



Reduce Costs, Increase Productivity, Improve Bottom-line Performance

Boston Society of Architects

Young Designers Professional Development Institute

March 2009- February 2010

Winner, AIA Emerging Professionals Program Of The Year Award

Reducing costs, improving sales skills, increasing bottom-line performance: the BSA Young Designers Professional Development Institute delivers the training young designers need most to help their firms run at the highest levels of productivity, focus, quality and efficiency. The year-long program of monthly half-day seminars featuring topics that increase firms' success: Managing Finances, Improving Negotiating Skills, Presentation Skills, Marketing and Business Development, Writing Skills, Improving Communications, Improving CA Performance.

Focus On Performance

Now in its tenth year, YDPDI has justifiably earned a reputation for providing participants with the insights, strategies and skills that matter most for their firms and their own careers. The program's success results from several key factors:

- *Direct link to participants' firms.* "Homework" for the session on Managing Finances involves having our participants interview the firm's Finance Manager. During the program, we ask participants to interview several key senior managers and work closely with a mentor in the firm to ensure they apply program insights in their own situations.
- *Highly relevant, useful program content.* Topics feature those "I should have taken in design school." Even firms that provide internal training cannot provide the instructors and perspective this program consistently delivers.
- *Effective year-long format.* The program's format of monthly half-day seminars for a year makes it easy to schedule, focuses on applying concepts between sessions and helps participants network and bond with each other at a greater level of depth than is possible in one-time seminars.
- *Outstanding instructors.* Our instructors have included outstanding professionals in their field: CEO's and principals of well-known firms, Harvard GSD faculty, representatives of key client groups. They have consistently delivered excellent programs and provided "live cases" of alternative career paths in the profession.
- *Office tours.* Hosting the program at a number of local offices during the year provides participants with a useful behind-the-scenes look at other organizations.
- *Interaction with contractors and clients.* Two program sessions are held in collaboration with participants in the AGC Young Contractors Professional Institute and the CORENET Global New England Chapter (corporate real estate executives) Real Advantage program.
- *Focused networking.* The program helps participants build meaningful relationships with each other, clients, contractors, engineers and instructors. Many sessions include an after-program social hour.

Program Specifics

The YDPDI program's nine year track record of consistently high evaluations sets it apart from other continuing education programs in the field. Average enrollment in past programs has been about twelve people, resulting in an accumulated alumni group of about 80 participants. These participants have come from 20 different firms. We have also benefited from a collection of talented, experienced instructors.

Specific program topics include a mix of discussion topics and skills sessions. Instructors for the discussion topics feature a mix of established senior professionals who have differing perspectives on the topic. Workshops are interactive, drawing on real case situations and examples and actively involving participants.

Dr. William C. Ronco, President of Gathering Pace Consulting, is the program leader. He leads several of the skills sessions that draw on extensive the training, partnering and consulting he does in A&E firms and corporate real estate organizations. Dr. Ronco also manages program logistics and planning.

Workshops are held from 2 - 6 p.m. at a number of firms in metropolitan Boston. Each workshop includes a guided tour of the office hosting the workshop.

Program Fees

Fee for one person for the 12-session program is \$4,200 (\$3,000 for BSA members/ member firms). Fee for additional participants is \$3,500 (\$2,500 for BSA members). This level of fee compares very favorably with other programs and seminars. Discounts are available for multiple registrants per firm and for participants from related professions. Enrollment is limited to 20.

Acknowledgement

The Institute was conceived in 1998 by George Takoudes AIA, a young designer at Payette Associates in Boston who was then Chair of the BSA Membership Committee.

BSA Young Designers Professional Development Institute
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Draft For Review

Date	Topic	Instructors
3-26	Program Kickoff. Clarifying Learning Goals. Career Development Strategies And Skills <i>At PCA (Prellwitz & Chilinski) Architects, Cambridge</i>	William C. Ronco, Ph.D, Institute Director
4-29	Managing Finances <i>At TRO-Jung Brannen, Boston</i>	Mark Paronich, New Focus Consulting James Bryson, TROJungBrannen
5-13	Effective Negotiations (Joint session with AGC Young Contractors and CORENET corporate real estate managers). <i>At Childs, Bertman, Tseckares, Boston</i>	Mary T. Feeney, Esq., Bowditch & Dewey, David Hancock, AIA, Principal, Childs, Bertman, Tseckares; Kevin Hines, Richard White Sons, Inc
6-17	Improving Presentation Skills. <i>At Einhorn Yaffee Prescott A/E, Boston</i>	William Ronco, Ph.D., Institute Director Anastasia Vassos, Director, Business Development, SEi Companies
7-16	Managing Human Resources: Requirements And Opportunities For Young Designers <i>At Bergmeyer Associates, Boston</i>	Susan Metzinger, HR Manager, Bergmeyer Associates; Shelley Kolesar, HR Manager, Payette Associates; Cheryl Egan, Tsoi – Kobus Associations; Maura Greene, Esq., Bowditch & Dewey, LLP
8-26	Improving Drawings Quality, Coordination and Documentation. <i>At ADD Inc, Cambridge</i>	Jeff Wade, AIA, Principal, ADD, Inc. Rick Jensen, Division Director, Erland Construction; Jaimey Buckley, Pre-Construction Manager, Central Ceilings
9-23	Improving Writing Skills <i>At TBA</i>	Richard P Dober, Principal, Dober, Lidsky, Craig
10-21	Improving Communications Skills <i>At Goody & Clancy, Boston</i>	Roger Goldstein, Principal, Goody & Clancy
11-18 11-19 11-20	Build Boston “Buffet”. YDPDI participants can attend any 3 Build Boston workshops.	
12-17	Working With Clients, Working With Contractors (Joint session with AGC Young Contractors and CORENET corporate real estate managers). <i>At Payette Associates, Boston</i>	George Takoudes, AIA, Principal, Martin Batt Associates; Marc Truant, President, March Truant Construction Mark Warren, Principal, WSP Flack & Kurtz Engineering Kimberly Plummer, Senior Project Manager, Partners Healthcare
1-14-10	Legal Issues And Ethical Dilemmas <i>At TBA</i>	Carl Sapers, Esq. Adjunct Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Design
2-23-10	Marketing Strategies And Skills For Young Designers/ Program Graduation <i>At KlingStubbins, Cambridge</i>	Edward Bond, Jr., President, Bond Brothers Construction. Scott Simpson, President, KlingStubbins
Workshops are scheduled from 2 - 6 pm and include an office tour and snack		

YDPI Costs And Benefits

Fee for the 12-month program is an excellent and small investment for any firm to make in its employees and in its future:

- Cost of two-day management seminars offered by traditional providers usually reaches \$1,495. Such seminars are costly and lack the sustained continuity and networking the Institute provides.
- The cost to a firm of turnover, often triggered by frustration with career development, is typically 1.5 times the person's annual salary. Based on human resource organization bench-marks, this figure reflects losses of continuity and learning along with direct costs of search, interview and signing on
- The cost to a firm of diminished productivity resulting from lack of skills = ?????

Benefits / Outcomes For Participants

Training and development are intangible but they can produce very tangible results. Firms should expect that participants' outcomes from participating in the program include:

- Improved understanding of what they can do to contribute to their firms.
- Increased performance in areas that matter most for the firm's bottom-line performance
- Improved ability to develop meaningful relationships with clients
- Increased performance in marketing, business development and networking
- Development of essential skills e.g. communicating, writing, presenting, managing projects, managing finances, marketing, managing CA and CD, etc.
- Acquisition of perspective resulting from interaction with peers from other firms, instructors, visits to other firms and interaction with contractors in the Young Contractors program
- Increased insight and self-awareness resulting from work with personality profiles and feedback from instructors
- Increased focus, job satisfaction and motivation resulting from all the above

Benefits / Outcomes For Sponsoring Firms

Beyond the individual participants, it is also quite possible for sponsoring firms to benefit as organizations from participating in the program:

- Improved bottom-line performance
- Retention and development of key talent
- Increased marketing and business development activity
- Improved morale and firm spirit resulting from clear demonstration of the firm's commitment to professional development for young designers
- Increased understanding and improved working relationships across levels, departments and groups in the firm
- Acquisition of current ideas and fresh perspective on best practices being developed by other firms and industry experts participating in the program
- Improved employee alignment with the firm's strategic plan
- Raised expectations for job performance and productivity from program participants
- Use of the program to strengthen the firm's efforts at mentoring and coaching between senior managers and younger designers

Getting The Most From This Training Investment

Keeping a high level of expectations in mind for what the program can provide for participants and firms, several strategies help firms achieve optimal outcomes from sponsoring participants in the program:

1. *Select participants on criteria important to the firm as well as the individual.* We usually believe that the best participants in any program are the ones who really want to be there, and that premise has held for many YDPDI participants. Some firms actually hold contests to select their participants. However, some of our most enthusiastic participants have been selected by their firms and placed in the program as a way of communicating to the participant that the firm has high hopes and increasing expectations for the participant.
2. *Make it clear that program participants are expected to bring what they learn back to the firm.* Firms have done this effectively in several ways, e.g. having program participants give a brief talk at an informal firm lunch meeting, having program participants discuss what they are learning as an agenda item in established firm meetings, having program participants conduct quarterly seminars on program topics that are especially relevant for the firm.
3. *Establish a clear link between program participants and a senior manager or principal in the firm.* We have begun calling these people “program mentors,” and we copy them on all the program emails and updates we regularly send to program participants. Program mentors help participants connect program content to their everyday work and performance development. Ideally, program participants meet with program mentors before each session to discuss what they should focus on in the session, then again after the session to discuss what they learned and how best to bring it to the rest of the firm.
4. *Have participants designate 4 – 6 clear learning goals.* Participants and the firm get more from the program when participants have clear learning and development goals they are using the program to address. Participants can develop these learning goals working with their program mentors.
5. *If possible, enroll at least two participants in the program.* (We try to encourage this with discount pricing for multiple registrants from a firm.) It is much easier for participants to apply what they learn in their ongoing work if they can bounce ideas and get support from a peer.
6. *Designate a backup person for each participant.* Even with the best planning, participants must occasionally miss a session due to project demands. When this happens it is very useful to have a backup already “on deck.”
7. *Encourage past participants to attend current sessions. Encourage all to attend Young Contractors sessions.* We welcome past program participants to attend any current program session they may have missed when their own program was offered, or even to repeat a program they enjoyed. To encourage interaction across the professional fence, we also make all the Young Designers and Young Contractors sessions mutually open to both groups.

Finally, I would ask that you also stay in touch with us. As the program is evolving, I am always interested in your comments and suggestions.