



AIA Minnesota

A Society of The American Institute of Architects

lift
challenge
inspire

Architects in Commerce
Research Initiative

When we look back on the recession 10 years hence, from the perspectives of our future practices — which we are redefining right now — we may identify the year 2008 as a watershed moment. We might remember our businesses before '08 and think about what a boom we enjoyed. The traditional practice of architecture, while never easy, was working. Post 2008, the year of the crash, we will recall a period of unsettling flux of duration yet to be determined. A look back on ourselves during this period would reveal the dramatic reduction of the size of our industry. It would see firms and individual architects reeling from the sudden loss of projects and of jobs.

We will also see what we did about it.

In fact, the so-called traditional practice of architecture was enduring pressure and revealing stress cracks well before 2008. Even during the expansive times leading up to the crash, the architect's role in a project was perceived as eroded; there were concerns that we were undervalued, overworked, and underpaid. The writing was on the wall for medium size architectural firms with a general design practice who didn't develop a specialty.

These topics were examined and discussed by thought leaders in every corner of our industry, including those in AIA Minnesota, to find solutions and to suggest tools to survive and thrive in a post 2008 reality.

The 2012 AIA Minnesota Architects in Commerce Research Initiative (AICRI) performed another important step in the continued efforts to understand and communicate the importance of architects in the marketplace. Our clients, consumers of architectural services, were asked directly what they want and need from their architects. They were asked about the challenges and opportunities they experienced working with architects. They were asked about the future and they offered advice.

The key findings of the survey are in this report. The results are sometimes predictable and sometimes enlightening, and there is something for each of us in the many voices expressed in the survey. Listen to them. Take what you need from their messages. It won't be the same for everybody.

If we didn't know our industry was changing before 2008, we surely know it now. When we look back on these challenges 10 years from now, we will want to see that we did something about it.



Ann Voda, AIA
AIA Minnesota President

Table of Contents

Forward	2
Section 1.0 Introduction	3
Section 2.0 Key Findings	5
Section 3.0 The Role of the Architect	6
Section 4.0 Contributing to the Business	7
Section 5.0 The Value Added	10
Section 6.0 Owner's Representatives	12
Section 7.0 Challenges / Barriers	13
Section 8.0 The Future	16
Section 9.0 Advice	17
Section 10.0 Comments	19

The research undertaken in this survey is part of an on-going effort by the AIA Minnesota — Architects in Commerce Research Initiative (AICRI) to better understand and advance the actual and perceived value of the profession as it relates to the commercial marketplace in which the membership practices.

This report presents the findings of a broad survey completed in 2012 that focused on AIA Minnesota members' external market — those who hire and/or work with architects — including owners, contractors, developers, and owner's representatives. Telephone interviews were conducted with these individuals in order to understand:

- The perceived role of the architect
- The relative importance of contributing to the owner's mission and vision
- The value-added that architects can potentially bring to a project
- The trend toward bringing in third-parties as owner's advocates
- Challenges and barriers in the design and construction process
- How the role of the architect is evolving
- What architects can do to bring greater value to clients

The Process

In 2012, AIA Minnesota hired Cameron MacAllister Group (CMG) to conduct this external survey in order to create a plan of action for AIA Minnesota to implement to move the membership forward. One main reason for retaining CMG was to involve a professional and experienced third party who would ensure the strictest of confidentiality throughout the entire process, hence AIA Minnesota's integrity in the client / architect interaction.

In the initial meeting, the specific objectives were established and a list of potential respondents for the telephone survey was developed.

A questionnaire, or discussion guide, was written by CMG and revised and approved by the AICRI committee. The concept was to keep the interview to roughly 15 minutes, thereby narrowing the number of questions asked. (*More about the final version of the questionnaire may be found in the following section.*)

A list of potential respondents was compiled, consisting of 112 names representing organizations in the following market sectors:

- Construction/CM/PM
- Corporate
- Development
- Education
- Healthcare
- Not-for-Profit
- Public/Civic

The names were further classified by scale (*size*), determined by number of employees: Small (*less 100*); Medium (*100–500*); Large (*greater than 500*).

All potential respondents were initially contacted via an email or mailed letter from the 2012 AIA Minnesota President, Jon Buggy, AIA, asking for their participation in the survey. Follow-up email and phone calls from CMG were then made and those who agreed to be interviewed were then scheduled. The final list of those interviewed was not shared with the AICRI committee or with AIA Minnesota staff. Prior to beginning each interview, the respondents were reminded of the project objectives and were assured of anonymity in their responses. Ultimately, a total of 52 individuals participated.

Upon completion of each interview, the content of the conversation was typed from written notes (*the interviews were not recorded*). That content was compiled in such a way as to tabulate responses and pull together conclusions, and it is those findings that are presented in this report. Where appropriate, tables were created to show response by frequency (*number of responses*) and percentage (*based on the number of respondents who answered a particular question*).

In order to provide greater insight into survey findings, verbatim comments pertaining to the issue being addressed are included throughout this report. In some cases, only parts of respondent's comments have been presented to help illustrate a point and have been shown with an ellipsis (...) to indicate this. The category and scale of the respondent organization is noted after the comment.

A compilation of all the telephone interviews is maintained by AIA Minnesota. The findings from the survey research is Copyrighted by AIA Minnesota.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire mentioned above was used as a discussion guide during the telephone interview. Not all respondents were asked every question and some were asked additional follow-up questions, all based on the relative experience and direction of interest of the respondent. That said, the questionnaire consisted of the following questions:

1. Roughly how many different architects has your organization hired or worked with in the past three years?
2. To what extent are **you** involved in working with those architects on projects for your firm/agency/ institution?
3. What do you see as the primary role of the architect on your project(s)?
4. How important is it to you that your architect has a clear understanding of the business you're in and your firm's/agency's/institution's specific mission and/or position in that marketplace? Why is that?
5. Can you give me an example of what you mean by that — how a firm has successfully applied that understanding to advance your mission or contribute to your enterprise?
6. Other than giving you a good design and a complete set of drawings, can you envision other ways that an architect's creative or critical thinking skills could further your organization's mission?
7. Do you typically bring an owner's representative, program manager, project manager, or some other type of third-party to represent the owner's interests on your projects? If so, what has prompted that and how has it been successful?
8. Has the architect provided more service or services different than you expected or lead you to an outcome that was greater than expected? How so?
9. I'd like to turn now to the whole process of design and construction of a building. Taking into consideration not just the architects but all team members, what have been your biggest challenges or barriers to success with either the process itself or the various team members?
10. How have you solved that?
11. And what about your use of architects? Looking out over the next five years or so, do you expect your needs for architectural services to change or to remain the same? If "change," how so?
12. Finally, if you were advising the architectural community on how to be more valuable to the clients they serve, what suggestions would you make?

The Survey Sample

The names of firms, agencies, institutions, and organizations, and specific individuals within them, were gathered by AIA Minnesota from a variety of sources and were kept confidential from the AICRI committee. The Book of Lists published by the *Minneapolis/St Paul Business Journal* was a key resource, as was the AIA Minnesota membership itself. Members were asked to volunteer client names to be included among the survey sample. A total of 112 names were compiled and organized within each of the market segments noted above.

To ensure a representative sample of the external market sector, quotas were established for each and an effort was made in conducting the interviews to adhere to these rough numbers.

Section 1.0 – Introduction *continued*

The survey sample was representative of the commercial marketplace for AIA Minnesota membership. It was proportionately balanced across market sectors as well as size of the client organization — ranging from sole proprietorships to Fortune 500 multi-national entities. The sample also covered the range of familiarity and function — from a singular experience and day-to-day involvement to managing dozens of architectural contracts worth hundreds of millions in construction costs at any given time.

TABLE 1: Survey Sample and Established Quota

	List	Quota	Completed
Construction/CM/PM	12	5	7
Corporate	20	10	8
Development	14	5	6
Education	17	7	6
Healthcare	18	8	9
Not-for-Profit	12	5	6
Public/Civic	19	10	10
TOTAL	112	50	52

Each respondent was organized by market sector and size of organization. The breakdown on the following page shows the survey sample:

TABLE 2: Survey Sample by Market and Scale

	Small	Medium	Large	TOTAL
Construction/CM/PM	5	1	1	7
Corporate	1	3	4	8
Development	4	0	2	6
Education	0	3	3	6
Healthcare	0	0	9	9
Not-for-Profit	4	2	0	6
Public/Civic	1	5	4	10
TOTAL	15	14	23	52

To get a sense of how experienced the respondent was relative to working with architects, they were asked how often and with how many architects they had worked with in the past three years. Almost half the respondents had significant experience in working with architects, some of whom claimed the number of firms was as many as 50, or even 100.

TABLE 3: Relative Experience with Architects

Little (less than 2)	13
Some (3 to 6)	15
A lot (more than 6)	24
TOTAL	52

To get a sense of how respondents interacted with architects on their projects, a question was asked to establish the way in which the individual was involved on the project and their role relative to the architect.

The table below shows that two-thirds were in a more managerial or executive capacity as opposed to working with firms on the day-to-day details.

TABLE 4: Interaction with Architects

Day-to-Day	18
Oversee/Executive	9
Selection/Management	25
TOTAL	52

The Role of the Architect

In a very broad sense, clients believe the role of the architect is to understand their unique needs and to meet them. What those needs are — varied by client, however. For some clients, the needs are simple — provide a design solution and adequate documents to build that design. For others, it boils down to design and design only. Still others expect their architect to focus on documentation, administration and/or facilitation of their program, and less on design. There are a handful of clients that characterized the role of the architect as being their advocate and the leader of the process or to bring in specialized expertise.

Contributing to the Business

While we see the role of the architect is to understand the client's needs, the interview drilled down to explore the kind of relationship clients sought from their architect and how the architect might contribute in a more meaningful way to the client's business or mission. We discovered most clients are less interested in having the architect understand their mission, their business, or their industry than in having them get a complete grasp on their specific organization and how it operates.

The Value Added

When we asked respondents to talk about an architect's innate creativity and critical thinking skills to add value beyond a building design, we discovered that not only do owners appreciate the architect's unique approach to problem solving, but many are already using them in this capacity. Some clients use their architects to help them develop efficiencies in workflow, operating procedures, or even in budgeting or costing facilities. Another added value for clients is the concept of best practice from architects who are practicing in other parts of the country, with other clients, or in other industries.

Several clients were asked whether the outcome from their architect was different or greater than what they had expected. Most came back with instances in which they were impressed, pleasantly surprised, and/or grateful with the outcome from the architect.

Using Owners' Representatives

Other than very large organizations with sizable in-house resources, approximately half of these clients bring in a third-party — an owner's rep or outside project manager — to represent their interests, particularly on larger or more complex projects.

Third-party advocates are brought into owner's projects for two key reasons: the organization lacks expertise to manage construction projects or the project is of significant scope and/or complexity that the in-house group must be augmented. Within these two key reasons is the perception that a third-party may do a better job of managing the project overall than any of the team members, including estimating and handling "bumps in the road."

Challenges and Barriers with the Design and Construction Process

The three top areas where architects may improve their services include better process management, greater budget accountability, and greater detail in documentation.

Issues that are broader and touched on the process itself included the possible adversarial nature of project teams, disagreements between architects and contractor, frustration with having to accept low-bids and contracts, or problems with scoping the project.

Clients tended to solve their difficulties by adjusting the approach to working with a design and construction team, which typically means putting in place policies or procedures to address the problem. Some hired an owner's rep as a result, and others said they used past experiences to better select their next architect.

The Future

Looking to the future, clients are considering, or are actively engaged in, a more integrated process that will demand greater collaboration between the architect and the contractor from the project initiation.

While engaging in a more integrated approach might impact the role of the architect on the back end — detailed construction documents — the other notable future trend potentially provides greater opportunity on the front end. Clients expect to utilize architects in a more strategic way, one which could impact their business and/or mission, through specialized or consulting capacities — lean design, master planning, strategic facility planning, green design, asset management, etc.

Advice

The majority of clients want architects to function as partners not vendors. Within this concept is the willingness of the architect to listen and genuinely understand what a client wants, even if it means reconsideration of the architect's own design goals. It means being proactive and an advocate for the owner. It means respecting the budget and valuing engineering as necessary.

Much of the frustration respondents communicated throughout these interviews was what they perceived to be the architect's lack of assertive management of their projects. Whether that was in time or fee management, documentation, coordination with the broader team, or just plain lack of timely communication, the issue was not just control but leadership. For some, particularly contractors and developers, this was the reason they saw a diminishing role for the architect going forward. The belief was that architects could have more control by being better at leading projects.

Many clients expect architects to offer new ideas, trends in their respective industries, best practices, and technological innovations. This is one of the greatest values for clients — all clients, particularly larger clients. Clients can become insular in their respective organizations and it is often the architect who brings them up to speed and into the future.

Clients felt that architects need to do a better job of self-promotion. That they could make a better case for the value-added that architects bring to projects. Throughout the interviews, we heard clients speak about their appreciation for what the architect provides on projects as well as their frustration — and sometimes intimidation — in working with them.

Clients felt it is up to architects to help them understand what an architect can do for a client beyond providing plans for a pretty building.

In a very broad sense, clients believe the role of an architect is to understand their unique needs and to meet them. What those needs are vary by client, however. For some clients, they are simple — provide a design solution and documents to build that design. For others, it boils down to design and design only. Still others expect their architect to focus on documentation, administration and/or facilitation of their program, and less on design. There are a handful of clients that characterized the role of the architect as being their advocate and leader of the process or to provide specialized expertise.

Providing a design solution and construction documents

While this is the most common response to the questions about the role of the architect on their projects, it contrasted with the rest of the responses, which tended to emphasize a particular function. These clients expect their architects to design a facility and to ensure it is built to the design intent.

“Listen carefully to the owner’s wishes and desires, and to translate those into a document that builds a project...”

Medium Contractor

“...to define the programming needs of the owner and define that as a space...and to ensure that it is constructed to the intent of the design as well as the codes and the budget.”

Large Educator

“Bringing a vision to life.” *Medium Corporate*

“...I would just use the word ‘design,’ which means the programming, schematics, DD, CD and construction administration.” *Large Healthcare*

Lead the process / Be the owner’s advocate

Just under one-quarter of the respondents view the role of an architect as the team member who not only represents an owner’s interest on their projects, but moreover orchestrates the entire design and construction process on behalf of the owner. Though these clients likely also expect the architect to provide the design and facilitate construction, they specifically see the architectural firm in its traditional role as the team leader.

“...I believe architects should be the main contact point up until you start construction but lead the relationship all the way through...” *Large Corporate*

“...They’re the hub of the wheel. They provide direction and cohesiveness.” *Large Developer*

“I would say it is to comprehensively lead the entire project... the architect is there to be able to interpret that [vision] and to create viable plans to the finished product...”

Medium Public Agency

Emphasizing documentation, facilitation, and administration

This response typically came from larger clients who have an existing in-house design group, an existing prototype, or have already vetted the design internally and simply want the architect to facilitate the process of bringing it to life. This is an important role for these clients, with its own kind of creativity.

“They execute our design program...” *Large Corporate*

“...They’re the keeper of consistency and accuracy of the drawings, and documenting everything. It’s not so much being the designer but more keeping the documentation.”

Large Corporate

“...Being the project facilitator, not so much the designer...”

Large Education

“Really it’s to supplement the services of our existing staff...”

Large Public Agency

Emphasizing design

There are some respondents who believe the role of an architect is simply to focus on the design solutions and to leave the details and documentation to the contractor and/or the sub-contractor. Sometimes viewed as a more efficient process, particularly by developers, these clients viewed the emphasis on design as getting the best from the architecture profession.

“I see the architect’s role as being part of a team that includes the investor, the financing, the contractor and others in which the architect does the space planning and conceptual design.” *Large Developer*

“I think their main role today is really the conceptual designer for the project...” *Small Developer*

Bringing in outside expertise

Some clients utilize architects to connect their internal group with best practices on a broader basis — to bring in solutions, ideas, and examples of how similar organizations solve similar problems. Sometimes this is directly related to design and/or building materials, but more often the architect's expertise helped to inform the owner about technology, different ways to use space, or industry trends.

“...So the complete package from our point of view is the lean capability, plus evidence-based design—that means interiors capability...” *Large Healthcare*

“...We want them to bring us technologies out there that relate to efficiencies and learning. We want to know what’s out there for 21st century learning.” *Medium Education*

TABLE 5: The Role of the Architect

Design and facilitate construction	22	42%
Be the owner's advocate/Lead the process	12	23%
Primarily documentation, facilitation, administration	8	15%
Primarily design (not detailed documentation)	7	14%
Bring expertise the owner doesn't have	5	10%

Percentage based on 52 responses

While we see the role of an architect is to understand the client's needs, the interview drilled down to explore the kind of relationship clients seek from their architect and how the architect might contribute in a more meaningful way to the client's business or mission. We discovered most clients are less interested in having the architect understand their mission, their business, or their industry than in having them get a complete understanding of their specific organization and how it operates.

The Importance of Contributing to the Business

Getting a thorough grasp on the client's organization

More clients consider it crucial that the architect take time up front to understand their particular organization — their ethos, unique brand, budget, politics, site, and how they operate, etc. — rather than any other issue. Not surprising, nearly all the not-for-profit clients interviewed felt strongly this way.

“It's 99% of the job.” *Small Contractor*

“...They need to understand how we do things.” *Large Corporate*

“...They need to get who we are.” *Medium Not-for-Profit*

“...Perhaps more important was the architect understanding the nature of our organization, rather than the mission of our organization...” *Medium Not-for-Profit*

“...The architect needs to understand the aesthetic as well as the brand of the client... We live with these projects for the rest of our lives so we care about all the nuances. The architect should figure out how to mine that information — all those nuances — and to push to really understand what the owner wants...” *Medium Public Agency*

“...It's about knowing the client and the alignment of knowing how to work with us...” *Medium Public Agency*

Understanding the Industry/Business

Several clients believe that having an architect understand their particular business or industry — and not necessarily their organization's mission or vision — is critical to project success.

“...To really design a building that the owner would define as successful, you have to understand the industry and the business the owner is in — and not from the builder's perspective or from the architect or engineer's perspective, but from the owner's...” *Large Contractor*

“It's imperative. If you don't understand our business, it could be a horrible job and it could kill business...” *Medium Corporate*

“...They have to understand what we consider to be brand appropriate and understand the value of their decisions to us as a business. They have to appreciate how much it costs to make a modification and be able to answer, ‘Does it enhance the brand?’...” *Large Corporate*

“It’s really important they understand the business we’re in. We can take care of the mission part and pass that to them, but they need to understand higher education...”
Medium Education

“...In fact, one of the ratings we use in selecting design firms is their ability to get on the other side of the counter and really understand our business...” *Medium Public Agency*

Understanding the Building Function/User Groups

An equal number of clients believe that it is most critical to understand how the new building or renovation functions and to be able to garner that understanding from those people who use the building. In other words, it is not mission or business, but developing an understanding specific to the building and its function.

“...They should understand what a building’s function is, how it should flow, and ask the tough questions. Many times this can lead into a direction that has conflicts, but good architects do a good job ferreting those out...” *Medium Contractor*

“...In a general sense, that’s what will make the project successful — finding out how do you expect to use it?”
Large Developer

“...The architect had to understand how our audiences come in and go out, the flow of traffic. We wanted the architect to understand how our business functioned and how the space would be utilized in this venue...” *Medium Not-for-Profit*

Depends on the Project

How well an architect understands the business of the client or their organization’s mission and vision is dependent on the kind of project being considered — according to several respondents. Clearly, the more complex or specialized the function of the building, the greater the understanding demanded of the architect.

“That depends. If I’m doing a lab project, I need an architect to have real knowledge of what we do. In the case of an office renovation, that’s not so important...” *Large Corporate*

“...For a straight office, it’s not that important. But when there’s process or security involved, it obviously has more importance. It really depends on the project and the program...”
Large Public Agency

Know the Building Type

In some market sectors, clients made it clear that it is a given that the architect needs to be familiar with the industry, business, and building function — hospitals, prisons, hotels, etc. — sometimes with mission and/or vision playing a backseat.

“I don’t think the architect would have been retained by [public agency] if they couldn’t speak the language, and had an understanding of what [building type] are...” *Small Contractor*

“All our RFPs are very clear. We seek out folks who have experience with higher education – that’s a baseline...”
Medium Education

“Extremely important. We wouldn’t consider an architect who didn’t have healthcare experience. They’re supposed to know more than we do. Sometimes they don’t, but it’s extremely important that they do.” *Large Healthcare*

“...I can’t envision us hiring an architect without experience in healthcare to do anything. As far as vision or mission, it’s secondary — that’s ours to work out....” *Large Healthcare*

Forwarding the Mission

Only a handful of clients feel strongly that it is critical for the architect to understand their organization’s mission and vision — and to design to it.

“...We make it clear that the architect needs to understand our mission and take it seriously. It’s absolutely critical they do that.” *Medium Education*

“It’s very important because we want the building to reflect our organizational culture and create an atmosphere that reflects both the mission and vision.” *Large Healthcare*

“...It’s really two-fold: they need to be aware of things from a technical standpoint and also be aware of our mission and vision.” *Large Public Agency*

TABLE 6: Contributing to the Business

Must understand us specifically	22	42%
Must understand the industry/business	9	17%
Must understand how building utilized/User input	9	17%
Depends on the project	8	15%
Must understand building type	6	12%
Forwarding the mission	5	10%

Based on 52 respondents; percent adds to greater than 100% due to multiple responses

Examples of the Architect's Contribution to the Business

A Thorough Grasp of the Client Organization

"...Our architect really understands our format, what mechanical loads our systems can handle, and the density of people our electrical systems can handle. They know the environment we're trying to create." *Large Corporate*

"...They came up with creative ways to *[build inexpensively]* by doing some internal research to find the best products, and then came to us not just with the products, but with the maintenance and long-term costs...We plan to hold on to our buildings forever so when we build something, we want a structure that will last for a long time." *Small Developer*

"...They know how long it will take for us to get funding. They know how much handholding they will need to do. They get the interface with the external community. They know that, on short notice, they may have to come up with something wacky because a potential donor wants to see it. And they don't complain about it." *Medium Not-for-Profit*

"The people who really have a thorough understanding of the existing codes and can wield that knowledge to allow us to make significant changes along the way. Not just safety change, but in space organization and function that aligns with the way a school practices..." *Large Education*

Knowing the Industry/Business

"...That they can speak the medical terminology is huge. They're sitting with people who are very highly educated and very highly trained. That they can speak the language and know what they're doing in the specific procedure room makes a big difference. One of our architects brought in a medical equipment planner and a medical planner to a meeting ... and it was impressive." *Large Healthcare*

"They had a specialist on board who really understood tribal behavior. He quickly understood what our business was about and how we deliver services..." *Large Corporate*

Understanding the Building Utilization

"...We had discussions early on that had absolutely nothing to do with design. The architect just wanted to understand how we operate today and how we expect to be operating tomorrow. That process helped us identify the gaps between the two. They looked at how the building could mitigate those issues or be part of the solution..." *Medium Public Agency*

"...We've had huge cuts in staff so we were having to do more with less. [The consultant] wanted to figure out an intuitive way finding for our patrons that would help reduce the load on staff. Doing that gave us a knowledge base that really helped us improve and change the way we did things..." *Medium Public Agency*

Forwarding the Mission

"...The architects incorporated elements of the mission into the design; there is a cross in the design — it's subtle but you can see it... The care and nurturance of the mission is really in that building. It's the most successful project I've seen." *Small Developer*

One of the primary objectives in conducting this research among consumers of architecture services is to understand how clients perceive the intrinsic value of an architect's contribution, more than merely a building designer or provider of a set of drawings, but as true consultants.

We asked clients to talk about how architects can potentially contribute to furthering their business and/or mission and to tell us about how architects met or exceeded (or not) their expectations.

Other Than Design and Drawings

When we asked respondents to articulate an architect's innate creativity and critical thinking skills to add value beyond a building design, we discovered that owners more than appreciate an architect's unique approach to problem-solving — moreover they are already using them in this capacity. Some clients use architects to help them develop efficiencies in workflow, operating procedures, or even in budgeting or costing facilities. Another added value for clients is the exposure to best practices from architects practicing in other parts of the country, with other clients, or in other industries.

Brainstorming, Problem-Solving, and Strategic Thinking

Many clients interviewed perceived architects as having the capacity and potential to help them consider options, flesh out possibilities, and to think more strategically about their facilities. This may include how to build in more future flexibility, how to think differently about workflow, and/or how to re-purpose facilities as industries evolve and change.

“Finding creative solutions to provide flexibility for future change. Those are the value-added propositions that good architects can deliver on...” *Medium Contractor*

“I mean just brainstorming efficiencies. How do you maximize what you have available to ensure a good flow? The quality of the space can impact productivity...” *Large Education*

“I think they can help us by collaborating with us on a strategic basis as to where we take our facility design strategy and practice...” *Large Healthcare*

“I think the analysis and adaptive reuse of existing space is one...” *Large Healthcare*

“...I expect the architect will have visions and ideas that exceed whatever we can come up with. That's the value added with architects...” *Medium Public Agency*

Helping to Lower Costs and Increase Efficiencies

Some clients view architects as being in the best position to help them bring down facilities costs and increase efficiency — whether it is through the use of lean in their design or by educating them on the use of materials.

“...If we can work with an architect who is interested in improving the constructability of a building, looking at materials costs and things, that makes a difference...” *Large Contractor*

“...Organizations are trying to become more efficient; they are trying to do it better and cheaper. When we do an RFP, we ask architects what their experience is in doing lean, in order to make the building more efficient and user-friendly.” *Small Developer*

“...I want an architect to join us, to really dramatically look at our systems, at what we need to do to get it built and why we need to rein in costs...Every dollar we spend that is not contributing to efficiency, to patient outcomes, to safety, energy efficiency, and staff satisfaction is not being used efficiently...” *Large Healthcare*

Bringing in Best Practices

In addition to creativity and critical thinking skills, clients recognize the added value architects bring from working with other similar organizations in the industry or with other clients in entirely different industries. Clients admit they can become insular in their view of their facilities and seek guidance from the architect to offer fresh ideas as well as proven ones in the form of best practices from outside the client's sphere.

“...In the way they take their experiences, to be able to use the spaces they've done in the past with other kinds of clients, and adapt it to what they are doing with us.” *Medium Corporate*

“...What we want to know is what are other world-class organizations doing that we can implement? That, to me, is one of the ways we benefit from using architecture firms that have experience with other organizations...” *Large Corporate*

“That's one of the things we look for in an architect. We expect they will have enough experience and knowledge of the industry to know who else has done ground-breaking design across the country...We want them to not just fulfill our mission, but to bring architectural leadership that provides us with new ideas.” *Large Healthcare*

TABLE 7: Value-Added, Other Than Design and Drawings

Brainstorming, problem-solving, strategic thinking	21	51%
Help to lower costs and/or increase efficiencies	8	20%
Bringing in Best Practices	7	17%
Other	9	22%

Based on 41 respondents; percent adds to greater than 100% due to multiple responses

Outcome Expectations, More or Different

Several clients were asked a follow-up question on the added value of architects — specifically, whether the outcome from their architect was different than what they had expected. Of the 15 respondents asked this question, 11 gave instances in which they were impressed, pleasantly surprised, and/or grateful with the services from the architect.

Below are a few of those responses:

“...I’ve worked with one of the very top architects in the world...They were not only solving basic functionality into the design, but it became a work of art...” *Medium Contractor*

“...I felt a higher level of engagement and commitment from those architects who went beyond a contract. And when you put in as much passion as that, you get better work as a result.” *Medium Corporate*

“Yes...with the lean work. We made absolutely huge decisions and different decisions than what we would have made otherwise. They made us think about things differently, and we made radical changes in the design. For example, rather than one large central nursing station, we decentralized our nursing stations — the first time in our history. You could say that’s not rocket science, but for us it was huge.” *Large Healthcare*

“...In general, the engagement of the firm led us to a solution for our needs that allowed us to overcome a lot of objections from the skeptical crowd, and also enabled us to achieve one of the biggest priorities — which was to create a much more welcoming front to the community; which has, in turn, caused us to see a visitor composition that we have never seen come into the museum before...” *Small Not-for-Profit*

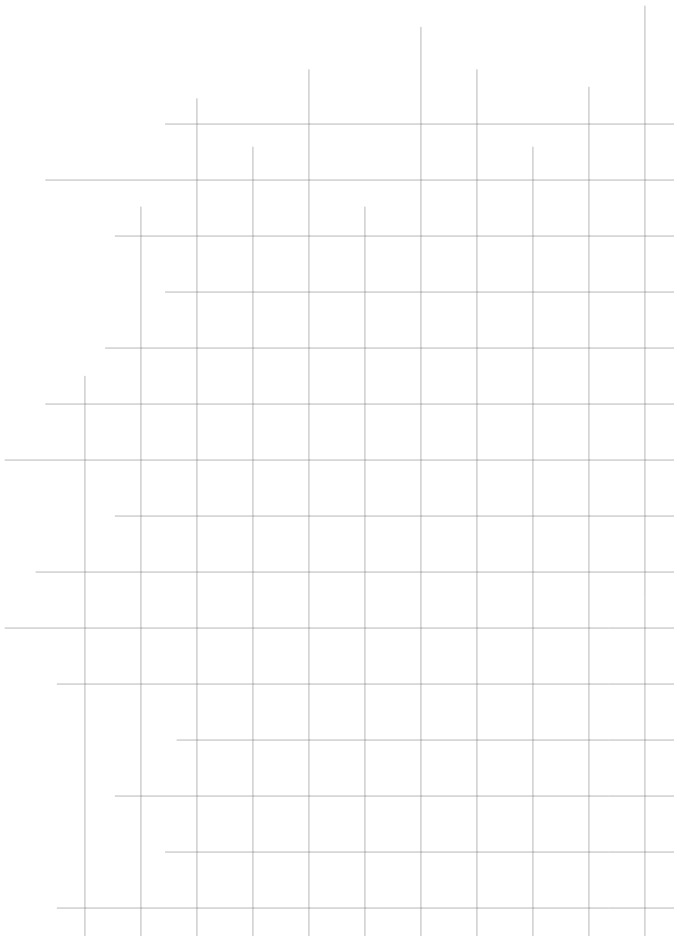
“...In going through the master planning project, our architects helped us negotiate all the local politics, and it got pretty ugly. Now that I look at it, we ask architects to do a lot!” *Medium Public Agency*

There were a few clients who had been disappointed with the services from the architect.

“...You just have to challenge them...If you challenge them, then you can come up with amazing solutions...We also see disappointment on the quality of drawings. When it comes to actually creating the drawings, I think that is what owners can get frustrated with.” *Small Contractor*

“...I think because we have so much internal expertise, we can sometimes over-manage our consultants so they end up becoming more reactive than proactive...” *Large Corporation*

“Well, obviously the ones that stick with me are the ones in which we *didn’t* get what we expected...” *Small Developer*



Other than very large organizations with sizable in-house resources, a good number of these clients tend to hire on a third-party — an owner’s rep or outside project manager — to represent their interests, particularly on larger or more complex projects.

TABLE 8: Using Third-Party Advocates (includes owner’s rep firm responses)

Always	11	23%
Depends on Project	18	37%
Never	20	41%

Based on 49 respondents

Third-party advocates are hired on projects for two key reasons: the client organization lacks expertise to manage construction projects or the project is of significant scope and/or complexity that the in-house group needs to be augmented. Within these two key reasons is also the perception that the third-party does a more thorough job of managing the project overall than any of the team members, including estimating and handling “bumps in the road.”

Among the respondents in the survey group are several owner’s representatives, project management firms, and in-house departments that act as such for owners. Their take on the advantages of using an outside party to advocate for the owner is naturally a little different than the owner’s. Rather than indicating them as “Contractors” or “Developers” it is noted whether they function as owner’s representatives (CMs or PMs).

Augmenting In-House Staff

“...On the owner’s side, there’s a lot of downsizing going on and they don’t have the extra staff they need to manage the projects, or they might have a full plate already...”

Small Owner’s Rep

“Typically in locations where we don’t have a staff member who can do the project management. In those areas, we hire local architects, but we use the services of an owner’s rep who will advise us in that regard. We use them to help select the architect...” *Large Corporate*

“They really function as more of an extension of my office...”

Medium Education

“...We do have some in-house project management resources, but having them see others from the outside [owner’s reps] has allowed them to step up their game...”

Large Healthcare

Smoother Project Delivery / Better Estimating

“...I know it muddies the roles a bit, but it also seems like there are less mistakes and that’s huge. Plus it bodes well for estimating...” *Small Owner’s Rep*

“Personally, I think having a CM on the project gives us good checks and balances.” *Medium Education*

“...What prompts them is they want to make sure their vision is realized, when they feel they have certain things they want to have watched out for ...” *Small Corporate*

Lack of In-House Expertise

“Most owners do not build on a regular basis or develop new facilities and they’re intimidated by the process or they have to answer to a board or to stockholders and they can’t afford to make a mistake. That’s what drives it...” *Large Developer*

“We don’t have the expertise to ask the right questions and to do the critical evaluations required to properly manage the process.” *Large Healthcare*

Selecting/Managing the Architect

“We do bring in an owner’s rep who is a third-party to push ideas out of our architects. We want them to be able to do value engineering from Day One...” *Small Developer*

“We felt the architect underserved us, functioning both as the designer and as the owner’s agent. We needed an independent voice — someone who could navigate the terrain between the architect and the contractor...” *Small Not-for-Profit*

For Bigger, More Complex Projects

“It usually goes with larger budget projects that might require value-engineering or fast-tracking or something...” *Small Corporate*

Problems with Third Party Advocates

Some respondents — despite being owners, contractors, or owner’s reps — believe there is clearly a downside to hiring a third-party advocate, but it is not intrinsic to the concept. It is entirely dependent on the attitude of the particular owner’s rep or CM.

“...Where they become a problem is when they try to isolate the architect and the contractor from the client. Collaboration always gets better results.” *Medium Contractor*

“There are those who are really geared around the teaming approach and I think they tend to be pretty successful. Then there are those who think they’re adding value by challenging the team members. I think they’re less successful.”

Large Developer

“...I know some of them make sure the owner thinks they are great and make the architect look bad...I think that’s what led to the IPD approach. The owner has heard about all this infighting and said, ‘Is there a different way to deliver this project?’ The owners were tired of the bickering. When you have an integrated agreement, the parties are signatory to it, and they have fee at risk. It’s a different philosophy....”

Small Owner’s Rep

	Owners		Owner’s Reps	
Augment in-house staff	8	42%	1	20%
Smoother project delivery/Better estimating	5	26%	3	60%
Lack of in-house expertise	4	21%	2	40%
Selecting/Managing the architect	4	21%	0	0%
On bigger, more complex projects	3	16%	0	0%
Problems with Third-Party Advocates	3	16%	2	40%
# of Respondents	19		5	

Percentages add to greater than 100% due to multiple responses

All respondents were asked to comment about the challenges and barriers related to the design and construction process — and how they solved them. A big subject, but the focus in the interview was on the biggest issues related to architects.

Challenges and Barriers with the Team or the Process

The three top areas where architects can improve their services include better process management, greater budget accountability, and greater detailed documentation.

Issues that are broader and touched on the process itself note the adversarial nature of teams, disagreements between architects and contractors, frustration with having to accept low-bids and contracts, or problems with scoping the project.

Project Management

Some respondents believe architects need to improve their project management skills, including consultant coordination, control of team members (including contractors and users), meeting preparation / documentation, and tracking time properly.

“...They managed the relationship and the process. They didn’t have the guts to rein in the [user] and they didn’t let us know they were off-track...What we need from architects is to have them drive the boat. They find it uncomfortable and difficult sometimes, I know...” *Large Healthcare*

“...I didn’t really feel the architect was protecting our interests. He seemed to want to remain in a neutral role and I thought the contractor was screwing us...” *Medium Public Agency*

“...I would say it’s after the project is done. Closing it out. It seems that getting the documents wrapped up, everything checked off and final billings, getting it off the books, is often an issue.” *Large Education*

Budget Accountability

While this response may be seen as an extension of the former, the issue of not designing to a budget or not doing a better job of translating design into cost, seems to be a particular challenge for the respondents who mention it. It is apparent that many clients expect the architect to control the wants and needs of the clients’ staff and building users. For public agencies, this issue is particularly problematic in that it can mean they need to go back to voters to ask for more money.

“...We found the architects were coming back to us with plans that would drive us over the budget, so we ended up having to take a more active role. On the one hand, architects have to be sensitive to user needs...but every user group is advocating for itself...I expect the architect to see this and then take a more activist role, not just taking orders from the user groups.” *Large Healthcare*

“...The biggest problem I’ve had with architects is the lack of accountability for the budget. I get very frustrated when they are not able to deliver the service needed for the fee in their contract...” *Small Not-for-Profit*

“...You have the [user] who wants all these things so you go through the programming stage and when we get into schematic design then it’s ‘Hey, you can’t afford all this’ and we have go into value engineering.” *Large Public Agency*

Documentation

Another frequent complaint from respondents is the quality of the documents they receive from architects, in particular the construction documents. Some believe quality had declined since the advent of computer modeling, while others felt it was something more efficiently done by the contractor or the subs.

“...the documents that we’re getting from architects these days are getting progressively worse. There’s a lack of coordination, less information on the documents. I’m not necessarily blaming the architects. The industry puts pressure on them to do more with less. And we’re getting less...” *Medium Contractor*

“Hands-down is that they don’t finish the documents. They turn in the plans and then don’t respond well to the RFIs... They do less complete documents and then issue addendums that are like encyclopedias.” *Small Owner’s Rep*

“...The biggest frustration for me is Quality Control. We see a set of plans, we make comments, and then when we see the next set of plans, and find nothing has been incorporated...” *Large Public Agency*

Attitude

Attitude is not a very common frustration, but is the only item (*other than the three above*) noted specifically about architects. The issue is clearly about specific firms (*or people in those firms*) and specific experiences.

“...The problem we run into is that the ego of the architect gets involved, and they want to leave their footprint. I want uniformity. It’s counter-intuitive to me. We still run up against architects where we say, ‘This is what we want,’ and they say, ‘This is what we want.’ It’s mind-boggling.” *Large Education*

Adversarial Roles

As long as design and construction are separate activities, there is an adversarial environment on construction projects — or at least the potential for it. “Finger-pointing” is another word for this problem, and it is the most common reason owners seek alternate delivery methods to the traditional design-bid-build approach. Within this group of respondents, the issue came up with a handful of individuals, however.

“...there is a sense of suspicion between the architects and the contractors. If the contractor is not in control then it becomes easier for them to undermine the design team when, in fact, they should be supporting design... There’s a sense that if contractors don’t maintain control, the architects will take it down the wrong path. In fact, it’s usually the design team that has a better understanding of the project if they’re given the right information.” *Large Corporate*

“...With design-bid-build, it becomes an adversarial relationship right off the bat. It has to do with the quality of the contractor and the quality of the documents...”

Medium Public Agency

Problems with Low-Bid Contracts

This issue is seen as an extension of the one above, but it is not necessarily the same issue. Many respondents interviewed are bound by having to take the lowest bid (*public agencies, including educational ones*) or have continued to use the delivery method as the most efficient or, at the very least, familiar.

“...The biggest issue in terms of where things tended to break down was in defining the scope of work — what does the contract include and not include?...” *Large Corporate*

“...Due to the requirement that we have to low-bid our projects, while everybody is trying to be productive and helpful, a lot of times it means there’s not any enforcing of the contract, so construction administration becomes an issue. No one wants to be a jerk, but sometimes you have to be one in order to get the contract enforced.” *Large Education*

No Real Problems

There is the occasional respondent who believes the design and construction process went relatively smoothly and had no complaints.

“...I like to think we have a process that runs pretty smoothly. There’s no one particular area that causes any problems...” *Large Corporate*

“Well, it’s always a balancing act and there are always frustrations, but I can’t really think of anything that comes up on a regular basis. We’re all fairly comfortable with the process.” *Small developer*

Poor management	10	22%
Lack of budget accountability	10	22%
Poor documentation	9	20%
Arrogance	4	9%
Adversarial team relations	6	13%
Problems with low-bid contracts	4	9%
Contract/Scoping problems	4	9%
No real problems	4	9%
Other	8	17%

Based on 46 respondents

Solving the Problems

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked how they solved the challenges and barriers they encountered during design and construction. Most respondents indicated they resolved the difficulties by adjusting their approach to working with the design and construction team members. A handful decided to hire an owner’s rep as a result, and another handful said they used past experiences to better select their next architect.

Adjusting the Approach

“...We want to see measurable points of completion with the level of detail needed. We try to push quality control points back upstream and we establish quick feedback loops so we can do real-time estimating. The key is to have checkpoints early on and frequent.” *Medium Contractor*

“...to make sure all our team members are on board in ensuring a collaborative effort, to have common goals...The most successful projects are the ones in which you can’t tell who is working for whom.” *Large Contractor*

“...One of the things we do is create a steering committee of all the key players on our larger projects and we have weekly meetings... making sure information is shared.” *Large Corporation*

“We are 400 pages deep into creating a design standards document that lays out every choice we make and why we make that choice....” *Large Education*

“Honestly? With my contractor, I make sure they let me evaluate the sub-contractors and that they work with ones I approve....” *Large Healthcare*

“One is that we started putting in our contracts that the architect has to give us a list of comments made and how they’re incorporated into the project....” *Large Public Agency*

“We have a kick-off meeting at the beginning...We make sure the project stays on track and keep coming back to that touchstone point....” *Medium Public Agency*

Selecting of the Architect

“...We’ve had more success with teams when the disciplines are separated. Then we can get an MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) that we can marry up with the architect and those typically run better.” *Large Corporate*

“...One of the things we like to do is to be able to talk to those people who will be doing the work...Some firms don’t like this. They’ve put a lot into marketing. But I say it’s the marketing people who get you to the shortlist, and it’s the people on the job who will get you the job.” *Medium Public Agency*

Hiring an Owner’s Rep

“We hired an owner’s rep and they’re taking a more disciplined approach...They put expectations on the part of the architect to live within limits and exert pressure on them to do that.” *Large Healthcare*

“Well, we hired [owner’s rep] on the [project] because it’s a big public project. It’s very visible. We can’t screw up. I want someone there for us, answering questions like, ‘Are there things we should be thinking about that we’re not?’...[On another project]...the owner’s rep had more of a bird-dogging role — during the bidding process, getting stuff to HUD, getting us to closing. They were advising all along the way.” *Medium Public Agency*

Respondents were asked to look five years into the future and consider how they might use architects differently — beyond merely construction, but in what capacity the role of the architect on their projects might change.

The top two trends that emerged are the desire for a more integrated design and construction process and for specialized services from their architect. Several other issues were also mentioned, but most can be viewed in the light of these two major trends.

More Integrated Design and Construction Process

Looking to the future, clients are considering, or are actively engaged in, a more integrated process that demands greater collaboration between the architect and the contractor from the beginning.

“I see a continued need for the design aspect with CM-at-Risk, something we’ll be doing more of in the future. I’ve got my first project underway so teaming with the contractor will be required... We’re starting to move away from firms who have less experience in working closely with contractors...”

Medium Education

“For us, we might be looking at other delivery methods — CM-at-Risk, more Design Assist. Maybe we would structure the process differently. I’d like to bring in the contractors earlier and still hold the a/e contracts...”

Large Public Agency

“...I think you’re going to see a more integrated process in which the architect’s goal will be to orchestrate, direct, and coordinate in a much more integrated dynamic process...”

Large Developer

Contractors and developers understandably have a different viewpoint. Those interviewed are in favor of a shift, noting that it might include a somewhat diminished role for the architect, particularly regarding final construction documents.

“...I think we’ll start to see lines blur between what the architect does and what the contractor does. We’ll be moving to more of a performance specification with the contractor completing the drawings in a more economical way, picking that up at an earlier point along the process...”

Medium Contractor

“I think you’ll see more collaboration as we move ahead. That might mean the architect’s role becomes a little diminished as we bring the specialty contractors on board early on and doing the more complete set of drawings. The industry is moving in that direction and I know that’s not something the architect wants to hear...”

Large Contractor

One other element in this shift is the advent of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and its potential to influence the integrated approach. While some respondents felt BIM advanced the case for a greater role on the part of the contractor, others did not.

“I think we’re going to need more BIM expertise from architects. As owners, we’re actively strategizing about how to make systems more useful all the way from programming to asset management... Everyone has different purposes for their models, but what we want is an integrated pathway among all those different groups...”

Large Corporate

Providing Specialized Services from Architects

While engaging in a more integrated approach might impact the role of the architect on the back end — detailed construction documents — the other notable shift potentially provides greater opportunity on the front end.

Looking at the strategic way architects might impact their business or mission, some clients expect to utilize them in a specialized or consulting capacity — lean design, masterplanning, strategic facility planning, green design, asset management, etc.

“...We may hire them to do fewer projects, end to end, but use them for more specialized efforts. Things like store surveys, preliminary planning, and entitlements...”

Large Corporate

“I think they’re always going to have to be expanding their roles when it comes to green design, sustainability, and the latest technologies related to both...”

Small Developer

“...Maybe help with the masterplan and that’s a huge change for us.”

Large Education

“...I think that in the future, the overall scope of work architects perform will not change, but we’ll demand more of lean services from architects.”

Large Healthcare

“Well, it’s interesting that you ask that. I think architects have something about the way they work and process information that can help us in looking at operations. I can see as we get more limited staff, we’ll be reaching out to design teams to help us with operating manuals for the building or to just help us with maintaining the building...”

Medium Public Agency

“...So, it’s the way of looking at the space, using design thinking to see how people are circulating in the building, etc. We’ll be using architects to help us think more creatively about the space...”

Medium Public Agency

Other Pending Changes

A few clients indicated the level at which they expect to use architects may increase while others predict a greater focus on renovation and refurbishment of existing facilities. A handful of firms plan to use architects exactly as they had been — no change.

“They are changing, because we’re going to need more. We have a lot of growth planned for our organization.”

Large Healthcare

“...We required the A Team...We’ve already set the tone for who we want to be so we won’t be asking for the same kind of team...” *Medium Corporate*

“It won’t really change. No. Based on what we’re doing, we have good defined roles that work.” *Large Corporate*

TABLE 11: Future Trends for Architects

More collaboration/Alternate delivery methods	12	26%
Architects role diminishing on documentation	6	13%
Demand for BIM	5	11%
Require more specialized services	12	26%
No change	6	13%
More construction	4	9%
Less construction	4	9%

Based on 47 respondents

In the question that asked respondents to offer advice to the architectural community, the real heart of their perceptions, values, and criticisms became apparent. In this question, almost to a respondent, advice was offered in a way that reflected their genuine appreciation of the architectural profession.

Be a True Partner

The majority of clients want architects to function as their partner — not vendor. Within this concept is a willingness to listen and really understand what a client needs, even if it means reconsideration of the architect’s own design goals. It means being proactive and being an advocate for the owner. It means respecting the budget and valuing engineering when necessary.

“I think it goes to being more proactive and in really drilling down into the owner’s business model to see what they’re trying to accomplish. Thinking that through and understanding that process, and then coming up with innovative, creative solutions for that. I think there’s a lot of opportunity out there for architects to do that.” *Medium Contractor*

“...The more they can spend time understanding what makes the owner’s company unique and special, and what makes their business successful, the better. They can take that on in the value chain instead of the downstream focus on document details.” *Large Contractor*

“...They just have to listen to the owner, massage what they hear, and then sell the owner on the solution. If they come across like, ‘We know what’s best for you,’ then I just want to back off...They have to know how to communicate...” *Medium Corporate*

“I would say be willing to be flexible and adapt...But beyond that to understand what’s important and where there are touch points with your clients. It’s all basic. Be a good partner...” *Large Corporate*

“I’d say in line with this, the local firms we’re working with all have shown a willingness to move away from the idea of particular engagements and have a more on-going relationship that is more holistic, with a willingness to look at financial considerations as well...” *Medium Education*

“I do think architects need to walk in our shoes for a few days, and observe what people in the spaces are doing; and then after they design a project, to follow-up afterward, ‘Did we hit the mark here?’, ‘Did we hit the mark there?’” *Large Healthcare*

“...You need to have that lean aspect involved, so you are working with the owner to reflect the best processes that they need.” *Large Healthcare*

“...I’ve never had an architect come back a year later to find out what worked and what didn’t. That would really be a powerful message!...” *Medium Education*

“...Architects can show us how to create the space and workflow that reduces our operational cost...”
Medium Public Agency

“Partnership is so important. I always hope the design team makes the profit they want to make, but the end result happens because of the relationship. The reason we select whom we select is all about personalities. At the end of the day, we judge our buildings less on how they look than how they function, and did they help us accomplish our business goals...” *Large Public Agency*

Take Control: Coordinate, Manage, Document, Communicate

Much of the disappointment respondents communicated throughout these interviews concerned the architect’s project management. Whether in time management, fee management, documentation, coordination with the rest of the team, or just plain lack of communication — the issue is not just control, but leadership. For some, particularly contractors and developers, this is the reason they see a diminishing role for the architect in the future. The feeling is that architects could have more control by being better at leading projects.

“I would go back to the whole QA/QC component...The architect needs to budget enough time to get their documents complete and coordinated...” *Large Developer*

“Either stay in or get out of construction administration. Architects just aren’t spending as much time as they need to be to make it successful...” *Medium Education*

“I think definitely when there’s a change to the fees or to the scope, the owner needs to know as soon as possible. The architect needs to have the strongest voice to put the owner on notice that it will increase fees and it will increase construction costs...” *Medium Public Agency*

“...I would ask architects to back-off a little bit in terms of what they’re designing and to be more confident in their communication to the owner that what they’re designing is under budget...” *Large Public Agency*

“Take charge and don’t be afraid. Don’t take any projects you can’t control and don’t be controlled. Step up and be the leader. It’s first among equals...” *Large Healthcare*

Bring technology and innovation to clients

As was mentioned earlier, many clients look to the architect to bring them new ideas, trends in their respective industries, best practices, and technological innovations. This is one of the greatest values for clients — clients of all sizes and in all market segments. Clients become insular in their respective organizations and it is often the architect that brings them up to speed and into the future.

“...What is comforting to us is to have obvious evidence the architect is on the cutting edge of what is happening in education design and technology.” *Medium Education*

“...I want to see what others are doing, see what’s having success elsewhere, and allows us to benchmark what we’re doing. I see firms that can bring us that as having greater value...” *Large Corporate*

“It truly would be lean and innovation. How do you help us through that conversation and process, to lead to space that is as flexible and efficient as possible?...” *Large Healthcare*

“...They helped us figure out how to incorporate technology, which systems have the greatest payback. If you don’t know what technologies are out there, then I don’t really want to talk to you....I don’t want to know more than my consultants in this...” *Medium Public Agency*

Advocate Your Value

A number of clients believe that architects need to do a better job of advocating on behalf of them, tooting their own horns, and making a better case for the added value they offer clients.

Throughout the interviews, as evident in this report, we heard clients speak about their appreciation for what the architect brings to their projects as well as their dissatisfaction — and sometimes intimidation — in working with them. They believe it is up to architects to help clients understand what an architect can do for a client beyond providing plans for a pretty building.

“...And then there’s always the opportunity to teach. Even if a client doesn’t fully appreciate the design, show them how a beautiful building really does add value... Maybe they need to raise their fees and then really convince the owner of the added value.” *Medium Public Agency*

“...They need to advocate the value of good design. They have to say to themselves, ‘Is this bringing value to what we’re all about?’...” *Large Healthcare*

“...But I think it comes down to the ability to prove our worth as architects and to stake our territory. The social function of what our profession does is not talked about much and yet it is really the source of our worth.” *Large Education*

TABLE 12: Advice to Architects

Be a true partner	28	55%
Take control: coordinate, manage, document, communicate	19	37%
Bring innovation and technology to clients	11	22%
Advocate your value	8	16%

Based on 51 respondents

At the end of the interview, respondents were asked if there were any final comments they’d like to make. Several took the opportunity to expand on issues brought up during the interview. Their comments roughly fell into three categories: praise for architects, further advice, and the survey.

A few examples of each can be found below:

Praise for Architects

“I feel we are very fortunate in Minnesota. We have a lot of fantastic architects here.” *Small Developer*

“Stress to them how much I enjoy working with them... I’ve really benefitted from my experience with architects and I want them to know that.” *Medium Public Agency*

Further Advice

“*[on proposals]* ... When there’s a lot of information, but it’s graphically done so I can skim through it and then be able to drill down in areas — that’s what I’m looking for...” *Large Healthcare*

“*[with the selection committee]* ... Those architects that make the effort to find out what the community needs are far more effective than those that have some kind of canned message.” *Medium Education*

“I’d like to know how they would like to set up a scope of sustainability design and documentation. I’d like to hear back from them on what they think would have the best chance for success.” *Medium Public Agency*

About the Survey

“I would like to say I think it’s great that the architects are doing this to understand their clients’ needs. I think it’s a great step in the right direction.” *Small Contractor*

“Will you be sharing this information?” *Large Corporate*

“Your questions were spot on...” *Large Healthcare*

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