

Attracting and Retaining Talent 2016 SURVEY REPORT



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Introduction

In June 2016, [Strogoff Consulting Inc.](#), in collaboration with the [American Institute of Architects California Council](#) (AIACC) conducted a survey to identify the primary factors that influence design professionals when contemplating joining a new firm or remaining committed to their current firm.

Attracting and retaining talent is becoming an increasingly critical issue as both economic and demographic circumstances contribute to a growing talent shortage within the design professions. This talent shortage is, in turn, creating significant staffing, leadership development, and ownership succession challenges. Industry projections indicate an approaching talent crisis that is elevating recruitment and retention policies to a crucial strategic priority.

This report summarizes the key findings of the survey and provides design professionals with information to develop a targeted talent recruitment and retention policy that shifts a firm's culture toward meeting the evolving needs and desires of the professional design community.

Acknowledgements

Stephen Epstein, Strategic Advisor and Practice Management Consultant with Strogoff Consulting Inc. guided the development of the survey and authored the survey report.

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Executive Summary

This report contains the results of a survey conducted in June 2016 by Strogoff Consulting Inc., in collaboration with the AIA California Council. This report also includes analysis and recommendations to inform and guide recruitment and retention policy initiatives.

The fundamental objectives of the survey and this report include:

- Providing insight into the **primary decision factors** that motivate design professionals to join and remain committed to a firm.
- Identifying the most influential factors that design professionals consider when evaluating a firm.
- Highlighting **professional development topics** that accelerate career advancement and support retention of future leaders, key contributors and high potential employees.
- Initiating dialogue about professional satisfaction and career development.
- Providing relevant information to develop effective strategies for attracting and retaining talent.

Background

The recession of the early 1990's and subsequent economic contractions caused many design professionals to leave the profession, and the Great Recession that began in 2008 diluted an entire generation of talent. The dramatic economic cycles of the past twenty-five years have contributed to persistent and ongoing talent shortages within the design professions, particularly during economic upswings.

Demographics are rapidly shifting with Baby Boomers now leaving the workforce in increasing numbers, and many others planning to retire over the next ten years. In addition, Millennials are exerting increasing influence through the values and preferences of a new generation.

The cumulative effect of these circumstances, combined with increasingly complex business and project delivery contexts, presents a significant challenge facing design firms – attracting and retaining talent.

Primary Decision Factors

The decision to join or remain with a firm can dramatically influence a design professional's career trajectory, and many can trace their current professional situation to prior employment decisions. This section of the survey highlights the factors that have the greatest influence on a design professionals' decision making process when evaluating a firm.

Design professionals ranked the importance of forty-one primary decision factors in five categories from least important to most important, and also selected the most important factor within each category.



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Executive Summary

The following table includes the top ten factors that received the highest average importance ranking on a scale from 1-7:

Ranking	Primary Decision Factor	Average
1	Design quality	6.17
2	Culture	6.09
3	Compensation/benefits	6.08
4	Work/life balance	6.06
5	Effective and inspirational leaders	6.04
6	Clear path for advancement	6.01
7	Leadership opportunity	5.99
8	Design innovation and leadership	5.93
9	Individual(s) leading the firm	5.87
10	Level/quality of professional development	5.84

An average of 576 respondents completed the questions in this section of the survey. The following tables include the three factors within each category selected as the “most important” and shows the percentage of respondents and the number of respondents for each factor.

Legacy Factors		
Primary Decision Factor	Percentage	Respondents
Portfolio	36.8%	232
Street reputation	35.1%	221
Ownership transition status	13.3%	84

Practice Characteristics		
Primary Decision Factor	Percentage	Respondents
Culture	37.4%	219
Effective and inspirational leaders	19.0%	111
Individual(s) leading the firm	11.6%	68

Design/Project Implementation		
Primary Decision Factor	Percentage	Respondents
Design innovation and leadership	31.1%	175
Design quality	26.8%	151
Access to senior technical mentors	13.5%	76

Professional Development		
Primary Decision Factor	Percentage	Respondents
Clear path for advancement	28.3%	157
Level/quality of professional development	21.3%	118
Leadership opportunity	18.8%	104

Other Factors		
Primary Decision Factor	Percentage	Respondents
Work/life balance	45.6%	249
Compensation / benefits	39.0%	213
Flexible work schedule	13.6%	74



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Professional Development Topics

While some of the Primary Decision Factors may require considerable planning, effort, and time to realize change, professional development initiatives can be implemented relatively quickly to accomplish specific strategic objectives of a firm’s talent recruitment and retention policy.

Design professionals ranked the importance of receiving training related to their career advancement objectives for thirty professional development topics in five categories from least important to most important, and also selected the most important topic in each category.

The following table includes the top ten professional development topics that received the highest average importance ranking on a scale from 1-7:

Ranking	Professional Development Topic	Average
1	Team leadership	6.01
2	Project management	5.92
3	Firm leadership	5.63
4	Design leadership	5.59
5	Business development	5.58
6	Interview presentation techniques	5.57
7	Building technology	5.53
8	Contract and fee negotiations	5.50
9	Client leadership	5.49
10	Communications	5.47

An average of 524 respondents completed the questions in this section of the survey. The following tables include the three topics in each

category selected as the “most important” and shows the percentage of respondents and the number of respondents for each topic.

Leadership		
Professional Development Topic	Percentage	Respondents
Team leadership	33.2%	178
Firm leadership	25.2%	135
Design leadership	21.5%	115

Career Development		
Professional Development Topic	Percentage	Respondents
Building technology	30.4%	160
Career planning	18.2%	96
Sustainability	12.0%	63

Business Skills		
Professional Development Topic	Percentage	Respondents
Communications	36.3%	189
Firm finance	14.0%	73
Public speaking	13.4%	70

Marketing/Business Development		
Professional Development Topic	Percentage	Respondents
Business development	46.2%	238
Interview presentation techniques	31.3%	161
Marketing	12.0%	62

Project Responsibility		
Professional Development Topic	Percentage	Respondents
Project management	48.0%	249
Contract and fee negotiations	21.4%	111
Construction phase management	14.6%	76



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Executive Summary

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are based on the survey results, and the analysis and research conducted while preparing this report.

- A firm's future success depends on its ability to recruit and retain exceptional design professionals.
- Implementing a focused and targeted recruitment and retention policy will concurrently result in comprehensive operational benefits.
- Design professionals constantly evaluate firms – both when considering new opportunities and when considering future opportunities within their current organization.
- Professional satisfaction is largely based on design quality and working with a firm that values and achieves design excellence.
- Design professionals want to connect with effective and inspirational leaders who care about their careers.
- Leadership development training is essential for emerging leaders, design leaders, as well as the firm's most senior leaders.
- Design professionals with leadership, senior management and/or ownership goals seek access to training that targets their specific career advancement objectives.
- Millennials place a high value on opportunities to progress in their career and assume greater leadership responsibilities.
- Work/life balance is not only about time spent at work vs. time spent pursuing personal interests, it is also about quality of life while at work.
- The high cost of employee turnover must be considered when evaluating a firm's investment in attracting and retaining talent.
- Develop a critical ear for the firm's reputation and plan initiatives to enhance favorable attributes and eliminate negativity.
- Clearly communicate the shared values and beliefs that define the firm's culture.
- Create communication channels that use graphic techniques and terminology targeted to design professionals for describing projects and articulating design quality within the context of a firm's overall design approach.
- Tailor the organizational structure to create ongoing promotion opportunities for ambitious design professionals.
- Initiate periodic conversations with each of the firm's highly valued employees about salary, bonus and benefits; and about the factors that influence their specific compensation package.
- Assign a firm leader to work with high potential design professionals to draft a career development action plan, and then coach them throughout the plan's implementation.
- Initiate a mentoring program for nurturing relationships between emerging designers and senior technical mentors.
- In an environment where firms have to compete for the best talent, embrace an assertive competitive spirit when developing strategies for attracting and retaining talent.



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Method and Statistics

The survey was distributed by AIACC to its more than 7,000 members and by Strogoff Consulting, Inc. to a targeted list of firm leaders throughout the A/E profession. Recipients were encouraged to share the survey within their firms. In addition, the survey was publicized on Twitter and announcements were placed on AIA’s discussion boards for members of AIA’s Practice Management Knowledge Community, Small Firm Knowledge Community, and Young Architects Forum.

The survey was open from June 7, 2016 through June 22, 2016. The cloud-based application SurveyMonkey was employed to administer and manage the survey.

633 responses were received, and an average of 543 respondents completed each question. The following tables highlight some survey sample statistics and demographic details.

Firm Size	
Less than 5 people	13.2%
6 – 15 people	13.5%
16 – 40 people	14.8%
41 – 100 people	18.3%
101 – 250 people	16.9%
More than 250 people	23.3%

Respondents represented a broad spectrum of industry experience and were relatively evenly distributed with respect to firm size, from firms with less than five people to firms with 250 people. Firms with more than 250 people are represented by a larger sample size although the variance is not significant.

Discipline	
Architecture	86.5%
Landscape Architecture	0.6%
Interior Design	3.1%
Engineer	2.5%
Administrative and Management	4.2%
Other	3.1%

86.5% of respondents identified their discipline as architecture. While the survey targeted architects, responses were also received from landscape architects, interior designers, engineers and administrative and management professionals.

Licensure Status	
Licensed	69.8%
On licensure track	17.3%
Not on licensure track but plan to get licensed	4.8%
Not interested in getting licensed	2.3%
My discipline is not eligible for licensure	5.8%

Due to the survey’s distribution channels, 69.8% of respondents were licensed architects. All but 8.1% of respondents were either licensed professionals or pursuing licensure.



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Method and Statistics

Age Group	
Less than 25	3.3%
25 – 35	22.7%
36 – 45	21.3%
46 – 55	21.5%
56 or older	31.2%

Respondents were relatively evenly distributed with respect to age and effectively equal between the 25-35, 36-45, and 46-55 age ranges; with about 42% more respondents in the 56 and older group than the other age ranges, except the less than 25 range.

This larger response rate from those 56 and older reflects the continuing influence of the Baby Boomer generation and foreshadows the challenges associated with the ongoing transition of this demographic into retirement. The relatively even distribution of the data sample with respect to age reduced potential bias due to generational cultural differences.

Gender	
Female	36.5%
Male	63.5%

36.5% of respondents were women, which exceeds the reported 28% of licensed women architects as reported by the 2014 AIA Firm Survey Report.

Ownership Status	
I am currently an owner of a firm	28.8%
I am on an ownership path	17.1%
I am not currently on an ownership path	38.1%
I have little or no interest in becoming an owner	16.0%

Given the relatively equal allocation of respondents relative to firm size and age, it is interesting to note that 45.9% of respondents were either firm owners or on an ownership path.



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Survey Results

Overview

The survey includes two sections.

The first section, **Primary Decision Factors**, asks respondents to consider those aspects of a firm upon which design professionals base their perceptions and that drive their decision making process when evaluating a firm.

The second section, **Professional Development Topics**, asks respondents to evaluate the importance of access to specific professional development opportunities.

Primary Decision Factors

Forty-one decision factors were organized into the following five categories:

- Firm Legacy
- Practice Characteristics
- Design/Project Implementation
- Professional Development
- Other Factors

Respondents were also provided the opportunity to submit up to three factors not included in the survey. These responses are included in the Appendix.

Two questions were asked in each category. The first question, “**Rank the importance** of the following factors when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm” included a range from least important (1) to most important (7) for each factor. The results are reported based on the average ranking for each factor.

The Appendix includes supplementary tables that detail the number of respondents per ranking level for each factor.

Results from the second question, “Which of the following factors is **most important** when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?” are reported based on the ratio of respondents that selected the most important factor within each category. The Appendix includes tables with the number of respondents that selected each factor.

Professional Development Topics

Thirty professional development topics were organized into the following five categories:

- Leadership
- Career Development
- Business Skills
- Marketing/Business Development
- Project Responsibility

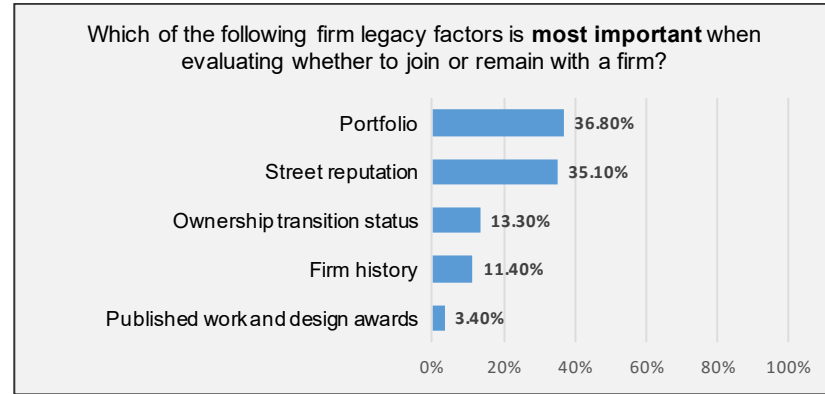
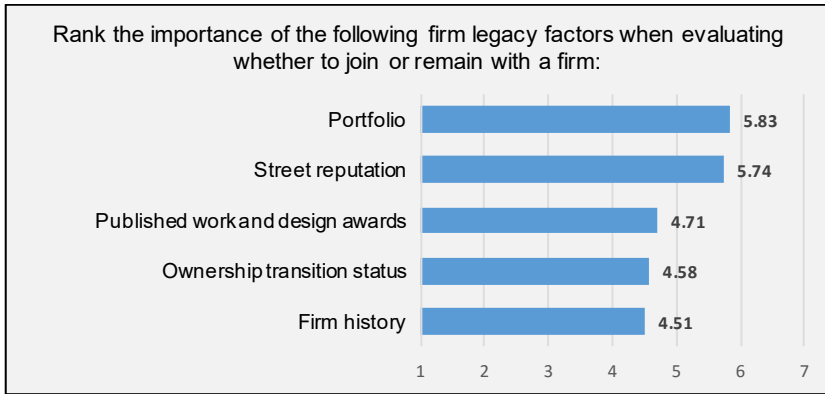
Respondents were also provided the opportunity to submit up to three topics not included in the survey. These responses are included in the Appendix.

Again, two questions were asked in each category and the approach was similar to the first section. The first question “**Rank the importance** of receiving training on the following topics to your career advancement objectives” included a range of least important (1) to most important (7) for each topic. Results from the second question, “Which of the following training topics is **most important** to your career advancement objectives?” are reported based on the ratio of respondents that selected the most important factor within each category.



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Primary Decision Factors: Firm Legacy



A firm’s legacy typically reflects the values of its founders, leaders and other significant contributors. Also reflected in a firm’s legacy is the level of design quality revealed through the firm’s contribution to the built environment. Legacy serves as the foundation for future success.

It is not surprising that a firm’s **portfolio** is a key decision factor. Professional satisfaction for design professionals is largely based on the quality of the work, and a firm’s portfolio may be the most reliable indicator of future design potential. While past work is a source of pride and inspiration, more recently completed projects have the greatest influence on a design professionals’ decision to join or remain with a firm.

Careful consideration should be given to determine how best to communicate project information to candidates seeking employment and to current employees. While company websites serve a specific purpose and audience, they may not address the level of detail required by design professionals. Creating communication channels that include

a firm’s design approach and philosophy, and project information using graphic techniques and terminology specifically targeted to design professionals will enhance a firm’s ability to attract and retain talent.

The professional design community is relatively small when it comes to sharing information and perspectives. With advances in social media and instant access to information, the community has become even smaller – especially locally. This has elevated the importance of a firm’s **street reputation**.

If a firm is doing stellar work and has a positive culture, the community will know. On the other hand, if projects lack design integrity, or senior leaders are difficult to work with, the community will also know. To manage perception, one must develop a critical ear for the firm’s reputation and plan initiatives to enhance favorable attributes and eliminate negativity. Being nimble and targeted about implementing change can quickly influence a firm’s reputation within the design community.



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Primary Decision Factors: Firm Legacy

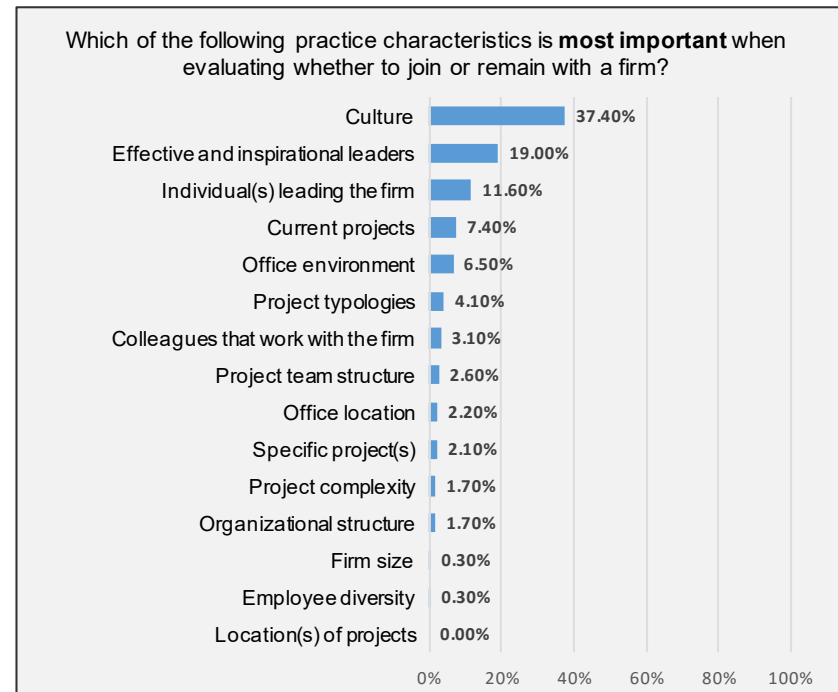
The remaining factors in this category, including **published work and design awards, ownership transition status and firm history**, were perceived to be moderately important. However, when asked to identify the most important factor in the category, only 3.4% selected published work and design awards. This is a clear reminder of the many differences between how a twentieth century practice and a twenty-first century practice receive recognition and attract employees.

Not long ago, being published and receiving awards was perceived to be extremely important and considerable effort and expense was expended pursuing accolades. While publicity and recognition remains an integral part of a firm's marketing and public relations strategy, the target audience of design professionals may be learning about a firm from alternative and non-traditional sources.



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Primary Decision Factors: Practice Characteristics



Practice characteristics are those qualities that differentiate a firm from all others. Collectively, these characteristics define an organization in terms that can be effectively communicated.

About two-thirds of the practice characteristics included in the survey were perceived by respondents to be more than moderately important, with 68% identifying three characteristics (culture, effective and inspirational leaders, and individual(s) leading the firm) as the most important.

Culture is a crucially important characteristic for design professionals evaluating a firm. Organizational culture emerges based on the shared values and beliefs of a group of people. A firm's culture consists of a complex set of issues that include design values, leadership, ethics, innovation, professional development, remuneration and other issues that are important and meaningful to the people involved.



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Primary Decision Factors: Practice Characteristics

Typically, a design firm's culture evolves organically based on the behavior of firm leaders over time. In many situations, this results in a vibrant and dynamic culture. As firms grow and mature, additional belief systems are overlaid and things can get muddled. Aligning these layers can be a significant challenge and may require a comprehensive planning initiative.

Given the high level of importance design professionals place on culture, an inclusive and transparent approach to defining a well-understood and dynamic culture is preferable to an organic culture that has become ambiguous and static. Clearly articulated values and beliefs will result in a cohesive and admired firm culture.

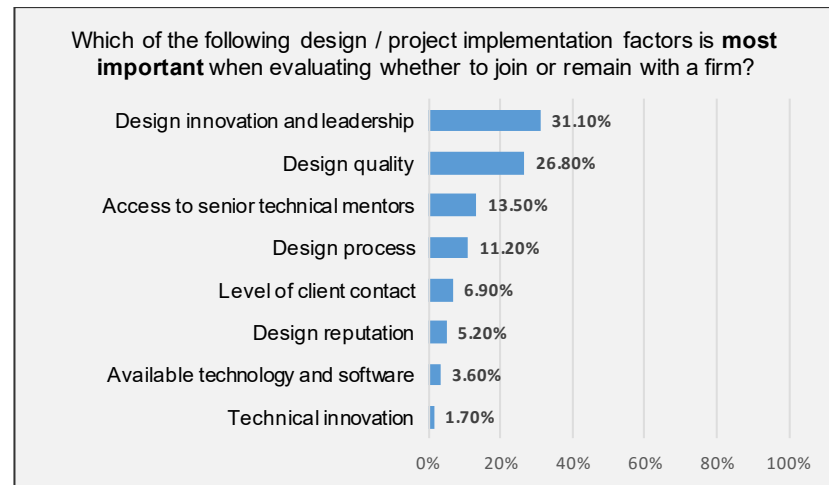
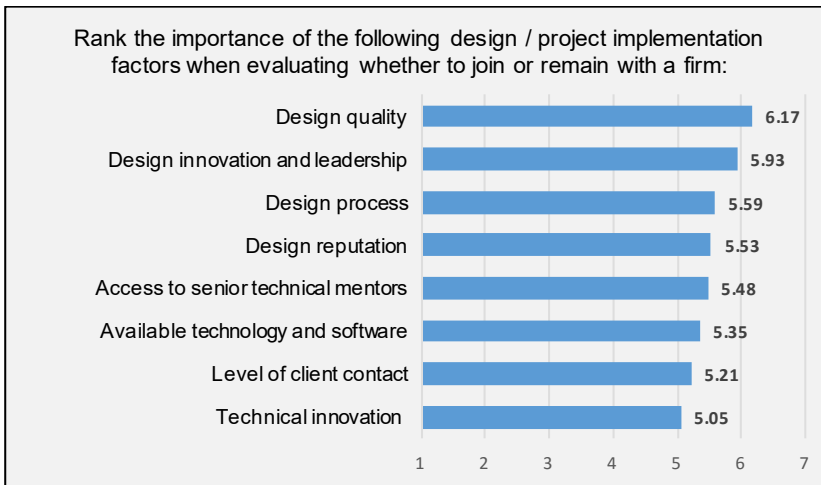
The second and third most important factors in this category are related to **leadership**. Design professionals are seeking effective and inspirational leaders and want to connect with individual leaders who care about their careers. Leaders create the vision and drive that propels a firm into the future. Nevertheless, the influence of leadership on all aspects of a design focused business and its culture is frequently underestimated.

Design professionals are highly educated and adept at learning, but a design-focused education is typically void of advanced leadership theory. Too often, leaders in the design professions fall short of achieving their leadership potential. Leadership development training for emerging leaders, design leaders, as well as the firm's most senior leaders should be an integral part of a talent retention policy.



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Primary Decision Factors: Design / Project Implementation



Most design professionals select their career path based on a passion for design and the built environment. The relatively high importance ranking of the factors in this category reflects the significance design professionals place on working with a firm that values and achieves design excellence.

Design leadership is typically hyper-focused on the design itself, but an evolving design community is demanding a more comprehensive leadership approach. Design leaders are benefitting from inspiring early and ongoing collaboration that encourages design professionals at all experience levels to contribute their diverse design skills to develop innovative design solutions.

Creating and perpetuating a compelling design vision requires an additional set of leadership skills to those needed to lead other aspects of the practice. A vast amount of scholarly research has emerged over the past few decades on the topic of leadership that can be applied to the challenges associated with leading design teams and to nurturing future design leaders. A talent retention strategy should include training that enhances traditional design leadership skills.

Design quality is also a crucial decision factor. Defining design quality is elusive and does not lend itself to a concise narrative, although most design professionals recognize it when they experience it. Too often, a firm’s design philosophy is reduced to a few generic phrases developed for a website or other marketing collateral. A strategy for attracting and retaining the best design talent should include an initiative to clearly articulate a firm’s commitment and approach to design quality.



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Primary Decision Factors: Design / Project Implementation

Access to senior technical mentors is ranked the third most important decision factor in this category. Project implementation requires a high level of technical sophistication to inform and fully develop innovative design concepts. Developing a formal mentoring program specifically aimed at nurturing relationships between emerging designers and senior technical mentors can dramatically enhance a firm's ability to attract and retain talent.



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Primary Decision Factors: Professional Development



When evaluating a potential new position or an existing position, both emerging and seasoned professionals value access to high quality, consistent, and comprehensive training opportunities that support their long-term career advancement goals.

Respondents selected a **clear path for advancement** as the most important decision factor in this category. To meet this requirement, firms may have to tailor their organizational structure to create ongoing promotion opportunities worthy of pursuit by ambitious design professionals. Layered onto an appropriate organizational structure should be clear opportunities for assuming increasing levels of responsibility and cross-functional assignments. For example, as a project architect moves toward project leadership, firms should consider encouraging lateral growth by assigning challenging business development, financial management, risk management, and/or operational responsibilities.

Respondents also selected **leadership opportunity** as an essential professional development factor. According to Deloitte’s 2016 Millennial Survey, 70% of Millennials are dissatisfied with how their leadership skills are being developed. When evaluating an existing position or a potential career change, Millennials ranked opportunities to progress and become leaders as one of the most important factors. This is clearly reflected in the results of this survey and is an important factor for all generations of design professionals. Firms should place strong emphasis on leadership development training as a crucial aspect of a comprehensive professional development policy – one that targets those design professionals that may be the most difficult to replace.



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Primary Decision Factors: Professional Development

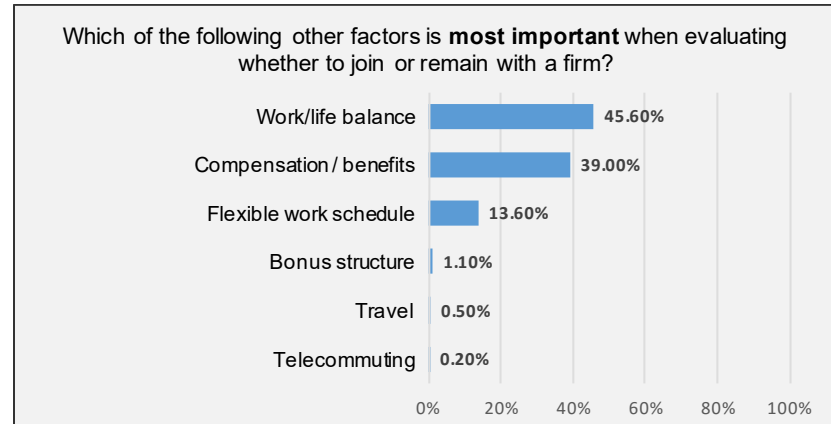
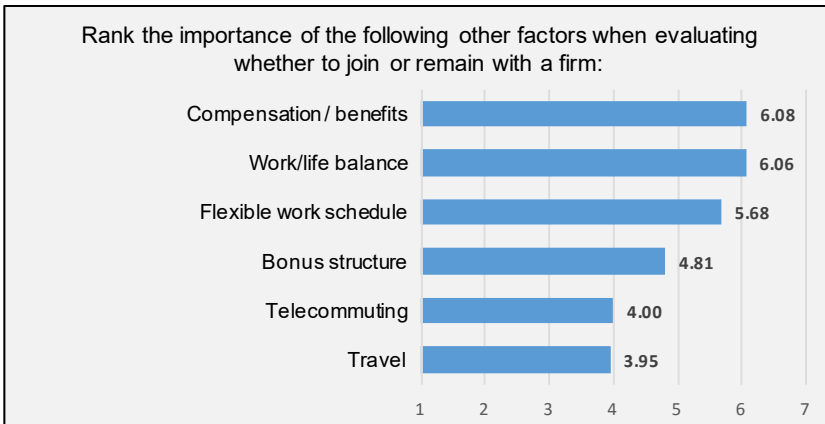
While a firm-wide professional development initiative should support all employees, firm leaders must provide the firm's most highly valued employees with advanced professional development opportunities that target their specific career advancement objectives. Firm leaders should identify those design professionals with the greatest potential and work collaboratively with them to draft a career development action plan.

A career development action plan should include a detailed training curriculum, accountability benchmarks, and appropriate guidelines for promotion. Firm leaders must then take responsibility for coaching the valued employee throughout the plan's implementation.



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Primary Decision Factors: Other Factors



Respondents ranked compensation/benefits and work/life balance equally important in this category; however, work/life balance was selected as the most important factor when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm.

While 68% of respondents in the 25-35 age range identified **work/life balance** as most important, the survey results reveal that a growing percentage of design professionals of all ages consider work/life balance an essential factor.

Maintaining passion for creative expression and design integrity within increasingly complex business and project delivery contexts requires extreme dedication. Many design professionals struggle to achieve work/life balance while coping with the demands of professional practice. Balancing career and the other aspects of life may at times seem impossible, but when supported by firm leaders, design professionals are well equipped to meet this challenge.

Leadership behavior and attitudes may have the most significant influence on work/life balance. By modeling work/life balance in their own lives and reinforcing its importance in daily practice, leaders will establish a culture conducive to attaining work/life balance.

Inefficiency can be a significant barrier to work/life balance. Developing focused expertise in leadership, project management, behavioral science, time management, and change management can move a professional environment toward greater efficiency through more effective daily performance.

Design professionals spend more than one-third of their waking hours at work. Work/life balance is not only about time spent at work vs. time spent pursuing personal interests, it is also about quality of life while at work. Professional satisfaction, career development opportunity, a sense of community, mutual respect, friendly colleagues, and a dynamic fun environment all contribute to creating balance within an often



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Primary Decision Factors: Other Factors

complicated and stressful context. With focused effort, improving each of these aspects of professional life will lead to better work/life balance.

Compensation/benefits ranked equally important as work/life balance and, not surprisingly, was considered one of the most important factors of the survey. Firm leaders report that compensation and benefits has become an increasingly significant factor for design professionals when evaluating existing and potential employment situations.

The current business cycle is a “seller’s market” for design professionals – there is a relative abundance of work and a shortage of talent. Offering a considerable salary increase to a candidate with a much needed skill set has become a common talent acquisition tactic. Providing a premium over market salary may be considered a rational business decision when an important client relationship and/or significant revenue potential are at risk.

Firm leaders can address this market driven activity by developing a talent retention strategy aimed at eliminating resignations due to compensation issues. The first step is initiating periodic conversations with each of the firm’s highly valued employees about salary, bonus and benefits; and about the factors that influence their specific compensation package.

When evaluating salary and benefits, firm leaders must consider the exorbitant costs associated with replacing key people, which have been estimated at 50% - 350% of an annual salary, and the risks such a loss imposes on a firm. These include:

- Loss of investment in training and developing an effective employee.
- Inefficiencies and redundancy associated with completing current assignments.
- Liability exposure due to loss of continuity and of specific project knowledge.
- Lost revenue due to disrupted business development initiatives.
- Lost revenue due to client relationship issues.
- Recruiting, hiring, and on-boarding.
- Training related to practice standards.
- Potential salary premiums for an equivalent replacement.
- Long periods of inefficiency prior to achieving similar levels of effectiveness.
- Inefficiencies and opportunity costs due to the required amount of senior management and team member support.
- Less engagement and loss of motivation and productivity from other team members.
- Risk of replacements not working out.

Losing key people, especially due to compensation issues, can cause lasting damage to morale and encourage others to seek employment opportunities that better support their financial needs. A percentage of employees in every firm, including top performers and people with tremendous potential, fall into a high risk retention category. Developing a focused strategy for preventing compensation related turnover is an increasingly critical component of a successful retention policy.



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Professional Development Topics

After graduation, design professionals continue learning from working on projects, from interacting with other professionals, in formal training programs, and through personal exploration. Increasingly, design professionals are seeking more structured educational experiences that target specific career advancement objectives.

Many design professionals enjoy access to excellent educational resources that support licensure, keeping them current with design innovations and technical advancements; and improving their project management, business development, general business and other skills. The most successful firms are committed to creating learning environments that encourage continuous improvement and ongoing professional development.

While the majority of learning opportunities focus on competency training, a comprehensive career advancement training program, and individualized career development action plans will be required for design professionals with leadership, senior management and/or ownership aspirations.

The table on the right shows the importance ranking on a scale of 1-7 of the 30 professional development topics included in the survey.

Professional Development Topic	Average Ranking
Team leadership	6.01
Project management	5.92
Firm leadership	5.63
Design leadership	5.59
Business development	5.58
Interview presentation techniques	5.57
Building technology	5.53
Contract and fee negotiations	5.50
Client leadership	5.49
Communications	5.47
Public speaking	5.32
Project finance	5.25
Marketing	5.23
Construction phase management	5.19
Risk management	5.18
Time management	5.17
Sustainability	5.07
Resource management / staffing	5.07
Coaching skills	5.04
Firm finance	5.03
Public relations	4.92
Software (BIM, graphics, email, etc.)	4.86
Business writing	4.81
Special building typologies	4.64
Career planning	4.60
Renovation / adaptive reuse	4.51
Design theory	4.43
Information technology	4.43
Planning and urban design	4.19
Human resources	4.16



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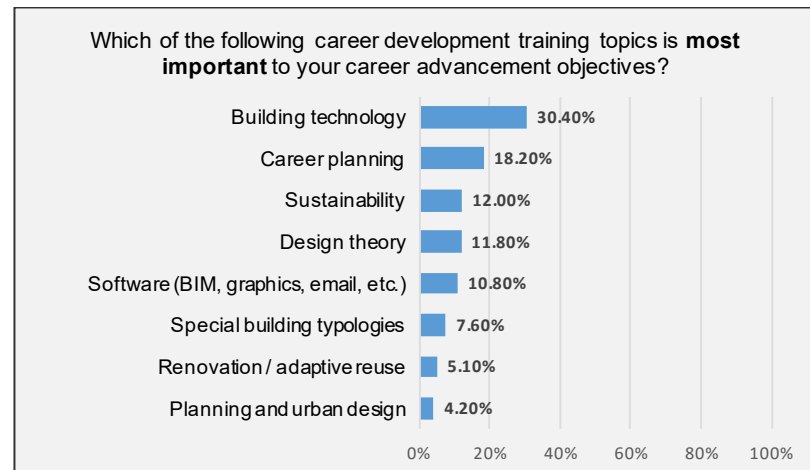
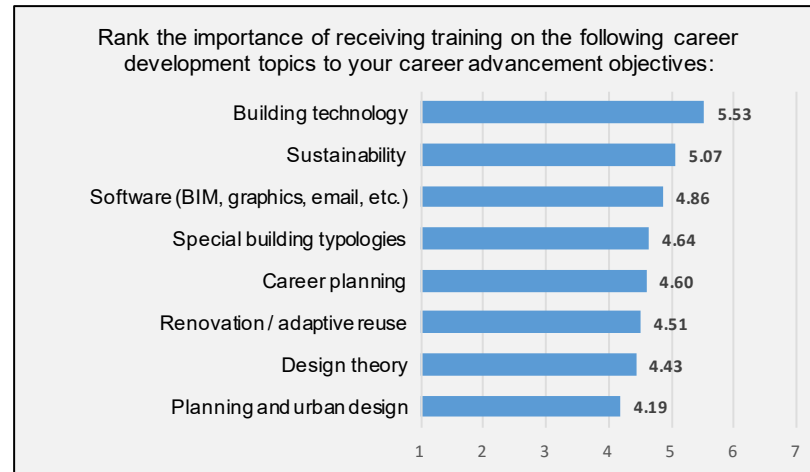
Professional Development Topics

In an effort to further understand the most important professional development topics, respondents indicated the following levels of importance within specific categories:

Leadership



Career Development



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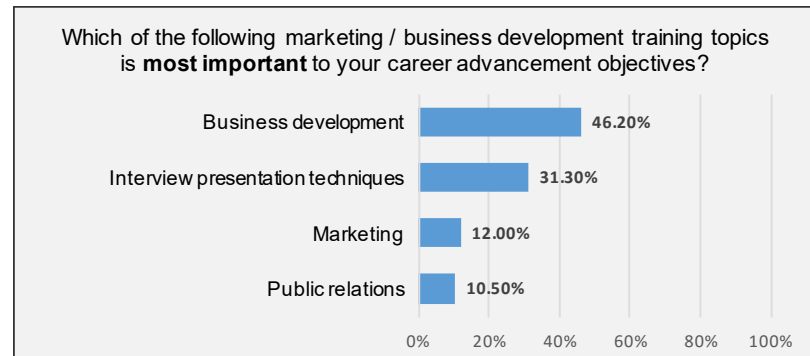
Strogoff Consulting, Inc. in collaboration with the AIA California Council

Professional Development Topics

Business Skills



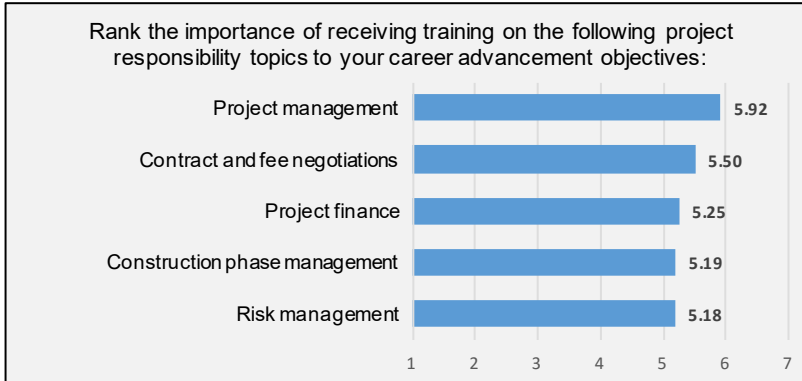
Marketing / Business Development



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Professional Development Topics

Project Responsibility



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Appendix

The following supplemental data includes response counts for each survey question. In the **Primary Decisions Factors** section of the survey, respondents were asked to include factors important to them that were not included in the survey and those responses are included below.

In the **Professional Development Topics** section of the survey, respondents were asked to include topics important to them that were not included in the survey and those responses are included below.

Primary Decision Factors: Firm Legacy

Q1 : Rank the importance of the following firm legacy factors when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Firm history	26	41	88	131	163	129	49	627
Ownership transition status	30	46	72	125	148	145	59	625
Portfolio	5	2	9	52	120	256	180	624
Published work and design awards	19	38	64	124	174	156	51	626
Street reputation	4	5	19	39	159	232	170	628

Q2: Which of the above firm legacy factors is most important when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?

Firm history	72
Ownership transition status	84
Portfolio	232
Published work and design awards	21
Street reputation	221
Total response count	630

Primary Decision Factors: Practice Characteristics

Q3: Rank the importance of the following practice characteristics when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Colleagues that work with the firm	28	38	41	93	158	157	65	580
Culture	1	3	5	32	96	208	242	587
Current projects	1	10	21	56	165	219	112	584
Effective and inspirational leaders	0	4	7	33	89	239	214	586
Employee diversity	53	52	78	128	131	103	40	585
Firm size	42	79	96	154	112	84	19	586
Individual(s) leading the firm	2	5	12	40	111	235	182	587
Location(s) of projects	54	77	93	148	109	85	20	586
Office environment	2	4	13	48	140	231	148	586
Office location	8	16	33	99	146	186	99	587
Organizational structure	5	14	42	86	190	169	69	575
Project complexity	13	30	67	146	172	118	36	582
Project team structure	8	18	45	123	167	160	56	577
Project typologies	6	35	51	111	174	146	60	583
Specific project(s)	38	58	82	136	138	100	31	583

Q4: Which of the above practice characteristics is most important when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?

Colleagues that work with the firm	18
Culture	219
Current projects	43
Effective and inspirational leaders	111



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Primary Decision Factors: Practice Characteristics (cont.)

Employee diversity	2
Firm size	2
Individual(s) leading the firm	68
Location(s) of projects	0
Office environment	38
Office location	13
Organizational structure	10
Project complexity	10
Project team structure	15
Project typologies	24
Specific project(s)	12
Total response count	585

Primary Decision Factors: Design/Project Implementation

Q5: Rank the importance of the following design / project implementation factors when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm:

	least important							most important							total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Access to senior technical mentors	5	11	27	65	124	218	110	560							
Available technology and software	4	15	31	64	151	212	85	562							
Design innovation and leadership	1	3	11	41	100	211	193	560							
Design process	0	2	24	59	150	205	118	558							
Design quality	0	2	7	20	73	221	234	557							
Design reputation	2	11	28	57	139	193	129	559							
Level of client contact	6	20	33	86	146	178	88	557							
Technical innovation	6	16	46	108	141	182	59	558							

Q6: Which of the above design / project implementation factors is most important when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?

Access to senior technical mentors	76
Available technology and software	20
Design innovation and leadership	175
Design process	63
Design quality	151
Design reputation	29
Level of client contact	39
Technical innovation	10
Total response count	563

Primary Decision Factors: Professional Development

Q7: Rank the importance of the following professional development factors when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm:

	least important							most important							total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Business development opportunities	8	29	48	101	164	147	50	547							
Clear path for advancement	0	2	8	44	85	203	209	551							
Clear path for ownership	18	35	50	108	122	139	74	546							
Leadership opportunity	1	1	9	35	94	218	192	550							
Level/quality of prof. development	1	3	13	41	119	205	168	550							
Mentoring/Coaching	3	15	21	57	117	221	118	552							
Project leadership	0	3	12	45	124	227	141	552							



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Appendix

Primary Decision Factors: Professional Development (cont.)

Q8: Which of the above professional development factors is most important when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?

Business development opportunities	13
Clear path for advancement	157
Clear path for ownership	39
Leadership opportunity	104
Level/quality of prof. development	118
Mentoring/Coaching	59
Project leadership	64
Total response count	554

Primary Decision Factors: Other Factors

Q9: Rank the importance of the following other factors when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Bonus structure	15	23	36	121	158	155	32	540
Compensation / benefits	0	1	7	30	83	213	210	544
Flexible work schedule	2	12	19	50	117	182	157	539
Telecommuting	48	76	72	129	100	77	38	540
Travel	42	60	85	150	121	64	18	540
Work/life balance	4	2	14	43	74	145	262	544

Q10: Which of the above other factors is most important when evaluating whether to join or remain with a firm?

Bonus structure	6
Compensation / benefits	213
Flexible work schedule	74
Telecommuting	1
Travel	3
Work/life balance	249
Total response count	546



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Primary Decision Factors: Respondent Factors

Q11: If there are decision factors important to you that are not included in the above categories, please enter up to three factors in the fields below.

Respondents were provided the opportunity to include up to three factors important to them that were not included in the survey. 133 respondents included one factor, 78 included two factors and 54 included three factors.

Collaboration

1. All employees willing to learn from each other
2. Autonomy
3. Listening skills of upper management
4. Minimal egos

Compensation and Benefits

1. 401k Contribution/Program/Profit Sharing
2. ARE compensation / benefits
3. Being compensated equally with men
4. Comp time to equal overtime provided
5. Educational Benefits
6. Exercise perks
7. Financial support for architectural licensing exams
8. Financial support for other certifications

9. Firm support of AIA membership and leadership
10. Firm support of licensure costs and process
11. Good health benefits
12. Health Insurance
13. Office health treatments to employees
14. Other benefits
15. Other office benefits - coffee, snacks, et al.
16. Promulgate further education by reimburse for higher degree
17. Vacation/personal leave
18. Paid parking and/or public transportation
19. Time off
20. Subset of work/life balance: respect for actual time-off

Design Excellence, Innovation and Research

1. Ability to develop designs
2. Ability to do research
3. Ability to innovate outside of regimen or structure
4. Access to designing projects
5. Commitment to Research + Development Initiatives within the practice
6. Commitment to sustainability
7. Design culture
8. Design freedom
9. Diversity of firm's project types
10. Fabrication-modeling making as part of design



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Firm Culture

1. Accountability as an integral part of firm culture
2. Acknowledgement provided to staff
3. Amount of office politics
4. Clearly expressed vision for the future of the firm
5. Collaboration nationally between offices
6. Collaborative environment
7. Colleague participation / engagement in the culture
8. College degrees in field of architecture
9. Commitment of firm - job security
10. Commitment to employees, sense of team
11. Common values
12. Company leadership shows respect for employees
13. Compassion
14. Credit for work contribution
15. Culture of questions without fear of being shot down
16. Culture of respect for employees/partners
17. Diversity of employees and in leadership
18. Educated in field
19. Empowerment
20. Encourage new ideas from everyone
21. Engagement
22. Exchange opportunity between offices
23. Extra-curricular activities
24. Focus on open, effective communication at/between all levels
25. Gender balanced office culture versus male dominated
26. How well peers support (or compete against) each other
27. How women are treated
28. Inspired by firm mission
29. Likeability of firm employees
30. Mission and values
31. Nice people to work with
32. No discrimination in the office
33. Office activities where coworkers mingle
34. Opportunity for professional recognition
35. Opportunity for rapid growth/promotion
36. Opportunity to address candidate preferred areas of the practice
37. Opportunity to contribute ideas
38. Opportunity to work on exciting challenges
39. Ownership equality
40. Pleasant coworkers
41. Professionalism
42. Receiving credit and respect for hard work
43. Relationship with other employees
44. Relaxed atmosphere / blue jeans type of environment
45. Reputation of open and frequent communication is key
46. Respect given to employees by senior leaders
47. Respect to one another
48. Respect within the office and with clients
49. Sense of community
50. Sense that work is appreciated
51. Sincerity of management for staff needs
52. Skilled, friendly, helpful, rigorous coworkers
53. Social Activities with Firm
54. Stability or growth of the firm
55. Staff stability (People feel insecure when there is lots of turnover)
56. Team player mentality of staff/office
57. The firm's integrity



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- 58. Too bad that sexism in the profession is still as strong as it is
- 59. Transparency on business practices
- 60. Vertical organization (people work from the start to end) vs horizontal organization (departmentalized)
- 61. Welcoming culture and affable co-worker

Firm Financial Health and Outlook

- 1. Does the firm have any work?
- 2. Financial soundness
- 3. Firm economic stability/longevity/future prospects
- 4. Future Project/Market Outlook
- 5. Future Workload
- 6. Is the firm changing/growing or stagnant?
- 7. Not being abandoned during economic crisis, rather investing in development
- 8. Profitability of firm
- 9. Secure beyond current project
- 10. Savvy business know-how

Human Resources

- 1. Advancement for minorities
- 2. Being given same advancement opportunities as men
- 3. Effective policies & procedures
- 4. Employee Review
- 5. Equal opportunity, equal pay between genders and backgrounds
- 6. Equal treatment for female employees
- 7. Evaluations
- 8. Fairness

- 9. Feedback of the performance from the team (all around, junior to supervisors)
- 10. Objective evaluation of work performance
- 11. Office politics (e.g., are promotions earned)
- 12. Paid, non-mandatory overtime
- 13. Personal recognition for contributions to project
- 14. Personalities of people I interview with
- 15. Promotions based on quality of work
- 16. Recognition

Leadership

- 1. Accountability of all employees - including leadership
- 2. Allowed to make mistakes
- 3. Bosses aren't assholes
- 4. Business acumen of firm leaders
- 5. Communication of firm's big pictures to lower level employees
- 6. Ethical awareness in projects and process
- 7. Female leadership
- 8. Firm leadership style - collaborative, delegates
- 9. Helpful, cooperative, understanding management style
- 10. Integrity of leadership
- 11. Integrity. Does the firm do what it says it is going to do
- 12. Integrity/Honesty/Morals
- 13. Is young leadership encouraged
- 14. Leaders who know what the work entails
- 15. Leadership communicates a clear vision for the future
- 16. Leadership listens to employee concerns and takes action
- 17. Open and direct communications styles
- 18. Open door policy



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19. Partners' reputation for being difficult to work with
20. Quantity of women as partners or in high positions
21. Strategic Plan for firm
22. Strong Management, not Strong Reactions
23. Trust
24. Trust of leadership
25. Values of firm leadership

Marketing and Business Development

1. Ability to maintain repeat clients
2. Active and promoted business and marketing plan
3. Appreciation of business development as a key part of continuity
4. Encouraging employee entrepreneurship
5. Ethically competitive
6. Firm involvement in local design community
7. Firm involvement with public
8. Firm outreach in the community

Mentoring

1. Accessibility of firm partners
2. Having someone at work who genuinely cares about you, your life and your career
3. Mentor/mentee potential
4. Mentorship Opportunities
5. My direct supervisor is highly interested in my growth and development

Project Management

1. Accurate Project Budgeting
2. Business process aligned with design process
3. Equitable distribution of project opportunities amongst all staff - male and female
4. Flexibility in Selecting Work
5. Opportunities to lead project teams
6. Opportunities to work on diverse project types
7. Position/Project Leadership Level = #1 reason
8. Principal support on team project
9. Project involvement
10. Project Management opportunities
11. Project team leadership
12. Project team structure
13. Quality Control
14. Realistic expectations
15. Responsibility & decision making opportunities for office and projects
16. Skill match to work performing
17. Specific role or tasks
18. Team compatibility
19. Team members acting in roles as necessary
20. Timely coordination of consultants & office flow
21. Understand customer, excellent customer service, clear problem statement
22. Unreasonable deadlines
23. Value in Employee Contribution vs Cad Monkey Driving
24. Variety in assignments.



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Professional Development

1. Ability to be involved in professional organizations
2. Architecturally educated staff
3. Clear path to working on more complex projects
4. Continuing education, e.g. conferences
5. Defined company-wide ownership opportunities
6. Free time for study
7. Freedom to develop as individual
8. Growth opportunities
9. One's own reputation (clout) within the firm
10. Opportunities to stretch and grow as an Architect
11. Paid professional development
12. Periodic lunch and learns/continuing education
13. Personal research on human factors effective architecture

Recruiting

1. Ability to attract resumes (Future firm talent outlook)
2. Staff turnover

Reputation of Firm

1. Client profile
2. Colleagues I like and respect

Social Relevance

1. Ability to give back to the community
2. Community involvement
3. Design ethic
4. Humanity and social aspect of work
5. Potential impact of firm's projects on the community
6. Practice that incorporates social justice and equity
7. Practice integrates highest sustainability standards and practices
8. Public benefit from work
9. Research agenda and access to working with nonprofits and community volunteering
10. Social awareness in projects and process

Work Environment

1. Ability to bicycle to work and shower at the office
2. Access to public transit or minimal commute
3. Adherence to safety and quality standards
4. Closeness to public transit and total commute time
5. Commute time
6. Dog friendly (woof!)
7. Ease of commute / very short commute distance
8. Equipment (Desk/Computer, etc.)
9. Homework area for older children after school
10. Interesting or cheerful office workspace
11. It's my life, not yours
12. Location of firm near transit to my home
13. Number of peers at my level
14. Specific commute
15. Workstation / computer



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Professional Development Topics: Leadership

Q12: Rank the importance of receiving training on the following leadership topics to your career advancement objectives:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Client leadership	5	14	22	67	114	189	123	534
Coaching skills	6	25	32	97	156	154	63	533
Design leadership	4	4	22	61	115	207	121	534
Firm leadership	3	14	14	66	96	195	146	534
Team leadership	1	2	7	33	87	210	195	535

Q13: Which of the above leadership training topics is most important to your career advancement objectives?

Client leadership	79
Coaching skills	29
Design leadership	115
Firm leadership	135
Team leadership	178
Total response count	536

Professional Development Topics: Career Development

Q14: Rank the importance of receiving training on the following career development topics to your career advancement objectives.

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Building technology	5	10	20	65	121	174	129	524
Career planning	18	41	57	105	148	103	51	523
Design theory	24	45	70	112	130	98	44	523
Planning and urban design	25	57	75	144	117	74	32	524
Renovation / adaptive reuse	13	45	66	125	125	112	37	523
Software (BIM, graphics, etc.)	11	34	42	104	138	127	68	524
Special building typologies	19	29	57	119	135	110	50	519
Sustainability	20	27	26	88	124	140	98	523

Q15: Which of the above career development training is most important to your career advancement objectives?

Building technology	160
Career planning	96
Design theory	62
Planning and urban design	22
Renovation / adaptive reuse	27
Software (BIM, graphics, etc.)	57
Special building typologies	40
Sustainability	63
Total response count	527



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Professional Development Topics: Business Skills

Q16: Rank the importance of receiving training on the following business skills topics to your career advancement objectives:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Business writing	22	32	48	85	136	129	68	520
Communications	5	19	34	60	99	154	147	518
Firm finance	7	33	36	89	127	152	75	519
Human resources	33	54	61	136	137	67	27	515
Information technology	23	45	51	118	152	89	33	511
Public speaking	8	21	24	74	125	150	117	519
Resource management / staffing	6	27	35	95	122	164	70	519
Time management	11	30	31	71	120	150	103	516

Q17: Which of the above business skills training topics is most important to your career advancement objectives?

Business writing	21
Communications	189
Firm finance	73
Human resources	11
Information technology	32
Public speaking	70
Resource management / staffing	59
Time management	66
Total response count	521

Professional Development Topics: Marketing/Business Development

Q18: Rank the importance of receiving training on the following marketing / business development topics to your career advancement objectives:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Business development	6	10	22	54	113	179	136	520
Interview presentation techniques	2	11	21	58	121	174	131	518
Marketing	0	20	29	92	126	177	75	519
Public relations	10	25	47	97	132	152	56	519

Q19: Which of the above marketing / business development training topics is most important to your career advancement objectives?

Business development	238
Interview presentation techniques	161
Marketing	62
Public relations	54
Total response count	515



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Professional Development Topics: Project Responsibility

Q20: Rank the importance of receiving training on the following project responsibility topics to your career advancement objectives:

	least important			most important				total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Construction phase management	10	23	35	69	118	178	85	518
Contract and fee negotiations	3	13	21	59	135	161	126	518
Project finance	1	20	30	83	138	155	90	517
Project management	1	7	9	41	94	173	193	518
Risk management	5	16	32	86	138	169	72	518

Q21: Which of the above project responsibility training topics is most important to your career advancement objectives?

Construction phase management	76
Contract and fee negotiations	111
Project finance	46
Project management	249
Risk management	37
Total response count	519

Professional Development Topics: Respondent Factors

Respondents were provided the opportunity to include up to three topics important to them that were not included in the survey. 43 respondents included one topics, 22 included two topics and 11 included three topics. The list is in alphabetical order and edited to omit duplications.

Q22: If there are professional development topics important to you that are not included in the above categories, please enter up to three topics in the fields below.

1. Advancing ethics in the construction industry
2. Allocating time for continuing education
3. Blogging or publishing 101 to build a brand
4. Building an online "brand"
5. Building codes
6. Business management
7. Certifications beyond AIA, i.e., A4LE, Planning, SCUP
8. Change management
9. Client dispute resolution
10. Client engagement (landing contracts) and retention
11. Client management
12. Client relations
13. Collaboration / effective team creation
14. Collaboration method
15. Conflict resolution
16. Construction claims



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17. Construction documents
18. Construction management
19. Contractor relations/management
20. Coordination between professions to create deliverables
21. Creating ideas that have legs or buy-in power to see projects take off and completed
22. Cultivating firm culture
23. Customer service attitude
24. Design charrette experience
25. Design management
26. Developing business with non-profit organizations
27. Engaging others to promote their best work
28. Engineering consultant coordination / management
29. Finding time to perform civic duties/volunteering
30. Fostering the office culture you want
31. Freedom to study, write, and publish
32. Future technologies
33. Global practice
34. How to get along with others (the team, inside & outside office)
35. How to provide great value to clients
36. Integrated team management
37. International client development
38. Lean work flows
39. Management of expectations
40. Market relevance
41. Networking
42. Opportunities for writing and research
43. Presentation skills and development of graphics
44. Professional development tied to actual projects and roles in the office – not discrete seminar type "learning" opportunities
45. Professional practice innovation
46. Professional support for AREs
47. Project accounting
48. Project design
49. Project feasibility
50. Project organization
51. Relationships with consultants
52. Relationships with contractors
53. Skill in motivating others
54. Strategic planning
55. Study materials for tests
56. Support for ARE's and other exams
57. Sustainability research and feasibility
58. Team building
59. Tracking earned value more effectively
60. Understanding other professions and how to integrate
61. When to say no go to a client
62. When to say no go to a project
63. Writing skills



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For More Information

If you have questions, comments or would like more information about the survey, please contact:

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