

# MARKETER

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## MARKETING-LED FIRM

- 12 WELCOME TO CX!
- 16 ENTERPRISE STRATEGY: ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE
- 22 THE BUSINESS OF GETTING BUSINESS
- 29 THE CONVERGENCE OF EXPERIENCE TO DELIVER  
YOUR BRAND PROMISE





# Enterprise Strategy: Roadmap for the Future

By Marjanne Pearson

Today, any firm can dream big. Size still matters, but experience is the foundation for our services, and ideas and innovation are the currency of our business.





National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Clark/Smoot/Russell Joint Venture, Adjaye Associates, and SmithGroupJJR. ©Feinknopf Photography, feinknopf.com.

**T**he new digital environment has given us the flexibility to reframe the work that we do, as well as our businesses. Small A/E/C firms that focus on relationships in their own communities are forming alliances for expanded reach. Mid-size firms are working globally, taking on projects that were once the exclusive territory of only the largest firms. Large firms continue to grow, adding services and capabilities while exploring new ways of working with local partners or acquisitions to enrich their collaborative process and experience. Quite literally, the sky's the limit.

What does this mean for the A/E/C industries? How can we ensure that marketing has a strong voice in creating the roadmaps needed to move our firms forward into the future?

## Evolution of Professional Practice

In its *Handbook of Professional Practice*, the American Institute of Architects provides a roadmap for evolution of a typical practice, characterized as growth decisions as a firm grows to 20 and then 40+ people.

This is a good beginning. However, the decisions are focused on growth of the practice via ownership expansion. As our business landscape has become more competitive, there is a greater need for an approach that addresses not only practice strategy, but also entrepreneurial issues—focused on markets and clients, as well as investments, initiatives, and risk.

Growth and return on investment (ROI) are dependent on creation of value. Success depends on having a holistic view of who

you are, why you are in business, what you are doing, with whom, and why it matters, as well as an integrated approach to achieve success.

## The Integrated Enterprise

Every business has four levels of leadership—fiduciary, enterprise, practice, and project (See *Figure 1.*).

Fiduciary leaders are responsible for managing investments and risk, with the added responsibility of ensuring that the business has the appropriate leadership, organizational framework, and ROI performance.

A/E/C firms tend to focus on practice and projects, with a significant emphasis on the metabolic force of getting the work and executing it, while managing

Figure 1. Functional Scope of Responsibility. Courtesy of Talentstar, Inc. | TOKOcreative

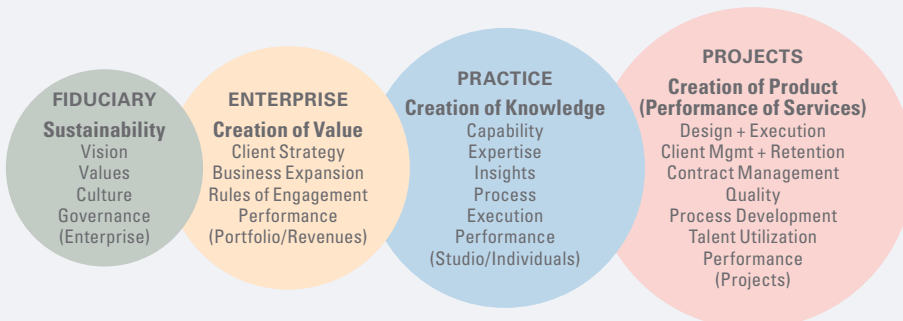


Figure 2. Functional Domains. Courtesy of Talentstar, Inc. | TOKOcreative

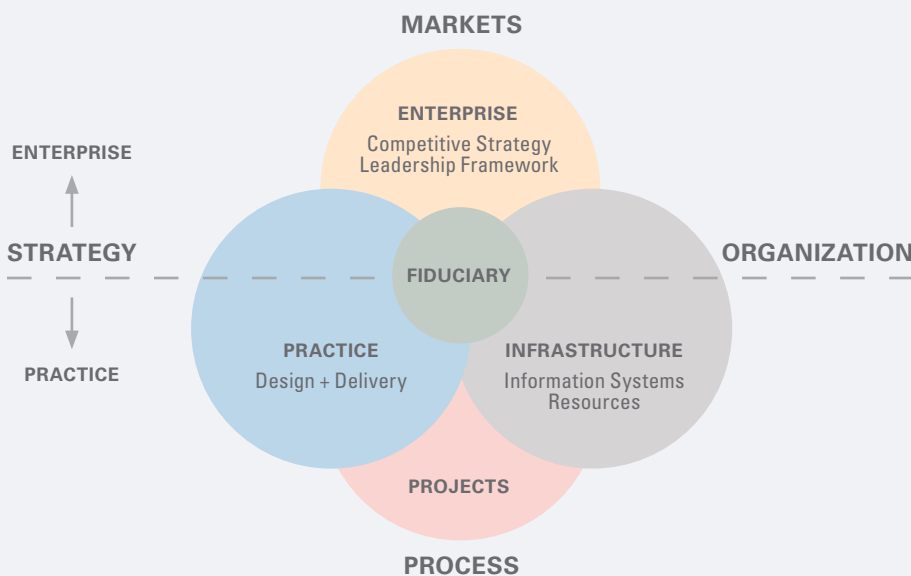
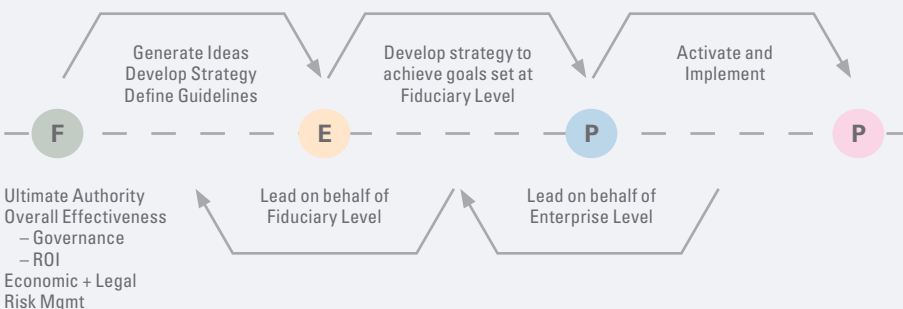


Figure 3: Roadmap (Not Sequential). Courtesy of Talentstar, Inc. | TOKOcreative

Strategic decisions cascade from Fiduciary to Enterprise + Practice for development + implementation.



all resources (time, talent, information, technology) to achieve a successful outcome. Projects are the vehicles of our businesses, and practices (or studios) are the environments in which they operate.

Since the 1992 recession, there has been a trend in the A/E/C industries toward enterprise strategy focused on growth and creation of value. Although known as “corporate strategy,” this applies to any type or size of business. It’s an attitude as much as a business tool, based on core functional domains—markets, strategy, process and organization.

Successful enterprise strategy relies on an integrated coalition of leaders who look at top-level strategies from a holistic point-of-view, touching on all functional domains, both internal and external (See Figure 2.).

- Competitive strategy — brand concept and market positioning
- Market strategy — markets, clients, and opportunities, including geographic reach
- Practice strategy — service offerings, value propositions, and process
- Talent strategy — talent, leadership, and organizational development
- Business strategy — investment, risk management, and ROI

The leadership coalition is vested with the responsibility for building a roadmap for the future (See Figure 3.). This is similar to training for a marathon. It’s not just about being able to run. One needs to build an investment strategy, with development of “backers” and “trainers,” as well as the right mental game and development plan for physical strength and endurance.

The leadership coalition has responsibility for ensuring that all elements of the “marathon” strategy are in alignment with enterprise goals.

Essentially, with this process, the leadership coalition is creating the foundation for an investment strategy, with a roadmap and supporting “funding deck” that leaders across the firm will adopt and take forward, sharing it with

all stakeholders as part of a cascading development and communications initiative.

### Marketing's Role in the Business Framework

As Seth Godin says, "Running a business with the wrong strategy in the wrong place at the wrong time is possible. But it's an uphill battle."

Marketing plays a leading role in integrated business transformation, ensuring that top-level marketing issues are explored as thoroughly as practice, talent, and business strategy, and that the entire spectrum of marketing, communications, and business development activities are not only in sync with the core business and key initiatives, but also exploited to enable accelerated growth and development.

With experience as the foundation for what we do, strategic integration builds a dynamic decision-making framework, enabling enterprises to grow and develop. This ensures sustainability of our enterprise through the culture we create, the principles we express, and the success that we attain, with a chain of values that links our firm, our employees, our constituencies, and our clients. ■

#### RELATED READING

"The Four Levels of Leadership: Creating Your Future," Marjanne Pearson, *Marketer*, Volume 34, Issue 4, August 2015  
<http://bit.ly/marketer-leadership>

Luanne Greene, President of Ayers Saint Gross, from KA Connect 2018  
<http://bit.ly/2018-kaconnect-asg>

"Get Agile," Phil Harrison, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, *Marketer*, Vol 36, Issue 1, February 2017  
<http://bit.ly/smps-harrison-get-agile>

"Elements of Value," Bain & Company  
<http://bit.ly/bain-value>

"Beyond Process," John Hagel, et al., Deloitte Insights  
<http://bit.ly/deloitte-beyond-process>

"How to make your organization as fast and agile as a Formula 1 team," Jurriaan Kamer, *The Ready*  
<http://bit.ly/ready-formula1>

"Letting Go of Efficiency Can Accelerate Your Company — Here's How," First Round Review  
<http://bit.ly/accelerate-company>  
<http://bit.ly/youtube-pisoni>

"Stress Test Your Company's Competitive Edge with These 4 Questions," Carsten Lund Pedersen and Thomas Ritter, *Harvard Business Review*  
<http://bit.ly/hbr-stress-test>

"The World According to Darren Bechtel," Nick Durham, *BuiltWorlds*  
<http://bit.ly/darren-bechtel>

"What One Marketer Learned on the Road to the Boardroom," Mary E. Morrison, *Deloitte Insights for CMOs, The Wall Street Journal*  
<http://bit.ly/deloitte-roadmap>

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8

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12

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16

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20

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22

### The Business of Getting Business: Turning Reputation Into Revenue



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29

### The Convergence of Experience To Deliver Your Brand Promise



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32

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37

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38

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### Featured Photographer

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