



Mentor and educate all members of your firm is quality of leadership in the process of a firm's professional practice. People are a professional firm's most important resource. If you fail to grow the next generation of professionals, you are failing to secure your own future and the future of your profession.

## MENTORING LESS EXPERIENCED STAFF

Establish a mentoring program to enable seasoned staff to nature the career development of less experienced firm members. Practicing architecture and engineering in the real world in a way that actually results in profitable, buildable, and claims-free projects is not learned in school. It is learned over time through personal on-the-job experience and from knowledge passed down from seasoned professional who take time to teach as well as do their own work. A formal mentoring program to nurture less experienced professionals will connect them to your firm's goals and strategies.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct Rule 5.201, Intern and Professional Development, states that:

Members should recognize and fulfill their obligation to nurture fellow professionals as they progress through all stages of their career, beginning with professional education in the academy, progressing through internship and continuing throughout their career. (Emphasis added.)

And, in addition to a firm's mentoring program, matching individual students and emerging professionals with practitioners who agree to serve as mentors is a promising initiative that several architecture and engineering schools, and AIA components and engineering chapters, have embraced. Most successful senior architects and engineers were mentored by numerous professionals inside and outside their firm.

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Canon 7, states that:

Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers, and shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those engineers under their supervision. (Emphasis added.)

Although administrative frameworks and expectations between less experienced staff with mentors vary, education is never wasted. Some mentoring teams never develop beyond perfunctory communication; others offer valued counsel, inspirational role models, and introduction into professional networks. Telling younger generations that they must "pay their dues" and "figure it out on their own" is likely to result in losing them to a competitor, which costs your firm in finding, hiring, and training replacements.

In the past, mentoring was considered a natural process that just happened. However, we fail to remember that in the past, technology did not exist unlike today's incredible pace of work, volume of information, and financial pressures associated with architecture and engineering practice today. Previously, young design professionals typically shadowed senior staff at client meetings, "on the boards" and on project sites. Relationships were simpler back then, with fewer layers of professional practices.



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## PROVIDING CONTINUING EDUCATION

Effective training is the key element to success for professional firms. Consider a comprehensive training program, including leadership, project management and technical skills. It is now recognized that continuing education is required for professionals to stay current with the latest developments, skills, and new technologies required for their fields. Overall, continuing education is considered a way for professionals to

keep abreast of their fields so they don't lag behind. And many careers require continuing education.

Employees who seek to improve their skills can be an incredible asset for their firm. Continuing education in professional design firms can be a win-win for both employees and employers. Skilled employees bring new ideas and creativity to their job. Firms that are truly interested in the welfare of their employees and their professional development can also offer full or partial financial aid packages for training.

The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) Section III., Professional Obligations, 9.e. states that:

Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers and should keep current in their specialty fields by engaging in professional practice, participating in continuing education courses, reading in the technical literature, and attending professional meetings and seminars. (Emphasis added.)

The AIA Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct, Ethical Standard 1.2, Standards of Excellence, states that:

Members should continually seek to raise the standards of aesthetic excellence, architectural education, research, training and practice. (Emphasis added.)

And the AIA Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct, Ethical Standard 5.2, Intern and Professional Development, states that:

Members should recognize and fulfill their obligation to nurture fellow professionals as they progress through all stages of their career, beginning with professional education in the academy, progressing through internship and continuing throughout their career. (Emphasis added.)

## IN CONCLUSION

Following are some expectations for mentors and mentees, and also when involved in receiving and providing continuing education and training.

### Mentors' Expectations from their Mentees:

- Be open to learning
- Be willing to take a risk and be hungry for new challenges
- Gain new skills and improve work habits
- Solicit and accept constructive feedback
- Act on mentor's suggestions, guidance and advice
- Appreciate the value of the mentor's work experience

### Mentee's Expectations from their Mentors:

- Establish and maintain rapport with mentee
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in the mentee
- Identify areas for growth and development
- Encourage exploration of new ideas
- Be an active listener
- Provide appropriate and timely counsel and advice
- Help share the firm's culture and goals

For more information, see *Architect's Essentials of Professional Development* (Wiley, 2003), Jean Valence provides concise how-to guidelines for establishing a proprietary professional development plan. The book is a good resource for design professional firms and individual professionals who want to build knowledge

and skills that improve their leadership and competitive edge.

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<sup>1</sup> The above risk management principles have been adapted, in part, from an article that originally appeared in the June 2012 issue of *STRUCTURE* magazine, published by the National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA), and is **reprinted with permission**. The top 10 principles of risk management for design professional are 1) A Firm's Culture & Ethical Practices, **2) Mentoring And Education**, 3) Communication Skills, 4) "Go/No Go" Policy, 5) Contracts & Ownership Of The Firm's Documents, 6) Develop A Scope Of Services With Appropriate Compensation, 7) Produce Quality Contract Documents, 8) Construction Phase Services, 9) Utilize A Certificate Of Substantial Completion, and 10) Dispute And Claim Handling.

<https://csengineermag.com/article/principles-and-tools-for-risk-management/>

### **About the Author**

*Eric O. Pempus, FAIA, Esq., NCARB has been a risk manager for the last 12 years with experience in architecture, law and professional liability insurance, and a unique and well-rounded background in the construction industry. He has 25 years of experience in the practice of architecture, and as an adjunct professor teaching professional practice courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels for the last 30 years. As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of the AIA National Ethics Council, he has demonstrated his impact on architectural profession. He has presented numerous loss prevention and continuing educational programs to design professionals and architectural students in various venues across the United States and Canada.*

*The above comments are based upon DesignPro Insurance Group's experience with Risk Management Loss Prevention activities, and should not be construed to represent a determination of legal issues, but are offered for general guidance with respect to your own risk management and loss prevention. The above comments do not replace your need for you to rely on your counsel for advice and a legal review, since every project and circumstance differs from every other set of facts.*

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## CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

### Speaking Engagements:



#### ***“Engineering Law & Ethics”***

Half Moon Education Seminars, Eau Claire, WI  
February 7, 2020 - 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
The Radison, University Toledo Medical Center,  
Toledo, Ohio



#### ***“Practice Management (PcM), Architecture Registration Examination (ARE 5.0)”***

AIA Cleveland  
March 7, 2020 – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Fabo Architecture Studios, Cleveland, OH



#### ***“Ethical Concerns That Your A/E Clients May Encounter”***

ae ProNet Spring Conference, Nashville, TN  
March 18 – 19, 2020, Time to be Determined



#### ***“Project Management (PjM), Architecture Registration Examination (ARE 5.0)”***

AIA Cleveland  
March 28, 2020 – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Fabo Architecture Studios, Cleveland, OH



#### ***“Ethically Looking Outward – Architecture/Interior Design Perspectives”***

The Alberta Association of Architects  
Banff, Alberta, Canada  
May 9, 2020 - 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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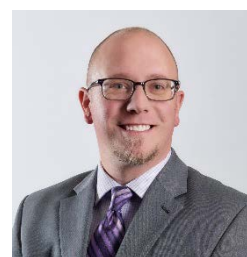
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