Presidents Message
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It’s Time

Actually it’s been time.

So here’s the question. What are we missing? What is the answer that we have all been looking for to solve all our concerns with the world of architecture. Is it the “Re-positioning” of our AIA? That would assume that the AIA had a strong position or at least a position that we want to “re-position”. I am not sure that we have had one for a while. That is; a position that we all subscribe to. But, at the very least, re-positioning is moving forward.

But, for any of us to think for even one minute that this is the Holy Grail is extremely short sighted. This move is a good one. There is no question. But, “Re-positioning” is intended to look at our professional organization. Its primary intent is not to look specifically at our practices. It certainly is one of the goals of “Re-positioning”, but the real thinking for our profession starts with each of us, and our ideas, our passion and our energy.

It is not up to the AIA to fix us. The AIA is there to help us along our way, not to make us who we are.

Yes, clearly “Re-positioning” of the Institute is good. In fact, it is essential. But for us to succeed, we must look to “re-position” our own practices.

Do we need LEED and USGBC to tell us that sustainability is a basic requirement of good design? No, it is fundamental.

Do we need someone to tell us that we need to continue to learn new things to make us better practitioners? No, it is our responsibility to think, to learn, and to improve.

Do we need technology vendors to tell us that we need new computers and programs to stay in the now? One would think that all you need to do is to stand on a street corner and watch the levels of technology being used that one would see that the world is highly technical. And to our credit, we are the thinkers and doers that have made many new technical advances everyday items.

And what about the new people who will replace us. Many of us think that no one could really replace us, no matter how much we hear the phrase, “everyone is replaceable”. Not believing that phrase gives us some level of hope that we are truly important in this world, but it can also make us complacent. I am not saying that we are not important, because we all are, but inevitability is more of a given than change is.

There is no question that we are relevant, and that we are important. But, we are practicing architecture at a time where all things are moving at light speed. Up to just a few decades ago we hadn’t significantly changed how we design buildings and even build them, since the first stone was put on top of another stone to build a wall.

How can we all possibly keep up? Well the answer is that many of us are not keeping up. It is expensive to keep buying new technology. It is difficult to find good help. It is a problem finding time to learn new things.
Yet these problems have always been part of life. **Always.** Just ask your parents, your grandparents or your great-grandparents. Yet each new generation figures out the things they need to figure out in order to succeed, and to make a difference. And so must we; every day in our practices and in our communities. But the responsibility is ours. It is not an organization telling us what to do and when.

We are capable of doing great things as individuals, as companies and as communities. What holds us back is usually ourselves. What moves us forward is our own decision to move forward. **Today, make one change for the better of your profession, your practice or your community. Not tomorrow. Do it today.**

**So let’s go back to the question. What are we missing?**

Is it motivation to do that one thing we have been putting off for a long time due to any number of reasons; money, time, support, etc.?

Is it following our real passion?

Is it reaching out to our future professionals and helping them understand that they can be great, and giving them the tools to find that greatness?

I coached baseball for over 20 years. Hundreds of young men. What I found out very early in my career is that you cannot play for them. You cannot make them win. You can only give them the tools and knowledge that they can use to improve. I also learned that you cannot force passion. That has to come from within, but you can help them find it. But, most of all I learned that we were a team. And that prepared teams succeed. **Just hoping to win is never a good option.**

No doubt you saw this coming, but we architects are a team. We are an essential team for our world. It will take all of us to make our profession better. But, it must come from within. **It is not someone else’s responsibility. It is ours.**

The AIA is our professional organization. It is not some “other” mysterious being in Washington, where we wait for the mighty word to come down from on high to give us just that one thing that will propel us forward. We shouldn’t wait for the AIA to tell us how things are going to be, and then complain about the outcome. No, it is our responsibility to use our team of highly educated, highly informed, passionate, and thoughtful professionals to speak up, and to act. **We are Repositioning!**

We can either control the process or be controlled by the outcome.

**So what are we missing? Nothing. We know what issues we have. Now we just need to act.**