



Council of Firms Knowledge Community

August 13, 2018

Topic: Human Resources: Recruiting/Hiring/Retention

How do we find the right people to fill entry level positions as well as gaps in our staff's skills and experience? How do we help to diversify our profession in our recruiting/hiring/retention practices? The Council of Firms discussed these topics at our August meeting.

Our recruiting discussion focused on a desire to attract a diverse group of architects and interns.

- How can you find people with a passion for the profession? As architects, we should reach out to elementary/middle school to start teaching kids about architecture as early as possible.
- Participate in Architecture in the Schools Committee, Design Camp, NOMA outreach to help diversify the talent pipeline locally.
- Hire a Step-Up intern. The Step-Up! Achieve program's Design Pipeline helps match under-resourced high school students interested in design with design firms in Minneapolis for paid summer internships.
- Volunteer for design reviews locally at UMN and Dunwoody, and attend colleges' and universities' job fairs and career nights.
- Connect with schools.
- Donate excess samples and materials to schools and architecture programs.
- Reach out to non-traditional colleges with architecture programs - Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Universities, architecture schools with a minority focus.
- Offer summer internships and scholarships to minority students.

Our extreme weather is a major challenge for hiring in Minnesota. Some firms with multiple offices are able to sell the idea of staff moving to Minneapolis based on testimonials of local leaders – highlighting the quality of life, including our parks system, public services, and cultural attractions. We have a resource here locally, GreaterMSP, with national outreach potential to attract new talent to our region. Their "Makelt.MSP." initiative includes tips and tricks for attracting and hiring talent in this region, and includes local networking opportunities for people new to the region.

Another challenge for hiring in our industry is the lack of architects with mid-level experience, due to the great recession. Firms are filling that gap with young architects eager to learn quickly and more experienced architects willing to reach out to interns and emerging professionals to bring them up. There has also been a rise in former architects returning to the field after years on another track – the learning curve is different for each person, and in many cases their former peers are now leaders in the firms. In these cases, firms should be willing to offer support and advocacy, as well as training for new skills required to help them to quickly integrate back into the profession.

For some unique positions, creative hiring solutions are warranted – for specifications writing, consider hiring a product representative or honing an intern's skills. For code analysis expertise, hire a building official.

For recruiting and retention, firms have instituted incentives like flex time and work-from-anywhere (even a Winnebago). For young architects and minority employees, firms should support staff attending local networking events and joining NOMA or other groups to enhance their social and professional networks.

This discussion highlighted that a creative and proactive approach to hiring staff should lead to a more diverse make-up of architects in our region over time.

Resources:

- PSMJ's "Finding, Recruiting and Keeping the Best" <http://go.psmj.com/ebook-finding-recruiting-keeping>
- GreaterMSP's Makelt.MSP. www.makeitmsp.org

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