



## CONVERSATIONS TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE PRACTICE

20 May 2019 / Managing a Career

### COMMON THEMES

- Expectations coming out of school into the profession are high and the reality is much different
- Small firms vs. large firms, they both have advantages and disadvantages of professional development.
- Everyone needs to find an outlet other than architecture, work/life balance is an ongoing struggle.
- Many people have thoughts about leaving architecture industry for similar fields ex, design or real estate for financial reasons and quality of life.

### NOTES BY GROUP

#### **Group 3:**

- Professional Goals, when first starting out
  - Thinking you'll be the "the Designer"
  - Jack of all trades, generalist approach
  - Being pushed to specialize
- How your goals have changed over time
  - Wanting to make a difference/making an impact
  - Power of the client
  - How people live in/interact with space
- Professional Development in your office
  - Constantly evolving, with regularity
  - Importance of mentors, formal/informal
  - How to give/take feedback
  - Networking in and out of the office

- Performance reviews, peer review -> pairing staffing based on experience
- +1 model, always take someone with you, i.e. meeting, job site, punch list
- Promotion/compensation -> Pathways (small, medium, large firms)
  - Asking others in office about compensation
  - Flat vs. tiered approach (pay), skill level vs years of experience
  - Licensure required vs not required for promotion/compensation bump
  - Clear vs. vague steps to advance
  - Introvert vs extrovert
- Challenges you face
  - Balance family/work
  - Cultural mindset (school vs real world)
  - Seeking leadership set the tone of working late
  - Peer expectations, coming in early, leaving late
  - Flexible schedule, defined core hours
- Niche/Specialty in your office
  - Project Management
  - Interiors
  - Generalist
- Longevity in Architecture
  - Income
  - Quality of life/living
  - Transferable skill set

**Group 4:**

- Personal/Professionals goals
  - Completing AXP + exams
  - Moving forward
  - Now- how to exit and mentor next generation of leadership
- Project management ->ownership of a project
- Firm and professional development should include mentorship program, annual review and check in 3 months after hire
- Large firm – nationwide HR strategies

- Mentorship
- Track goals
- Reimburse money for passed exams
- Associate and senior associate are support for younger staff
- “digitalized” annual reviews
- Small firm strategies
  - Continuing education
  - Paid family leave
  - Performance review -> transparent on goals and emphasis
- What can firms do better?
  - Safe environment for feedback
  - Firm listens to and supports employees goals
  - Clarity in steps to achieve compensation and leadership position, need for more clarity
  - Large firm: very clear how to achieve a specific title, however, there is a big range in salary.  
It is more clear for younger staff, less so for more experienced staff
  - When people ask questions out in the open things become more clear
  - Difficulty seeing or understanding the range of salaries for a specific position
  - Generational component to transparent
- Challenges you face while Managing a Career
  - Suggestion: keep track of professional related activities -> these count as “work”
  - Line item for professional develop, from a leadership perspective it’s frustrating that people don’t take advantage of these opportunities
  - Importance not to get lost in the day –to-day
- Niche or specialty
  - Technology has bifurcated profession, being good at the software can pigeon hole you
- Do you see yourself leaving Arch?
  - Plan checker -> controllable hours
  - The profession is huge, there are so many places to go
  - A culture of saving problems
- Working for myself, feeling like all my hours are for me.

## Group 5

- Recession impacts on career path – positive vs. negative
- Saying yes to all opportunities, say “yes” when you mean yes.
- Experience with different project types, different industries and region
- Be careful to not over-commit/spread yourself too thin – work and professional development
- Challenge of switching forms – time to get acclimated
- Life – changes that impact your career goals and priorities
- Expectations of the field vs those of yourself, be comfortable with following your own path
- School training = creative; no business training and this is a business.
- Small firms vs large firms: more support (typically) for testing, CEUs, benefits
- Recognize when it is time to make a change – what is working well and what isn't.
  - Be clear and honest with what gets you up in the morning
- What are you good at vs what brings you joy- are they the same thing?
- Your job doesn't have to define who you are – that's a lot of pressure
- Related professionals that pay more money – makes it tempting to change
- Become well rounded by getting other experiences – you can come back to architecture with different perspectives.

## Group 6:

- Being open to non-linear career paths
- Managing post school expectations
  - Housekeeping tasks during early career phases
  - Conceptual ideas vs. real world application, gauging and balancing between creativity and practicality
  - Budget constraint and firm style

## Group 7:

- Professional and personal goals
  - Thought would be an architect designing buildings, not. Just detailing
  - Bowl of cherries/ privilege few
  - Many layers of work behind design – why is design separate from tech?
  - Large firm vs. small firm divisions – leads to lack of coordination and inclusion

- Thought we would be holistic, more specialized in field
  - Firm culture/asking for roles
  - “I thought I’d have an opportunity to dabble in project types.”
  - Wasn’t prepared for the boredom/ grunt work.
- Systems office uses for professional development?
  - None, mentorship should be the responsibility of senior staff
  - Organize not “paired”
  - Hours and budget for professional development
  - Transparency of pay and stage in career, pay discrepancy
- Promotion
  - Always some amount of subjectivity.
  - Not clear steps –however vacancies and finding opportunities
  - Rising to the occasion of and filling void
- Work/life balance
  - Finding outlets/passion/other professions (part time work)
  - Up and down, ongoing, hard to maintain
  - Work life balance with kids – more flexible schedule now than before
  - “mommy tracked” vs leave – unconscious bias regardless of intention
  - “equality achieved when there is a generation of children raised by men”
  - Strategic in opportunities you face for the long term,
  - “If it’s not a “hell, yea!” it should be a no.”
  - Balance is subjective
- Segregating different design “hats” and the ways offices handle it
- What we thought we’d be doing... the general let down of the intern experience.



**THANK YOU FROM YOUR SESSION LEADERS**

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