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
  o Thinking you’ll be the “the Designer”
  o Jack of all trades, generalist approach
  o Being pushed to specialize

• How your goals have changed over time
  o Wanting to make a difference/making an impact
  o Power of the client
  o How people live in/interact with space

• Professional Development in your office
  o Constantly evolving, with regularity
  o Importance of mentors, formal/informal
  o How to give/take feedback
  o 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.
  o 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
  o Housekeeping tasks during early career phases
  o Conceptual ideas vs. real world application, gauging and balancing between creativity and practicality
  o Budget constraint and firm style

Group 7:
• Professional and personal goals
  o Thought would be an architect designing buildings, not. Just detailing
  o Bowl of cherries/ privilege few
  o Many layers of work behind design – why is design separate from tech?
  o 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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