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Practice Management Digest

News & Best Practices from the PM Knowledge Community

Features

Letter from the Editor

By Donald Simpson, AIA, LEED® AP

"Changing of the Guard and a Look into the Future"

This first issue of the Digest for 2011 will bring you up to date on Advisory Group leadership, and contains articles from speakers at the Practice Management Conference with AIA Minnesota in November of last year. Also, Michael Strogoff, FAIA takes a look into the future for Practice Management...[Continue Reading](#)

Introducing Rena M. Klein FAIA, the Newest Advisory Group Member

Rena M. Klein, FAIA is principal of RM Klein Consulting, a firm offering meeting facilitation, business planning services and management education to owners of architectural firms nationwide. Building on her graduate degree in management and her twenty years experience as the owner of a small architectural firm, Rena regularly presents seminars on small firm practice at AIA National Conventions and at various AIA Knowledge Communities...[Continue Reading](#)

The Coming of Age of Practice Management: How Economic Despair, Technological Advances and Shifts in Generational Values Create Opportunities for Forward-Thinking Firms

A Letter from By Michael Strogoff, FAIA, Outgoing PMKC Advisory Group Member

"The Coming of Age of Practice Management: How Economic Despair, Technological Advances and Shifts in Generational Values Create Opportunities for Forward-Thinking Firms"

While firms grapple with the Great Recession, struggle to retain top performers amidst declining revenues, invest scarce resources in new technologies and learn to compete against a new category of super-sized firms, some architects might question whether our profession will ever return to its recent glory days. Many architects, hopeful creations that we are, thought the worst would soon pass as economists pointed to better days in 2010, then changed that to 2011 and again to 2012. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate among architects skyrocketed, some firms quietly closed their doors or agreed to be acquired, and a host of architects re-invented themselves as sole practitioners after their jobs were eliminated. What does our future hold?...[Continue Reading](#)

Multi-level Marketing: What Other Business Models Can Teach Us

By Karen Compton, CPSM, Principal, A3K Consulting

We chose to be designers. Not business people, right? Then one day we woke up and realized that part of our success as a design profession is predicated on our ability to apply business concepts to the design profession in order to create a successful design practice. For many of us, we've studied the business practices of other firms—larger firms, smaller firms, niche firms. Oh...let's just admit it, we've even studied engineering firms. But, for most of us, we've never studied other industries—beverage companies, airline companies or even auto manufacturers. Yet, if you really want to understand how successful (and not so successful) businesses are run, we need only to look to other business models. So, let's consider Multi-level Marketing and see what we can apply to our profession...[Continue Reading](#)

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Promoting Two-Way Mentoring to Use BIM Effectively

By Melissa Lassar, SPHR and John Pocorobba, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

The A/E industry, like so many others, is hurtling towards a convergence point. The rapid rise of technologies like Building Information Modeling (BIM), instant communication, the rate of innovation and obsolescence, and the widening gap between Baby Boomers and successive generations are placing unprecedented demands on businesses and individuals to work faster and smarter. In the next five years, fifty percent of managers will retire, taking their experience with them. The college graduates who replace them expect to spend only 16 months in a job before moving on. Yet only 27 percent of businesses are actively transferring knowledge. What can we do to leverage the power of the changing world, instead of just keeping up or falling behind?

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Taking Your Marketing Off-Road

By Laura Davis, AIA, IFDA and Larry Paschall, AIA

In January 2008, we were a start-up firm with a small client base. Four months into running our business, we lost our biggest client, and we had no idea of how to bring in new business. We looked on web sites for RFQs and checked with past clients to see if they had any upcoming work or knew of anyone who was looking. We fell back on the things that were done at our old firms, and they weren't working. In order for HPD Architecture to survive as a business, we decided to do something different. We started taking our marketing off-road...[Continue Reading](#)

Thought Leadership 2.0: How Web 2.0 Tools Will Impact the Way You Develop and Market Your Firm's Expertise

By Christopher Parsons

The fundamentals of thought leadership in our industry have not changed: Despite advances in technology, the most important aspect of thought leadership is having a thought worth sharing. What Has Changed About Thought Leadership? We have new communication and collaboration tools: The free, or nearly-free, nature of Web 2.0 tools -- authoring tools such as blogs, video-sharing tools such as YouTube, and social networking tools such as LinkedIn and Twitter -- have dramatically leveled the playing field. Small and emerging firms now have increased access to clients seeking their expertise. Thought Leadership 2.0 tools are collaborative, which means that your audience will help you to improve or expand upon your ideas through comments and discussions...[Continue Reading](#)

Unlearning to Collaborate

By Randy Deutsch, AIA, LEED AP

While collaboration extends and reorients insight, increases efficiency, creates credibility and community, the word itself is too often loosely defined. A definition of collaboration particularly relevant for our age of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Integrated project Delivery (IPD) is a process through which people who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. (Grey, 1989)

Collaboration is simply when people work together to create something that couldn't be done by someone on their own. We do it all the time when designing buildings, resolving problems or working with owners to deliver solutions. The difference today is that we need to get even better at working together and sharing knowledge to solve problems, which are getting larger and more complex...[Continue Reading](#)

Maximizing Your Marketing & BD ROI

By Richard Friedman

With many A/E/C and environmental consulting firms experiencing layoffs, salary freezes/reductions, benefit cuts, and other cost-cutting measures, it's more important than ever that firms invest their precious marketing and business development (BD) overhead dollars wisely.

Getting more staff involved in BD (especially project personnel), in ways commensurate with their role, career juncture, and skills is a no-brainer when compared with the alternative of relying on a few key rainmakers. But this approach also requires a commitment to training, coaching, and mentoring— a commitment that is lacking in many firms in good times and bad...[Continue](#)

Reading

New IPD Case Studies Document

From the AIA Center for Integrated Practice

This newly released study from AIA, AIA Minnesota, and University of Minnesota, School of Architecture, is the latest in a series of AIA reports on Integrated Project Delivery (IPD). Unique to this report is the opportunity to study projects from early phases through completion. The projects examined ranged in size and scope from a 7,000 square foot, \$500,000 office remodel to an 858,000 square foot hospital that cost more than one billion dollars to design and build. Each comprehensive case study examines 21 separate categories including project description, decision making, information sharing, Building Information Modeling elements and liability...[Download the report](#)

Upcoming Events

2011 AIA Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana

2011 Convention Practice Management Lunch: Thriving in a Tough Economy and a Look to the Future

When you register for the 2011 Convention in New Orleans, be sure to sign up for the Practice Management Lunch on Friday, May 13.

The lunch, which is jointly sponsored by the AIA Practice Management Knowledge Community and ARCHITECT magazine/Hanley Wood, will feature the leaders of top-ranked architecture and A/E firms as ranked in the newly published 2011 ARCHITECT 50. These firm leaders will gather for a spirited panel discussion, describing how their firms—large and small—have continued to succeed in terms of financial performance, design quality, and a commitment to sustainability as well as a thought provoking look ahead to future trends in our industry and profession.

PM at AIA 2011 Convention

When you register for the 2011 Convention in New Orleans, look for the programs being presented by members of the Practice Management Knowledge Community Advisory Group...[Continue Reading](#)

Opportunities

a/e ProNet David W. Lakamp Scholarship

The scholarship was initiated in 1990 by a/e ProNet, a group of insurance professionals providing risk management services to architects and engineers. In 1999 the scholarship was renamed for David W. Lakamp. Mr. Lakamp was a founder of a/e ProNet and a trusted advisor to the profession. He left behind a legacy of professionalism and integrity that set new standards in the field of insurance services. The \$2,500 annual award is given to a student who best demonstrates strong interest in practice management. ...[Continue Reading](#)

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