professionals were paper pushers. HR was often perceived to be professionals tasked with the administrative responsibility of hiring and firing personnel using a variety of antiquated tools such as faxes, courier services, and hand delivered inter-office memos. Today, thanks to a series of advancements in corporate culture, federal and state laws, and liability protections, many firms now view HR as a strategic partner in business operations.

Understanding the value of HR is critical for the overall success of a firm regardless of size. It doesn't matter if a firm is a sole-proprietorship, has expanded to an office of five, or has grown to a staff of 50 or 500; developing a holistic view on the value that HR brings to an organization will ultimately contribute to the overall success of a firm.

Much like architects and engineers in college were up at all hours of the night in their studios and labs working on models, drafts, and meticulously honing their craft, similarly HR professionals have spent countless hours in school and participating in on-site training, developing a unique understanding that the execution of an organization's strategy ultimately lies with its people.

From Paper Pushers to People Pushers

The traditional functions of HR are still critical to an organization's success. Things such as payroll, benefits administration, communicating performance deficiencies, recruitment of new staff, meeting government regulations such as affirmative action and equal-opportunities, sexual harassment, and other issues always have been and will continue to be vital to a strong organization. To many businesses or principals, this list alone seems daunting and ever-expanding. However, successful organizations realize that outside of these traditional functions, HR truly brings value to an organization by assisting principals or executives with the development and execution of the firm's vision, strategic plans, and mission.

It is often overlooked when firms develop an organizational strategy that it is people who are ultimately tasked with the responsibility of executing that strategy. HR plays a critical role by partnering with an organization's leadership to ensure that a vision is realistic and tangible for the firm's future. HR then provides the guidance, assistance, training, and support for those employees to successfully execute the vision. HR makes organizational strategies a reality.

For example, your firm has decided to expand to a new market sector and/or geographic location, a lofty goal that if successfully achieved will reap great benefits for your firm. Outside of the obvious technical skill set, what does it take from an organizational capacity to achieve this goal? Often a firm must identify internal talent that will lead the organization into this new market sector, hire new talent to build this new market sector, identify the 'compensation-related' issues with a new market sector, identify local employment regulatory or compliance issues, etc. These functions are all critical to the success of the expansion, but center solely around people. This is where HR can play a critical strategic role in helping a firm identify the most appropriate people that will be responsible for executing the strategy of expansion.

Stewards of the Organizational Mission

Ultimately, regardless the size of your firm, allowing HR to be the stewards of your organizational mission will help you achieve your goals. Often goals and objectives start with a technical capability and a desire to grow, and HR helps achieve these goals by assuring that the right talent is hired, managed, developed, and retained. Leaders of small firms that understand the importance of dependable, talented employees, will position themselves to be successful in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Sole-proprietors and small firms too often counter, "we don't have a budget for HR," which can easily be mitigated by utilizing cost-effective HR consultants or part-time HR staff who can help begin to develop an organizational mission. For firms that are larger or are experiencing rapid growth, full-time HR professionals should be included in the board room, executive retreats, or anywhere that strategic planning occurs.

This is not to say that an owner of a small firm can't accomplish the role of HR professionals, many can and are exemplary leaders in talent management. Rather, it is progressive leaders who view these professionals, who have extensive knowledge and experience in the tactics and principles of HR, as a champion and driving force of the organization's mission. HR professionals are self-actualizers who ensure that an organization lives up to its full potential and that a firm's most valuable commodity, its people, are striving each and every day to meet the organizational mission.

Barbara Irwin is the Founder and President of HR Advisors Group, LLC., a human resources consulting firm servicing the A/E/C industry. She can be reached at bhirwin@hradvisorsgroup.com or through her website www.hradvisorsgroup.com.

Employment 101 for Small Architecture Firms

By Jane Frederick, FAIA

During this last recession, many laid off architects hung out their shingle and started their own firms. Now that the economy is recovering, these same architects want to know - How do I get all the work accomplished? Should I hire an employee?

It is no wonder that small firms consider all options before adding employees, since the Small Business Administration (SBA) reports that the impact of regulatory costs on firms with less than 20 employees is 36% more than larger firms. Three options exist for small firms to share their work load: 1. Team with other sole practitioners and consultants; 2. Hire employees and manage the regulatory requirements in-

house; and 3. Outsource human resource and payroll tasks to a Professional Employer Organization (PEO).

The approach for many sole practitioners' (24% of AIA member firms) is to look big while staying small. They assemble teams for each project which might include draftsmen, engineers, interior designers, code reviewers, and other sole practitioner architects. The critical issue in this model is to make sure that independent contractors are in fact independent and not common-law employees. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines an individual as an independent contractor if the "payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done and how it will be done." If an employee is classified as an independent contractor, the business may be held liable for employment taxes for that worker.

Independent Contractor or Common-Law Employee

With most consultants there is a clear division of work and no confusion about being an independent contractor. The slippery slope to common-law employees can start with draftsmen or intern architects. The IRS defines an employee by the evidence of the degree of control and independence which includes the following:

Behavioral Control:

- Who determines when and where to work?
- Who provides computers, desks, and computer programs for doing the work?
- Who determines how to prepare the drawings and in what sequence to do the work?
- Who trains the worker on how to do the job?

Financial Control:

- Is the worker free to seek other clients?
- Is the worker able to make a profit or loss?
- How is the worker paid? If they are paid a regular wage for a period of time, the IRS assumes the worker is an employee. Independent contractors are typically paid a fee for the job.

Relationship:

- The permanency of the relationship is the important issue here. The IRS looks to see if the worker is hired for one project or indefinitely and
- If the worker provides a key service of the business.

Hiring Employees

What are the regulatory requirements when a firm is ready to hire employees? The United States Department of Labor (DOL) has a great and user-friendly primer at www.dol.gov on complying with the law. It is an easy questionnaire that asks a few questions about the nature of your business, number of employees, if you are hiring foreigners and or disabled workers, if you plan on having a retirement plan and if you will provide health insurance. After answering the questions, the applicable laws are outlined such as The Consumer Credit Protection Act, Employee Retirement Income Security Act, Fair Labor Standards, Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

The United States Small Business Administration at www.sba.gov has the Federal Employment Law Forms, such as the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form which is required by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services.

The Internal Revenue Service requires an Employee Identification Number (EIN) which you can apply for on line www.irs.gov. The IRS web site also has information on withholding and depositing Federal Income Tax and Social Security and Medicare tax from employee wages; as well as Federal Unemployment Tax.

Finally, the firm needs to comply with state and local laws for State Income Tax withholding and State Unemployment Tax.

Professional Employer Organizations

If your head is spinning with the regulations and paperwork in hiring an employee, another option is to work with a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) where the PEO is a co-employer with the firm. The PEO hires the firms employees and becomes the employer of record for the firm. In essence, when a small firm works with a PEO it has the human resource department of a large firm; freeing up the small firm owner's time to concentrate on architecture.

The PEO is responsible for all the state and federal regulatory compliance and filings such as unemployment insurance, new hire reporting, payroll taxes, worker's compensation, and year end W-2 preparation. PEOs also offer benefit packages and administration such as insurance, retirement plans, 529 college saving plans, and COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) administration. By joining a larger employee pool, the small firm accrues savings on insurance and other benefits. PEOs also advise small firms on employment risk management issues.

Typically, PEOs charge a service fee of three to five percent of the compensation package for each employee including the principals. The best starting point to find a PEO is their trade association, The National Association of Professional Employer Organizations (NAPEO). <http://www.napeo.org/> Whichever method you use it is always helpful to get expert advice. SCORE www.score.org is a non-profit association that provides free and confidential advice to small business. There are 354 local offices across the country.

Jane Frederick, FAIA is the chair of the AIA Small Firm Round Table and has owned a small firm for 26 years. Her first job was as a common-law employee. Jane was a sole-practitioner for 3 years. Her firm, Frederick + Frederick Architects, used a Professional Employer Organization for 7 years with 9 employees. For the past 11 years she has managed human resources and payroll in-house. jane@f-farchitects.com www.f-farchitects.com

Bridging the Talent Gap: How Good Firms Get Great People

By Kerry Harding

Standing across the street from The White House recently on an unseasonably warm spring day, I asked 100 people passing by two questions: "Can you name a famous architect?" and "Can you name a famous basketball player." Of the 51 people who could answer the first question, 37 responded with "Frank Lloyd Wright," six said "Michael Graves," and three said "Frank Gehry." Of those same 100 people, 87

said, without any hesitation whatsoever, to the second question, “Michael Jordan.” I pondered a third question: Why aren’t there more superstars in design firms?

Unlike professional sports, no system exists to identify and track top design talent. For 2011, a simple Internet search revealed that UCLA’s Gerrit Cole was Major League Baseball’s top draft pick; Auburn’s Cam Newton was the National Football League’s top draft pick; and Duke’s Kyrie Irving the top pick for the National Basketball Association. Stats like these are available back to the early 1950s. Yet, who were the top ten design firm graduates in the country last year? Five years ago? Ten years ago? Where did they start their careers? Where are they now? Compiling this information would take hundreds of hours— even if privacy laws even made it possible. What does the professional sports world have that the design professions could implement to institutionalize this type of knowledge? Several things come to mind:

The Scout. Each year, 2000+ design graduates enter the profession. In their respective schools, professors deem a handful of people as “the rising stars.” Some are easily identifiable, winning student chapter awards or national student design competitions, making the Dean’s List, or winning top academic and leadership honors at graduation. No regional or national repository exists for those involved in design firm recruiting to tap into to annually review emerging young talent’s credentials. In pro sports, this is the Scout’s function who travels from city to city, watching people in action, talking with their coaches, etc. The opportunity exists to begin building a database of “ones to watch.”

The Draft. In the sports world, a formal process exists for bringing top talent together with top firms in an objective, organized way. The benefit is that everyone involved knows all the candidates at the outset to compare credentials. Yet, no such process exists to link design firms with the national design pool that emerges at graduation. True, some schools have established job bank programs to allow their own students and alumni to interact, yet most fall woefully short of the potential that exists or simply serve the immediate region.

The Rookie. Once a student makes the transformation from campus to company, their progress gets lost in the system. Unless they are a contender for programs geared toward emergency professionals such as AIA’s Young Architect Award, there are not many ways early in their career to remain visible. An organized way of tracking talent between graduation and the first ten years of practice would enable firms to identify those who have lived up to their potential – and those who have not.

The Farm Team. Successful sports franchises’ system ensures a consistent supply of talent. Young talent is identified and sent to smaller, regional entities to ensure they acquire the skills necessary to compete in the upper echelons. For some, playing at this level will be as far as they progress, while others will clearly emerge as ready for the majors. In design firms, this manifests itself in several ways—the market sector studio, the discipline team or the branch office. Providing young professionals the chance to rotate through a variety of roles and project types will reveal where the person’s true passion and best fit lies. Sports teams know that their people need to identify where they function best and then refine the specific skills to excel at those. Too often, in design firms, a person best suited to design projects gets promoted into project management or principal-level positions. Being a good center doesn’t mean someone will be a good quarterback. An ace designer may not excel at managing people either.

The Major Leagues. Within any given sport, the top performers deliver results in spite of who wins their respective national championships. This is equally true with design firms. While there are large firms whose fortunes ebb and flow like the tide, there are others who experience steady growth and

consistently maintain adequate backlog and profitability along with brand integrity. These firms are always recruiting strategic hires not just for the next year but for the next generation—that elusive but essential combination of talent and cultural fit.

The Dream Team. Through time and planning, any design firm can assemble or acquire a Dream Team for a particular market sector—where all of the positions are covered by people considered among the best in their profession such as: Gensler or HNTB and aviation; HKS and health care; Payette and academic science buildings; Shepley Bullfinch and libraries; and Populous and stadiums. Sometimes, dream teams aren't built—they're acquired, the way HDR did with CUH2A's R&D practice or Kling did with Stubbins' corporate practice. In other cases, through individually assembling a cadre of talented generalists, a firm assembles its own dream team for a specific geographic area—HLKB in Des Moines, The Estopinal Group outside Louisville, or Ikon5 in Princeton. If you want to begin building your own Dream Team, there are several key things to begin doing right now.

Offer career opportunities, not jobs. Most jobs advertised on the major job board describe skills, duties and responsibilities—not exciting career challenges. This precludes the best from even being intrigued enough to apply. Some firms have used their top marketing linguists to craft position descriptions that “sell the sizzle” of both the firm and the position. They define top performance for every job in a clear statement of success parameters. By clarifying performance expectations you'll attract top candidates and more accurately assess their competency.

Figure out who you need to hire over the six months and the next five years. They solicit input from key firm staff to figure out who they need to hire over the six next months and the next five years, always with contingencies in place for the unexpected. The hiring process needs to be forward-looking, providing time to find the best candidates available, and not lower your standards to succumb to business pressures to get someone “yesterday.”

Go after those who are looking for a better job, not those who need a job. Though the valley of the recession is almost five years behind us, the fallout filtered thousands of professionals out of the workplace. Savvy recruiters know that the best candidates aren't usually found on job boards—just the most desperate ones. You'll find the best candidates through implementing a formalized employee-referral program, followed by partnering with a connected recruiter who has a cadre of people in their database on the lookout for that right next opportunity. Use a multipronged method to upgrade your sourcing programs to target the best.

Formalize a complete recruiting process, including practical training. Research shows that for most line managers, the typical interview is only 7% more accurate than flipping a coin. If hiring managers haven't been thoroughly trained, you'll wind up with similar results. Top candidates view a new job as a strategic decision based on growth opportunities and chemistry. They need more information than just compensation, benefits and job duties to make a decision—they want an inspiring interview.

Tie compensation to value to the firm, not salary structures. In the sports world, when pro teams want to attract super-athletes, their managers don't say “Well, everybody else with X-year's experience makes Y thousand dollars a year, so, as much as we want you, that's all we can pay.” They know that unique talent merits unique compensation. Most design firm managers still approach recruiting like they're haggling with a car dealer... “How low will they go?” Recruiters across the country routinely share their frustrations that deals frequently unravel over a salary gap of \$10,000-\$15,000—especially where there's a dramatic difference in the geographic cost of living. In one case, a firm lost its top

candidate to a competitor because it refused to cover the airfare to fly him to the interview. In another, the deal breaker was simply an extra week's vacation.

In hot markets, where the number of credible expert individuals in the country can be counted on two hands, the difference between closing and blowing the deal can be the fee for just one small job. Design firms need to identify the top talent in their target or geographic markets, and then craft creative compensation programs that effectively combine salary with incentives. A prominent firm recently lost a nationally-renown market sector leader because it implemented firm-wide financial austerity measures with no raises, no bonuses and a 10% across-the-board pay cut for all principals, even though the person's studio had posted record earnings for the period in question. Why? Another firm, already in the top five but vying for the top slot, saw an opportunity and seized it. Design firm success hinges on the synergy of individual talent with market opportunities. Attracting superstars and supporting them with a strong bench in sales, technology and operations will ensure that, when it comes to winning work, your firm will always at least get to the playoffs.

A former executive with some of the nation's top architectural firms, an accomplished author and agent of design firm change, Kerry Harding serves as President and Chief Recruiting Officer of The Talent Bank, Inc. an executive recruiting and human resources consulting practice founded in 1984, specializing exclusively in design firms. He can be reached at kerry.harding@thetalentbankinc.com

How to Align Your Team with Strategic Objectives to Create a High Performance Workforce

by Sandy Blaha

Creating a high performing team is not an accident, but the result of a specific intention executed with discipline. It requires aligning your workforce with your strategic objectives — and developing your team with a focus on talent management. Sound fluffy? Consider these sobering comparison statistics of companies that focused on talent management versus those that didn't over a 10-year period:

	Talent Management Focus	No Talent Management Focus
Revenue Growth	682%	166%
Net Income Growth	756%	1%
Job Growth	282%	36%

The evidence is clear. In addition to the remarkable numbers above, firms without a talent management focus experience serious loss from mis-hires, lost training time, opportunity cost, and loss of reputation. What's been the impact on your company?

Unfortunately, proper discipline and best practices around hiring, assessment, performance, succession, leadership, learning programs, and employee engagement get short shrift at most companies, including architecture firms. According to The Human Capital Institute only 25% of all businesses and a dismal 14% of small businesses had a formal talent scorecard, that is, an official method for evaluating and reviewing employees.

However, top performing companies know how to get the people decisions right through performance and talent management. As a result they hire top talent — A Players — who produce at a rate 3-5x greater than the average performer. That's a significant advantage. What company wouldn't want employees who can produce at 3-5 times the typical worker?

Here's how top CEOs ranked the most important performance metrics for their firms. How do yours match up?

- Total Turnover – 77%
- Productivity – 76%
- Retention of Top Performers – 70%
- Best sources of talent to fill skill/expertise gaps – 68%
- Average time to hire for critical roles – 66%
- Competency/skills gap analysis – 66%
- Critical roles with no identified successors – 63%
- Employee engagement levels – 63%
- Quality of hire – 62%

You may be thinking that it's expensive to hire high performers. That's true initially. But remember, you can hire fewer people since "A's" out-produce their average peers by 3-5x, allowing you to get more done with less. It is important, however, to realize that hiring and retaining "A" talent doesn't mean you have to get rid of your "B" players. You need them. Keep your solid B-level personnel and plan to bring them up to A-level. Rather, be sure to let go of "C's" and hire only "A" and "A+" talent.

If you want a workplace that attracts A-level personnel you need a preponderance of high performers. Top talent wants to work with other top talent — and so should you. Attracting and retaining high performers is not rocket science but it does take deliberate effort, organizational skill building, agreement on the necessary time to improve, and consistency in execution.

Few architects went to school to become a talent and performance management specialist. So how do you, as an architect, start the process of creating a high performance workforce?

1. Conduct an annual strategic planning session with stakeholders. Prior to the session collect, prepare and present data, such as:
 - a. Percent of new hires that are top performers, turnover of top performers, the cost of hiring mistakes, employee satisfaction surveys, performance reviews, learning and development, satisfaction with superiors and degree of employee engagement and commitment.
 - b. Determine which senior leaders are retiring in what time frame.
 - c. Identify the probable understudies for each retiree (3-5 years in advance). Have the understudies been agreed upon, assessed and developed?
 - d. Create an executive report highlighting your findings with a Return on Talent summary that targets the areas you need to improve upon most to improve your bottom line.
2. Discuss these findings at your planning meeting.
3. Determine the degree of acceptance and agree on the five key actions with metrics and deadlines that will yield your best return on investment.

In addition, here are a few practices and tools utilized in my performance and talent management practice that will support your efforts for a high performance workforce:

- Use the Topgrading hiring and interview process to insure you hire an “A” player 90% of the time.
- Assess the leadership style and social-emotional intelligence for all high performers and personnel advancing to senior and executive levels.
- Conduct 360 reviews of all middle and senior level management.
- Formalized Leadership Mindset™ training for high potential and up and coming personnel that focuses on leadership style, emotional intelligence, communication skills, delegation and authority sharing, and how to coach direct reports.
- Performance management and coaching:
 - Develop success descriptions for each key role in your organization. Include the most important performance metrics. Be sure to list competencies for each role.
 - Coach individuals on the gaps in their performance, and be sure to have them involved in identifying their gaps.
 - Create individual development plans and coach for improved performance.
- Create a leadership transition handbook that documents and defines key roles, metrics and competencies as well as the steps in your talent management and advancement programs.
- Phased implementation of assessment, leadership development and coaching programs.

I don't recommend any company attempt to put all of these practices into place at once. Instead, take a mid-term view focusing on them over a twelve to eighteen-month period. This will virtually assure a high performance workforce and culture.

You don't have the time to get it wrong over and over again. Invest now and get it right the first time. Implementing a solid talent and performance management system is the best way to align your workforce to strategic objectives to create a high performing workforce. It's the last frontier in improving your bottom line.

Sandy Blaha is a performance management, leadership development and succession-exit planning expert. As an author, presenter, trainer, facilitator and coach, Sandy builds organizational capacity with a focus on strategy, leadership development, talent assessment and execution discipline. She works with owners and senior executives nationwide to insure their companies' legacies. Ms. Blaha is the author of *Passing the Torch: A Toolkit for Leadership Development and Transition*, *Stepping Stones: 5 Essential Steps for Transition Success*, *Exit Planning: The Leadership Succession Challenge* and *The Leadership Mindset™*. Sandy can be reached at sandy@sandyblaha.com or 303.260.6480.

To learn more, [sign up here](#) for the AIA June 28 Practice Management Webinar: *Human Resources: Creating the right workforce for your future: Attract the right people, create a great team, identify and develop your next generation of leaders.*

How to Create an Employment Brand That Attracts and Retains the Right Fit and Repels the Ones That Aren't

By Lizz Pellet

Employment Branding is a hot topic and has become just as important to human resources and marketing professionals as it is to recruitment advertising firms. The hard dollars spent on recruitment and retention are under the microscope. While the extent of organizations' people investments vary

greatly from one industry and employer to the next, experts agree that the costs of losing valued employees is considerable. That's why it is imperative to **attract** the right employees, increase efforts to **retain** employees before their employment officially begins, and to **repel** the ones that just won't fit before they even apply.

In order to be on point with Attract, Retain and Repel, HR needs to start thinking like a marketer.

Consumer marketing professionals see the **value chain** from start to finish. Think about Mobile apps (scan here) or sales fliers you receive in the mail; usually they have an event or incentive code that you need to enter in order to receive your free gift or discount. Marketing uses this tracking system to identify the exposure, acceptance of the campaign, and ROI of the marketing efforts. HR must build the same kind of metric into their recruiting efforts. The most successful marketing campaigns are those that propel the person into action – or you could say causes them to have a reaction.

Understanding organizational culture is vital to knowing who your firm is and who it is not in order to build a congruent employment brand that is consistent and believable. Once this has been achieved, you can then create powerful, targeted and purposeful retention strategies.

So what if we reframe how we look at our employment branding efforts to attract and come from the space that we are creating campaigns to **repel** the employee who just would not fit in our organization? Some might say this would be counterintuitive, but by weeding out candidates before they even apply could save organizations large sums of money. Think about it – what if the ones who you spend thousands of dollars on, targeting, interviewing, processing, onboarding, and training.....never even applied? Or if they did, it was their choice not to move forward in the interview or hiring process. In many of my presentations on cultural fit, I ask attendees to raise their hand if they want to be a "Nordie," I don't get too many takers. Then I ask who wants to work for a company known for having the best customer service on the planet and hands shoot in the air. It is interesting that just by calling their employees "Nordies", Nordstrom has repelled so many potential candidates right off the bat.

Here are a few tips on how to focus on repelling the candidates that will not fit:

- Be crystal clear about who your firm is and who it is not; this might take a quantitative cultural audit to understand. Companies like Southwest Airlines can make the bold marketing statement (in both consumer marketing and employment branding) that they are Fast, Fun, and Friendly. Anyone who has flown Southwest has noticed something different about the airline and usually would agree that they experienced at least one of the F's.
- Count on your values to speak directly to the candidate. Cultural fit is a must have in today's economy – find the right fit the first time and save hard dollars in the process. Organizations are putting their values up on the front page of their career site. A candidate must read and agree that they would live within that values system if they become an employee. Basically, agree that we have a values match or please don't apply. Here is how one organization plainly positions that agreement: "By agreeing to this document, you are stating that you have read and understand our values and are willing to live by these values. Be aware that you will be asked a series of questions about these values during the interview process. If you disagree with our Values you won't be the right fit here at EIRMC. However, thank you for your interest."
- Count on your mission to speak directly to the candidate. The mission of the organization is the bold statement of what you stand for. It should be closely aligned to your values and can be weaved into your marketing and brand. Think about faith-based organizations - the candidate is

either aligned personally or not. This is not to say faith-based organizations would try to “convert” an employee, but they do have a mission and values that employees are expected to live by. While Chick-Fil-A may not be widely known as a faith-based organization, they are closed on Sundays. The reason for the closing, as founder S. Truett Cathy has stated, “Our decision to close on Sunday was our way of honoring God and directing our attention to things more important than on business.” A simple but very clearly stated statement that allows a candidate to understand what drives the organization.

- Once you understand who your firm is from a cultural perspective, you must determine if you are going with an external recruitment advertising firm or if you have the bench strength in house to create marketing collateral. No matter who you choose, the face of the organization has to be communicated.

Hopefully these tips give you an idea of how to use the repel tactic in your marketing and recruitment efforts. Marketing is a creative process as well as a good business practice. Be aware that metrics and measurement (or charts and graphs) are what the C-suite is looking for, so as you build your marketing or creative repel messaging, build it in a way to track whether these outcomes are producing the results you expected.

Lizz Pellet, Vice President US Group for Felix Global – a talent management consultancy - and Fellow from Johns Hopkins University, is the author of *The Cultural Fit Factor, Creating an Employment Brand that Attracts, Retains and Repels the Right Employees*. Liz can be reached at lpellet@felixglobal.com or 714-602-9897.

Compensation Survey Data for Emerging Professionals

By Jennifer Riskus

According to the AIA’s [2011 Compensation Survey report](#), architect compensation at U.S. architecture firms was essentially flat from 2008 to 2011. (Data collected in the survey was reported as of January 1, 2011 and the survey report was published in August 2011.) Since the survey is only conducted every three years, we do not have specific data for the intervening years, but firms did report that during that time they enacted a variety of cost-cutting measures including: salary freezes and/or reductions, reductions in hours worked, the conversion of full-time positions to part-time or contract positions, and mandatory furloughs or other unpaid leave. The average salary for an architect was \$75,000 in 2011 (including overtime, bonuses, and other incentive compensation), an increase of \$1,600 from 2008, or an annual growth rate of just 0.7%. However, architect salaries grew by 32% overall in the decade from 2002 to 2011, which outpaces growth by all professional and related staff (an increase of 27%) and all private workers (an increase of 25%) in the U.S. economy during that same time period.

Compensation varies widely for architecture staff, depending on their experience level. While senior design/project management staff earned an average of \$94,900 in 2011, architect/design staff earned \$71,600, and interns earned an average of just \$47,300. However, interns also reported the smallest salary decline from 2008 to 2011, with average compensation falling by just 0.3% (net of inflation), compared to a decline of 1.7% for architects/designers and a decline of 3.0% for senior design/project management staff.

Interns See Less Salary Erosion in Recent Years Than Other Architecture Positions

average compensation including overtime, bonuses, and incentive compensation for staff architecture positions at U.S. architecture firms

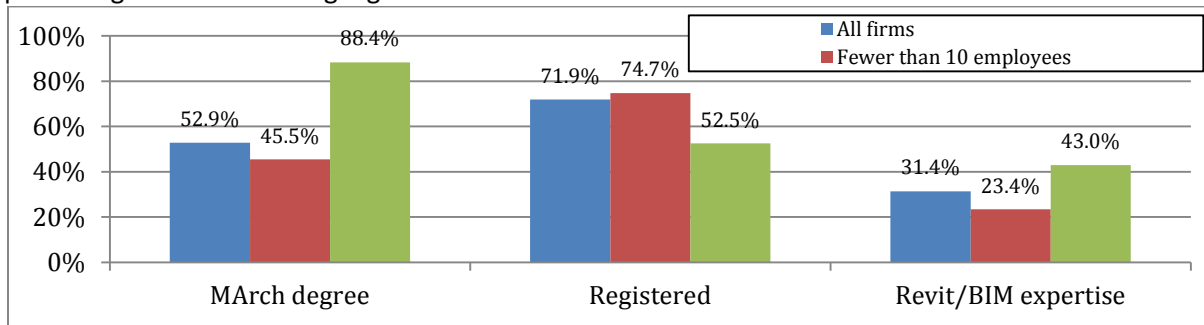
	Average Compensation			Average Annual Increase in Compensation			
	2005	2008	2011	2005-2008		2008-2011	
				total	net of inflation	total	net of inflation
Senior design/project management staff*	\$85,800	\$98,800	\$94,900	4.8%	1.6%	-1.3%	-3.0%
Architects/designers**	\$57,700	\$71,600	\$71,600	7.5%	4.2%	0.0%	-1.7%
Interns***	\$38,800	\$45,400	\$47,300	5.4%	2.2%	1.4%	-0.3%

Source: 2011 AIA Compensation Survey Report Notes: Inflation measured as annual change in the Consumer Price Index
 * Positions in this category include: director of design, director of operations, senior project designer, project designer, senior project manager, and project manager.
 ** Positions in this category include: architect 1, 2, 3 and unlicensed architecture/design staff 1, 2, and 3.
 ***Positions in this category include: Intern 1, 2, and 3.

Intern compensation also varies widely by both experience level and region of the country. Intern compensation in 2011 ranged from an average of \$39,500 for the Intern 1 position to \$51,300 for Intern 3. (Intern 3 is defined as 3-6 years of experience, Intern 2 has 2-3 years of experience, and Intern 1 has fewer than two years of experience. All are considered to be on the path to licensure.) Intern salaries were highest at firms located in the Pacific Northwest and Middle Atlantic regions of the country, and lowest at firms located in the East South Central region. However, some of these regional salary differences may be due to varying costs of living across the country.

Advanced architecture degrees, licensure, and Revit/BIM experience can also help to bump up salaries. Nearly three quarters of all firms (72%) pay higher salaries for employees who are licensed, and more than half (53%) pay a premium for workers with an MArch degree. By firm size, 88% of firms with 100 or more employees offer a bump for an MArch degree, and 31% of all firms offer a salary bump for experience with Revit/BIM, an emerging and important area of expertise.

Most Firms Offer Higher Salaries for Registration; MArch Degrees; Many for Revit/BIM Experience
 percentage of firms offering higher salaries



Source: 2011 AIA Compensation Survey Report

In April 2012, AIA Economics asked our monthly [Work-on-the-Boards survey](#) panel about anticipated salary changes for 2012, since the next Compensation Survey is not scheduled to be conducted until early 2013. Respondents projected that salaries would once again be essentially flat, with only minute changes estimated for 2012. Overall, more firms anticipated increases in salaries than expected to see salary decreases for all types of architecture positions in 2012. In particular, 48% of respondents

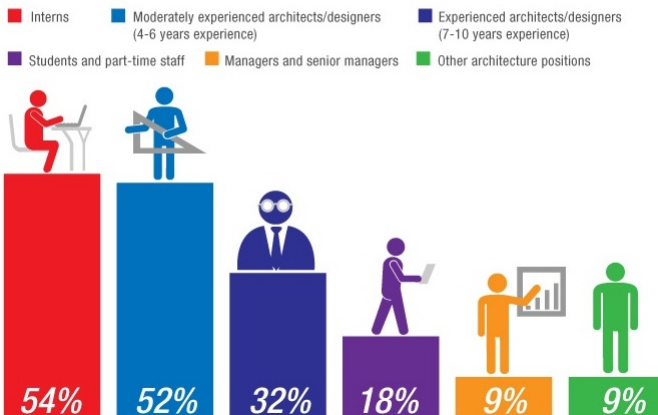
anticipated that guaranteed compensation for interns on the path to licensure would increase in 2012, compared to just 12% who expected it to decline.

Nearly four in 10 respondents (39%) indicated that they anticipate an increase in the number of architecture positions at their firm by the end of 2012, with intern positions leading the way (54% of those adding positions plan to add intern positions). 52% of firms that will add positions in 2012 plan to add moderately experienced architects/designers (those with four to six years' experience) and 32% expect an increase in experienced architects/designers with seven to 10 years' experience.

More Than Half of Architecture Firms Anticipate Adding Architecture Positions in 2012

Q: What types of architecture positions do you anticipate to increase at your firm in 2012? (select all that apply)

units: % of firms anticipating adding given position, of the 51% of firms anticipating adding any architecture position in 2012 (multiple responses permitted)



Source: AIA Work-on-the-Boards Survey, April 2012

The AIA also compiles secondary research relevant to the architecture profession in the form of the annual [Environmental Scan report](#), which includes information on trends affecting the emerging professionals sector. The report includes an excerpt of the results from a study recently released by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, which indicates that recent college graduates with bachelor's degrees in the arts, humanities, and architecture experienced significantly higher rates of joblessness than other industries and professions in the period from 2009 to 2010¹. In addition, a study conducted by Syracuse University of its architecture program alumni (from 1950 to 2011) found that nearly 30% of graduates have not completed, or even enrolled in, IDP2.

Overall, business conditions remain tough at architecture firms in the U.S. More than 66,000 positions have been shed from the architecture services industry in the last three and a half years³. Many architecture firms continue to report declining firm billings, and salaries remain relatively flat. But there is still work to be had, and still a need to hire emerging professionals to continue to grow the ranks of future architects. Firms need to continue to nurture and encourage intern architects and other emerging professionals to help prevent a "lost generation" of architects.

Footnotes:

1. Georgetown University's Center on Education and Workforce and U.S. Census, 2011
2. Syracuse Architecture Annual Alumni Salary Survey, Data Collected: Fall 2011
3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Resources:

[AIA Economics homepage](#)
[2011 AIA Compensation Survey](#)
[AIA Work-on-the-Boards Survey/Architecture Billings Index \(ABI\)](#)
[AIA Environmental Scan](#)

Jennifer Riskus is the Manager, Economic Research, for The American Institute of Architects. She can be reached at jriskus@aia.org or 202-626-7532.

Resolving Partner Conflict

By Dr. Kiban Turner

There are few things as stressful as being in conflict with a partner. This is as true in business partnerships as it is in marriage. In both cases, people are highly vested in the relationship and interact with each other all the time. To dissolve the relationship is expensive in terms of financial and emotional cost. Living in conflict with a business partner is stressful, in an everyday, can't-sleep-for-thinking-about-the-problem way. It can make going into work an exercise in misery and if things have gotten bad enough, the business of the firm can be significantly impacted.

The Usual Progression

Most of us like to get along with others, especially people we have chosen as business partners. We generally choose our partners because we have a common dream, common values and common goals. At least that's how it should work. In reality, people take on partners for all sorts of less lofty reasons – familiarity (he's been working with me for so long, surely we can make it work), guilt (she put in so much work on that last project, I should give her an equity stake), connections (his wife is on the airport authority, that should help us with the bid) and even fear (I'm afraid to launch this venture alone).

Things generally go swimmingly at first. Everyone is vested in making things work, in getting things off on a good foot. But then disconnects between partners occur. A partner may fail to meet expectations, perhaps building a huge accounts receivable balance for his client. Or someone takes a star turn, taking public credit for what was really a team effort. Sometimes a partner revels in unorthodox, even provocative behavior, claiming that as a "creative" she doesn't have to play by the same rules as everyone else.

When this happens, others may make half-hearted attempts to call the individual on their behavior, usually with indirect comments. Occasionally, specific performance feedback is given to the difficult partner, usually by the CEO or senior partner.

What happens next is predictable. The difficult partner feels offended and wrongly accused. They are part-owners in this venture, after all! They have been working hard. They just have a different way of approaching things than the others. The remaining partners seethe, as the problem behaviors continue. Factions may form on the leadership team – supporting or opposing the difficult partner. Senior leaders have less time to find and do the actual work, as they spend more and more time on interpersonal conflict issues.

The end result is often a partnership team in gridlock. Meetings may be fiery, with sharp disagreements and even shouting matches. Or the team may avoid discussing issues that involve areas of conflict – even when they are critical to the business. The stress of the situation takes a toll on everyone, especially those at the top of the organization. They are frustrated, overwhelmed and desperate for help.

When things reach this point, leaders tend to look outside for help.

The Approach

Conflict often results from the destructive power of unmet expectations. To resolve conflict, communication is needed between the partners so they understand their expectations for themselves and for each other. At the partner level, roles are often very loosely defined, and this can lead to confusion about what each partner's responsibilities entail.

To manage and even avoid conflict, it is imperative that each partner know exactly what part of the business they are responsible for, and there must be agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the other partners as well. To begin this process, each partner should define:

- Expectations I have for myself
- Expectations I believe my partners have of me
- Expectations I have for each of my partners

All partners then come together to share their responses and discuss. It is common to find that partners think they are responsible for something very different than what others are expecting from them. Discovering these disconnects leads naturally to partners discussing expectations and clarifying role responsibilities. Partners also need to make sure they are aligned on values and strategic goals for the firm, and that they are all working towards the same goals. Finally, partners should discuss processes to put in place to help resolve future conflicts before they escalate.

When to Bring in Outside Help

If the team is not already highly conflicted, it may be possible to have these conversations without outside assistance. Because of the high costs of partnership conflict, all parties may be very invested in trying to make things work. Unfortunately, if the conflict has gone on for some time, there can be significant resentment and negativity, making it difficult for the partners to manage the discussion on their own. It's best to bring in a neutral third party when any of the following is true:

- Emotions are running very high
- A partner has repeatedly refused to take input from other partners about his/her behavior
- Partners do not feel comfortable having difficult conversations with each other
- The stakes are high (i.e. the business is being significantly impacted)

Working through a longstanding conflict with a partner can be a challenging, yet worthwhile, process. In the end, you have a happier, more productive partnership team.

Dr. Kiban Turner is an Executive Coach and Organizational Consultant, working with professional service firms in the fields of Architecture, Law, and Financial Services. She combines expertise in behavioral

factors with business knowledge to help people make important changes, develop as effective leaders, resolve conflict, and create positive, high performance workplaces. Formats for her consulting include one-on-one executive coaching, working with senior leadership groups, conflict resolution, and one- or two-day leadership training programs. You can learn more about her work at www.tmcoaching.com. Dr. Turner can be contacted at ktm@tmcoaching.com.

Knowing the Unknown Unknowns: Achieving Certainty in Documents

By Micheal J. Lough, AIA

The single action that architects can take to improve the “certainty” which they expect of their Construction Documents is to increase the frequency, quality, and extent of reviews of the documents. Too often, documents at all design phases and the Construction Documents phase are issued without sufficient review. Insufficiently reviewed documents are a firm’s “Unknown Unknowns:” important details that firms don’t know that they don’t know, which can bite them later in the project.

Architects would be well served to develop a structured review program with checklists to address document audits. This process encompasses the following items:

First-Party Audits

The architectural design team has the primary responsibility to review the documents; these are first-party audits.

The project team leader should conduct team meetings weekly with the architectural team to review progress. Each member of the team should have clearly defined responsibilities and specific goals, which are tracked at least on a weekly basis. The project team leader, the Project Manager and/or Project Architect, should touch base frequently, even daily, with the individual team members and make themselves available to address all questions or issues raised. The architect’s review is a review of all the documents: consultant documents; outline specifications; code analysis; and other supporting and reference materials such as geotechnical engineering and acoustical consultant reports.

Larger project teams may designate an experienced team member as a document coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating the various drawings prepared by the architect as well as coordinating the architect’s drawings with consultant drawings, consultant drawings with other consultant drawings, and drawings with the specifications.

Management Responsibilities

Firm management needs to be responsible for document audits, ensuring they are conducted by the project team. To conquer the Unknown Unknowns, they should encourage second- or third-party Peer Reviews as part of the quality management process.

A sole-proprietor or a firm with a single principal does not have the option of management-conducted second-party audits (a second set of eyes) so a third-party audit with a consultant should be considered. In small and medium sized firms, second-party audits may be performed by a principal not directly

responsible for the project. The effectiveness of a second-party audit occurs when the reviewing principal is not directly involved in the project.

Peer Review Program

Establishing Peer Reviews as a component of a firm's quality management process with second- or third-party audits is the surest way to slay the Unknown Unknowns and improve the certainty of the Construction Documents.

Second-party audits have the best chance to work in larger firms where senior staff can have a specific role as a second-party auditor. This staff/second-party auditor can wear other hats such as technical resources, internal code resource, or specification writer. However, if this staff person is an active participant of the project team (the specifications writer, for instance,) he or she cannot function as the second-party auditor. It is rare that a Project Manager with a heavy work load can serve as the second-party auditor for a different project; their focus remains on their projects and attempting to focus on someone else's project is a distraction. Discovering Unknown Unknowns is a serious detail-oriented undertaking that requires 100% focus. A better solution is to use a consultant with a strong technical background, experience in managing projects, and good design sensibilities.

Identifying the Unknown Unknowns and assuring certainty in the documents requires ongoing peer reviews through the project. A single Peer Review conducted towards the completion of the Construction Documents may uncover issues too late to handle them with finesse and within the budget. Except for very small projects, at least three Peer Reviews should be conducted, one at Schematic Design, one at Design Development, and one at 75% or 90% Construction Documents. The function of a Peer Review program is more than just catching errors and omissions prior to the issuance of Construction Documents. The Peer Review plays an important role in correcting documents as early in the process as possible, which is more efficient for the project team.

While it is challenging to fit Peer Reviews into demanding project schedules, the best approach is to integrate Peer Reviews into the project schedule, rather than extending the project schedule.

Peer Review Criteria (Uncovering the Unknown Unknowns)

- **Compliance.** Compliance includes requirements such as regulatory requirements (zoning and code) as well as programmatic and performance requirements. The new trend in quality management of architectural projects is commissioning (or enhanced commissioning) where the owner engages the Peer Review consultant to ensure that their project requirements are met and comply with the Basis of Design documents.
- **Completeness.** The most important area in which to achieve certainty is in the thoroughness of the architectural drawings, consultant drawings, specifications, and other requirements appropriate to the phase. This is the heart of unknown territory and the most likely place to uncover accidental errors.
- **Coordination.** Another key area of certainty is in the coordination of the architectural drawings with the structural and MEP/FP drawings, the consultant drawings, and the specifications.
- **Technical detailing.** The technical detailing of the exterior building envelope is especially critical and more often than not documents do not sufficiently address the issues of water penetration, air and vapor infiltration, thermal performance criteria, fire-resistive requirements, constructability, structural factors, and other design intent and performance criteria. Thorough

technical detailing review of the exterior building envelope as well as other detailing throughout the project will uncover Unknown Unknowns critical to the success of the project.

Micheal J. Lough, AIA, is the founding principal of Integral Consulting, a firm providing technical assistance, exterior envelope consulting, and Peer Review consulting services for architects, owners, development managers, and contractors. Contact: mlough@integral-consulting.net.

Recent Activities

2012 AIA National Convention, Washington, DC, May 16-19, 2012

Practice Management Lunch: *The Future of Practice* by Phillip Bernstein, FAIA, RIBA, LEED AP
In a sold-out room for the annual Practice Management Lunch, Phil Bernstein, Vice President for AEC Industry Strategy and Relations for Autodesk and co-author of the book *Building (in) the Future: Recasting Labor in Architecture* examined the challenges and opportunities facing the profession of architecture relative to our value proposition as we enter the second decade of the 21st century. In response to many audience requests, Phil agreed to share his presentation online. [View Phil's presentation on Prezi](#).

Quite a number of AIA members at the Convention also took advantage of the **2012 Marketing Media Exchange**, a joint venture of the AIA PMKC and the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS www.smeps.org) and received free constructive critiques of their firms' printed and online marketing materials.

Be on the lookout for the annual Practice Management Lunch and another Marketing Media Exchange as well as other practice management programs when you register for the 2013 Convention in Denver on June 20-22, 2013.

Upcoming Event

2012 Fall Conference

Your Practice Management Knowledge Community is joining forces with the AIA South Atlantic Region for our annual Fall Conference on September 19-21 in Atlanta. The entire day of Wednesday, September 19 will be devoted to practice management sessions, so save the date!

re:inventing practice

One-Day Pre-Conference Workshop by the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community

September 19, 2012

re:inventing architecture South Atlantic Region Conference, September 20- 22, 2012

Lowes Atlanta Hotel
Atlanta, GA

The AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community (PMKC) is partnering with AIA South Atlantic Region (SAR) Conference for a special one-day pre-conference workshop. In support of the SAR conference theme of ***re:inventing architecture***, the PMKC workshop will provide an opportunity to explore how architects are transforming how they practice to respond to changes in technology and the global economy.

re:inventing practice is an innovative one-day conference – combining seminars by experts, case studies presentations by practitioners, and interactive opportunities for knowledge sharing among all participants. The day will begin keynote speaker, James Cramer, Hon. AIA, on the future of practice and will be designed to maximize learning and knowledge exchange throughout the day regarding emerging ways to practice in the “new normal.”

re:inventing practice will provide the latest information on options for new ways of collaborating and organizing to acquire and deliver projects. Morning seminars include a presentation of research findings on emerging practice options and an exploration of new technologies that often enable these opportunities.

One-Day Workshop Schedule

7:30am Registration/Continental Breakfast

8:30am **Session I:** PMKC Intro / Keynote Address

- Introduction of the day’s schedule and keynote speaker
- Emerging Trends in Practice – *James Cramer, Hon. AIA (1CEU)*

10:00am **Session II:** Overview and Tools for Emerging Practice Models (2 CEU)

- Emerging Practices Overview – *Linda Reeder, AIA & Rena Klein, FAIA*
- Emerging Collaborative Technology – *Calvin Kam, AIA*

12:00pm Box Lunch

1:00pm **Session III:** Case Studies in Emerging Practice Models (3.0 CEU)

- Case Study 1: Partnering to Deliver Excellence
Gustavo Berenblum AIA, Berenblum Busch Architecture, Miami, FL
- Case Study 2: Making Collaboration a Reality Using Virtual Tools
Aaron Greven AIA, AG Design Works, Chicago, IL
- Case Study 3: The Architect as Construction Manager
James MacManus FAIA, S/L/A/M Collaborative, Glastonbury, CT
- Case Study 4: A Franchise Model for Architects
Karen Pitsley AIA, Transforming Architecture, Highland, MD
David Nicks, AIA, Transforming Architecture of Texas, Lake Jackson, TX

4:30 pm Concluding Session (.5 CEU)

Case Study 1: Partnering to Deliver Excellence

Gustavo Berenblum, AIA has collaborated and partnered with some of the top international architecture firms, to deliver stunning architecture in Florida. In the process, he has defined a novel practice model that is highly flexible and tailored to specific projects. Through the presentation of case studies, he will share insights and experiences, discussing successful examples, lessons learned and opportunities

Speaker Bio

Gustavo Berenblum, AIA is a nationally recognized architect with over 20 years of experience in education, corporate, hospitality, port and residential projects. He has partnered and collaborated with world known architects such as: Bernard Tschumi, KPF, SOM, Herzog and de Meuron and TEN Arquitectos to deliver some of the most iconic and award winning building recently completed in Florida. He founded with Claudia Busch, **Berenblum Busch Architecture** in Miami, a design firm that focuses on high-quality projects. The firm is currently collaborating with Zaha Hadid on the Collins Park and Mix-Use project for the City of Miami Beach.

Case Study 2: Making Collaboration a Reality Using Virtual Tools

As the division of responsibilities between design and construction teams continues to evolve, project teams need a leader to facilitate collaboration. AG Design Works provides leadership and experience to project teams looking to use Virtual Design and Construction tools to enable more effective coordination, communication and collaboration.

Speaker Bio

E. Aaron Greven is a leader in emerging AEC industry technologies with 10 years experience utilizing BIM tools as a designer, general contractor, and owner. A licensed architect and LEED AP, Greven has almost 20 years experience as a project architect and construction manager on large scale mixed-use, commercial, institutional, and residential projects around the world. Greven's passion is for advancing work using BIM and smart modeling, and leading this turning point in the AEC industry. He is using his work in integrated design-build projects, project consulting to contractors and design firms, as well as teaching at IIT College of Architecture's Masters of Integrated Building Delivery Program to define a "better way," and provide a vehicle for change in the industry.

Case Study 3: The Architect as Construction Manager

The Shaw Center at the University of Hartford demonstrates how the architect as designer and CM can improve and protect the design outcome of the project. Filling both roles allows the designer to provide exception value and avoids many of the areas of conflict on the project site.

Speaker Bio

James McManus, FAIA, has served as President and CEO of the S/L/A/M Collaborative a 150 person design and construction firm specializing in serving education and health care clients. He initiated the implementation of 5 Mergers and Acquisitions with complementary firms that provided new staff and experience in diverse market. In 1995 he was Instrumental in establishing the wholly owned Construction Management subsidiary that brings together both design and construction in a single firm. He has led such significant projects as the Shriner's Hospital for Children in Mexico City and The School of Law at the University of Notre Dame. He is former President of AIA/CT and a Fellow of the AIA. He has lectured widely on the advantages of integrating design and construction services.

Case Study 4: A Franchise Model for Architects

The purpose of pursuing a new practice model is that the current model is damaged. Our menu of services has dwindled dramatically and our value is in question. The franchise model allows collaboration with other small firms across the country and changes how the business of architecture currently works.

Speaker Bios

Karen Pitsley, AIA is the president and owner of Transforming Architecture LLC, the first and only franchise opportunity for registered architects. Ms. Pitsley started Transforming Architecture in 2009, which is based on her successful Architectural firm, Residential Reflections ARCHITECTS, LLC. She began speaking to architectural groups in 2009 and has educated architects nation-wide. She also produces bi-monthly free, educational webinars on operating a successful and profitable architectural firm. She has spoken at AIA conventions, ALA conventions, non-profit fundraisers, and award ceremonies. Ms. Pitsley graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Maryland, School of Architecture.

David Nicks, AIA is a Registered Architect / Interior Designer holds a Certificate in Facilities Management and is a Licensed Insurance Agent. He is a graduate of Texas A&M College of Architecture, which had a

strong emphasis on problem solving and universal design. He used the architecture methodology, analysis and synthesis, and collaboration to solve a broad spectrum of problems for a wide variety of clients and employers. David understands that design is not only for the built environment but, the analysis and synthesis process can be utilized for building design and construction, interior design and construction, real estate, real estate development, product design, facilities management, and organizational design. As Regional Developer for Transforming Architecture he is responsible to identify, recruit, in-board new franchises and support existing franchises with creating successful businesses.

Webinars

Our June webinar, *Human Resources: Creating the Right Workforce For Your Future* will be presented by Sandy Blaha on June 28, 2012 from 1:00-2:15 EDT. Registration is free and you will earn 1.25 CES credits. You can learn more and [register here](#).

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. The AIA shares professional practice knowledge through its collection and dissemination of individual Best Practice articles. [Download this PDF article](#) addressing what a Best Practice is, and how to write and submit a Best Practice article for review and consideration. You can learn more about the AIA Best Practices on the AIA Website under the Practicing Architecture section. If you would like to share a best practice with your fellow practitioners, contact David Richards, AIA at drichards@rossetti.com.

Online Resources

See everything that the Practice Management Knowledge Community has to offer by [visiting our website](#).

Visit the Practice Management Digest [archives page](#) for past issues.

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