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**Introduction**

**Definition of Topic:**

Career Advancement addresses the aspects beyond raw technical competence which young architects need to be successful, providing a holistic approach to developing design professionals.

**Why is this topic important to Young Architects?**

In today’s profession the speed at which projects are developed are so fast paced and fees so tight there is little room for professional development above and beyond the technical development of construction documents. Many young design professionals are not given the opportunity to grow other necessary skills within their office that will allow them to be well-rounded and place them on track for growth within the firm. To compete in today’s tough profession a design professional must have the skills above and beyond the ability of just documenting a building’s construction methodology they must also have strong soft skills that will make them a valuable team member within their firm, on a project team with the other trades and within their community.

**Why is this topic important to the AIA?**

The next generation of design professionals has a different outlook on the profession. They are eager to get involved and engaged in the process of operating a firm, running a team and being successful on multiple levels. The profession has not wholly embraced this eagerness and energy and therefore are finding that many young design professionals are leaving the profession to utilize their skill sets in different areas where they are able to be more engaged, have opportunities that make more immediate impact and have potential of developing parallel skill sets that strengthen their abilities to grow faster and be more successful. If the AIA does not address this issue within the profession we will see even more young professionals choose alternative career paths that will give them the opportunities and growth potential that they seek.

**Impacts**

**Individual**

1. Increases their value as an employee and a professional within their community.
2. Focus is given to the development of the “soft skills” that are not typically developed in the early stages of one’s career in the profession.
3. Allows the individual to feel more engaged in their work and ultimately leads to them enjoying their work more and being satisfied professionally.
4. Gives the design professional the ability to be more diversified and therefore inspired to better work.

**Firm**

1. Increases the firm’s number of skilled and knowledgeable employees.
2. Helps retain employees due to higher job satisfaction rates.
3. Saves money by having well rounded individuals with diverse skill sets to work on projects when needed in lieu of having to always hire new employees with certain skills.
4. Healthier work environments due to happier employees
5. Overall health and long-term viability for the firm as future leaders are formed.

**Profession**

1. Higher satisfaction with career would hopefully impact individuals to think at a higher level when designing.
2. When individuals feel that the AIA has provided them with a valuable tool that they feel helps them personally they would have a higher respect for the institute and ultimately be more willing to engage with the AIA.
3. By clearly documenting how important these career development skills are to the next generation of architects it could provide insight for the schools of architecture to start teaching these skills with more focus.
4. As today’s profession is doing more with less many firms do not have the money or skills to develop their staff in the areas identified as needing development. Firms would benefit by having the AIA assist in their employees’ development and in turn the Firms would see more value from the AIA directly and support employee’s involvement in the future.

**Community**

1. Higher satisfaction with career would hopefully impact individuals to feel more obligated and able to assist in their communities.
2. Higher satisfaction with career would hopefully open individuals to think more critically and at a higher level as it relates to their surrounding built environment.
3. One of the skills that need to be developed is leadership. The more leaders that the AIA trains the more we empower design professionals to give back and get involved in their community.

**Outcomes**

**Individual**

1. To help young architects develop a Career Path in which to grow their career
2. Increasing the desire within the young architect to give back to the profession because they enjoy what they are doing.

**Firm**

1. Aides in assisting the firm with career advancement training and tracking.
2. Gives the firm a guideline/tool from which to develop design professionals. Picks up where IDP leaves off.

**Profession**

1. Strengthen the interaction and workflow between the newly licensed/young design professional and the more senior professionals/Fellows of the institute.
2. Assists in helping more design professionals say engaged and give them support that in turn will keep on the licensure path and stay in the profession.

**Community**

1. By giving tools to design professionals to track their continued growth allows the individual to be more engaged with the profession and ultimately their surrounding community.

**Actions**

**Short Term** (1-2 Years)

1. Develop a Career Assistance Manual that clearly outlines the typical skills that need focus from which to build a stronger and better career and help with promotions and general career advancement.
   1. Does this relate to an individual, firm, profession, or community outcome from above?
      1. This “Career Assistance Manual” will assist the individual, firms and the profession by helping provide career assistance and direction that ultimately will lead to a higher career satisfaction rate among design professionals
   2. How does a young architect benefit from this?
      1. The young architect benefits by having a document that helps shed light on the skill sets that they should be seeking to strengthen as they progress in their career. This manual would be most useful for young architects who do not have mentors or work in a firm that helps them define a career path and goals to get to the next stage of their career.
      2. The firm will benefit through the AIA having developed and provided this career assistance manual that they can use to grow employees in key areas.
      3. THIS SHOULD NOT BE MANDATORY OR REQUIRED. However this could lead to great way for young architects to get continuing education credits as they advance through the various topics/training.
   3. How does the AIA benefit from this?
      1. This career assistance program will give the individual a greater sense of growth potential and allow them to be more engaged with the AIA. This in turn will lead to higher satisfaction rates with their career and ultimately will lead to higher retention rates in the profession among young licensed architects.
      2. The AIA will also benefit from simply having a framework from which to build continuing education around for the next generation instead of guessing what they want to learn this manual will give concrete suggestions.
   4. What are the steps to implement this action?
      1. *Step One: Clearly identify the areas in need of focus for growth*
         1. Study firms and identify the needs they require of their employees
            1. Need to solicit small, medium and large firms and see the differences/similarities.
         2. Use the YAF 2012 Survey data for identified areas in need of attention.
         3. Perform additional research of young architects and see where they feel additional direction and support could be of value and the types of topics they wish their firm or the AIA could provide them that they are not providing currently.
      2. Step Two: Create a “Career Assistance Manual” or curriculum around the above skills and work with AIA components and national to create workshops and CE classes based around these skills.
         1. Allow CE for all these types of events/classes.
         2. Develop an annual curriculum for AIA Components to use as guide to develop the emerging professionals (this is not about getting your license).
   5. How can this action be supported at the Local, State, and National Level?
      1. Use the career assistance manual as a tool for mentoring & guide for career development programming
   6. Are there any metrics to measure the success of this action?
      1. To be truly successful this is one of the most important steps. As we develop the tools and programing to address this issue we need to annually measure the satisfaction of design professionals who have used the Career Assistance Manual and or attended sessions to continually ensure that we are hitting the correct skill sets and topics that are in demand by the young design professional. The metrics needs to be measured nationally, regionally and locally.

**Medium Term** (3-4 years)

1. Continue to grow and strengthen the above SHORT TERM tactics.
2. Seriously consider a Young Architect’s Forum “Boot Camp” which is an annual or bi-annual event that lasts two days and specifically educates Young Architects on the skills outlined above. This would be similar to convention or the leadership form but just focused on soft skill development and training for those licensed 10 years or less.
   1. This idea has the potential of relating to the individual, firm, profession, and community depending on how it is developed.
   2. The Young Architect could benefit by an intense two day workshop to learn the skills that their office or AIA component does not have the ability/funding to provide. These workshops would all teach the skills from the viewpoint of an architect and allow the YAs to get CE for their attendance. The workshop could be developed to keep it as inexpensive as possible and move around the country so that many YAs have a chance to attend. Scholarships could be given to attend for those who cannot afford to go. Firms hopefully would be more willing to pay for their employees to attend if they see that the curriculum will directly relate to their bottom line and client satisfaction.
   3. The AIA would benefit from this event by attracting YAs (not necessarily AIA members) to prove that the AIA does understand their situation and show that the AIA is a resource for them. This could also be a funding source but not a big one. This event must stay as a financially feasible event for YAs.
   4. The steps to implementation are as follows:
      1. Send out a survey to inquire if people would attend if this workshop idea was realized.
      2. Develop a curriculum committee/board of advisors consisting of YAs, Seasoned design professionals/firm leaders and professors from schools of architecture
      3. Develop the curriculum of these workshops
      4. Start a speakers list to invite professionals to teach the sessions
      5. Look at AIA 2030 as a potential model for “franchising” this workshop.

**Long Term** (5+ years)

1. This is too far out. In 5 years the issues of relevance could be completely different from today. The only thing that we could state here is that our work over previous 5 years could have impact in the schools of architecture to teach these “soft skills” with more focus and regularity.