

MARKETER



WINNING TOP TALENT

OVERCOMING UNCONSCIOUS
BIAS IN RECRUITMENT AND
HIRING PRACTICES

STRATEGY BY DESIGN: HOW
COMPANIES GROW

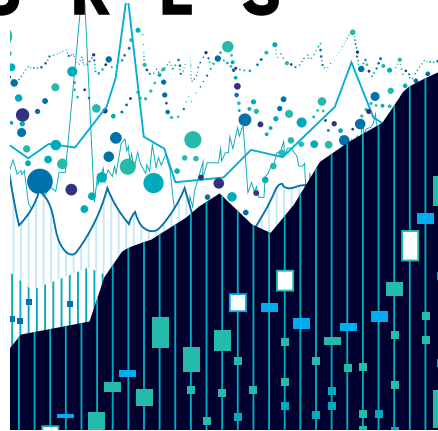
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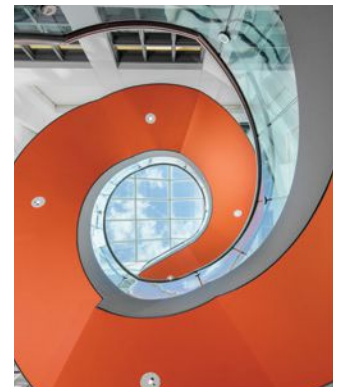
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Story Behind the Picture

A colorful grand staircase addition spirals skyward to renew and invigorate an existing pharmaceutical campus space, welcoming new tenants. Architecture by Integrated Design on the Parmer RTP Campus in Research Triangle Park, NC. ©Sterling E. Stevens, sestevens.com.



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Strategy by Design: How Companies Grow

Marjanne Pearson and Linda Wallack

Every company is different. There may be prototypical organizational models or go-to-market strategies, but like fingerprints, design practices are not identical, even offices of the same firm. It's not just the terroir—the characteristic taste and flavor (style and culture) that a firm might develop—it's the talent and leadership and the individualized perspectives and expertise they bring to the work.

Marketers have become experts at brand design and positioning. As Ida Cheinman,¹ principal and creative director of Substance151, has said, we can create a brand promise that “communicates what an A/E/C firm says it will deliver.” But now, “a different brand element is taking a front-row seat, overtaking brand promise in how firms want to be perceived and remembered. That element is brand purpose.”

Purpose: The Foundation of Dimensional Value

Purpose-based development is dimensional rather than linear. It's focused on creating multi-directional future value for our companies and our clients and broader impact in our personal lives, communities, cities, institutions, and the world. It's how we change the way we think about what we do and why; the growth and transformation that we embrace to realize it; and the actions we take to mobilize and extend our resources to achieve it.

Purpose becomes the foundation for who we are and what we do. It causes us to ask how we can design our organizations and culture to create value for all stakeholders, now and into the future.

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. As our business landscape has become more competitive, there is a greater

need for an approach that addresses a portfolio-based practice strategy and entrepreneurial issues—focused on markets and clients, as well as investments, initiatives, and risk.

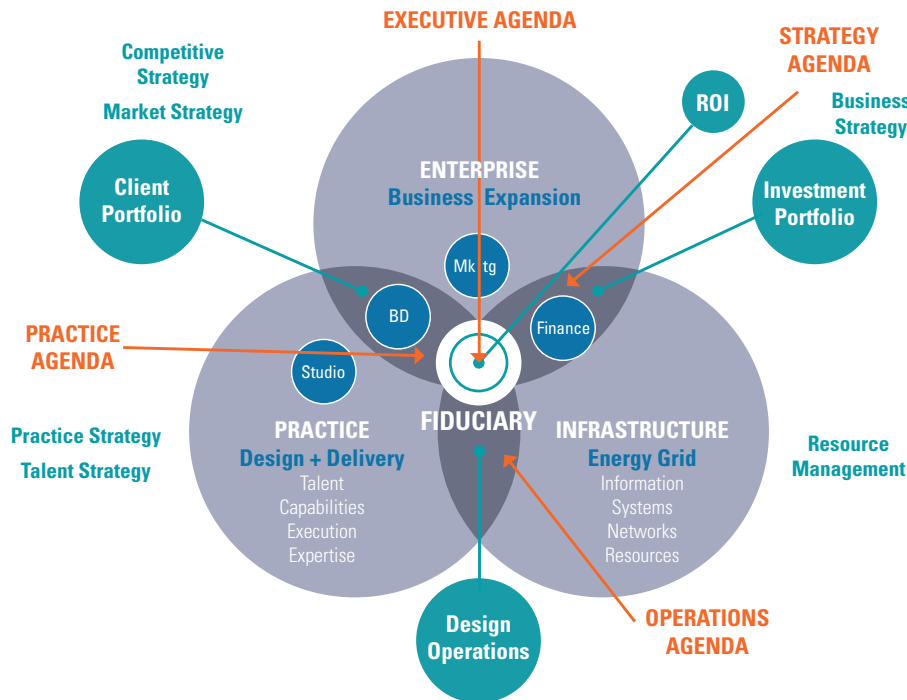
Defined Values Drive Everything

Successful enterprise strategy relies on an integrated coalition of leaders—a forward-thinking “futures council”—who consider top- and mid-level strategy from a holistic viewpoint, touching on all functional domains, both internal and external. As a firm engages in business transformation, all members of the firm must be aligned with the key initiatives to enable accelerated growth and return on investment (ROI).

Where are you in the development process?

- Are you living up to your stated purpose and values?
- Are you operating as if there was/is no pandemic and the world hasn't changed?
- Is your office structured like a spreadsheet?
- Are any of you still doing “old work”—structured, repeatable, and predictable?
- Are you assessing current and future demands?
- Are you creating a culture that emphasizes agility and learning?
- Are you designing your firm's organization and culture to create value for all stakeholders?

Functional Domains



Leadership Framework

As we learned in *Aligning the Stars: How to succeed when professionals drive results*,² People are more than valuable assets; they are the source of competitive advantage.

Within the A/E/C industries, practice leaders drive the creation of value and are catalysts for change. They lead organizational knowledge and perspective, focused on strategy, expertise, and integration of information and resources. They help us understand what we can do to achieve success and resiliency.

- 80% of a firm's operational focus is metabolic conversion—feeding the firm—getting the work and doing the work, achieving performance goals (qualitative and quantitative), generating revenues, and ROI.

Practice Strategy (process + operations management)

1. Talent Capability Mix
2. Service Offerings
3. Process Development
4. Portfolio Management
5. Resource Management (including all project resources)
6. Execution Systems

- 20% is evolutionary transition—growing markets, talent, capabilities, and expertise—creating higher value (qualitative and quantitative), enabling growth and transformation over time.

Portfolio Strategy (markets + client strategy)

1. Go-to-Market Strategy
2. Brand/Market Positioning
3. Client + Revenue Mix
4. Relationship Strategies (including clients, alliances, and key collaborators)
5. Client Development + Retention
6. Execution Systems (including all marketing/BD/PR resources)

Creating Your Future

Best-selling author, Professor Rita McGrath, stated, “The word ‘strategy’ has come to mean anything in an organization that is important. But great strategies drive real purpose and decision-making. Define one that is meaningful, and you can guide real-time choice-making across your organization.”⁴

Step One:

Create a brain trust including a mix of generations and disciplines. They will lead the effort to look at the puzzle pieces in new ways and consider novel approaches:

- What are the trends that will impact our clients and our practice?
- What commitments has our firm made toward ESG and DEI (J.E.D.I.) within our practice?
- Who could we work with to gain new insights and perspectives?
- Who could we bring into the firm to help us activate change and transformational change?

Step Two:

Working with practice leaders and other designated champions and catalysts, the brain trust will have an opportunity to lead the development of the firm's collaborative strategy related to practice and talent development, including:

- Develop priorities regarding work-life balance, social issues, wellness, trust, and technology
- Redeploy talent to new roles (and new ways of working)
- Invest in skill-building
- Define roles around skills, affinity, or passion versus traditional models

Trends³

3 Trends That Are Here to Stay in 2022

Gensler 12/17/2021

<https://www.gensler.com/blog/3-trends-here-to-stay-in-2022>

The Unspoken Burden on Women in Architecture

Julia Gamolina, Metropolis

12/27/2021

<https://metropolismag.com/viewpoints/women-architecture/>

Women in the Workplace 2021

McKinsey & Company

09/27/2021

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

- Find consultants or other firms to partner with
- Look beyond your ZIP code—it's a virtual workplace
- Plan to test and retest

Supercharge Your Current Team

Care for the people you have. They are your greatest champions, and they create and hold valuable knowledge and expertise.

1. Trust is number one!
2. Create a culture of enabling vs. control
3. Lead with compassion and competence
4. Communicate often, especially during hard times

5. Elevate the quality and frequency of employee recognition
6. Commit to long-term employee happiness over short-term productivity
7. Develop a robust and flexible remote-work strategy

Simon Sinek's Golden Circle⁵ model helps us articulate why we do what we do, and more importantly, why it matters. Sinek has said, "An organization communicates its WHY through everything it says and does—it's marketing, the products and services the company provides, the decisions its leaders make...everything." More importantly, the adoption and catalytic conversion of brand purpose impacts relationships, engagement, and reputation, enriching the roots of our practice so we can thrive and grow. ■

Leadership Roles and Criteria

Characteristics of a Successful Leader⁷

"The core missions of a leader—to build the long-term value of a business and to protect and promote its brand—are goals that professional service leaders share with their counterparts in other industries. However, how those objectives are achieved differs dramatically in the professional services arena, where creating a cohesive, collaborative, and efficient environment is essential to success.

"In a professional service setting, influence trumps control. Leadership requires powerful motivational skills and adroit maneuvering, coupled with the willingness to make tough calls and to take the heat for them. It also requires a consummate communicator to manage a partnership of equals in which everyone is an owner and entrepreneur."

The Art of Managing Professional Services – Maureen Broderick⁷

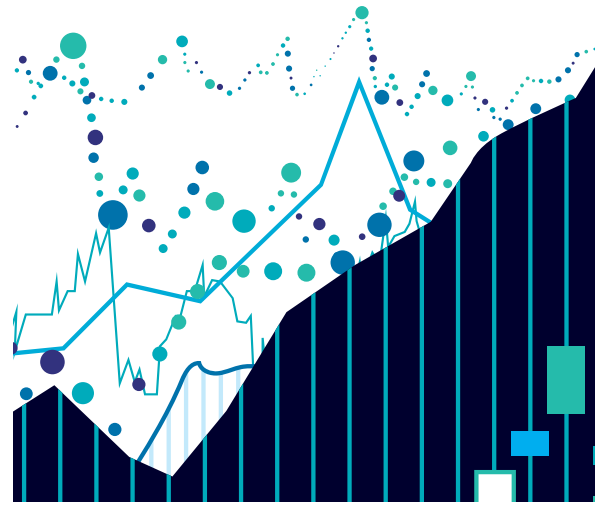


The Four X Factors of Exceptional Leaders⁸

"In defining 'best performing leaders' we focused on a number of factors but gave priority to actual delivery against the organization's strategy: the clarity and alignment those leaders generated and the pace of transformation they were able to drive successfully. We prioritized the 'how' of their leadership, while also considering the 'what' of their results."

1. They simplify complexity and operationalize it.
2. They drive ambition for the whole enterprise.
3. They play well on teams they don't lead.
4. They build leaders.

Strategy by Design: A Guide to Marketing for Talent



Finding the right talent isn't a transaction. It isn't about fulfilling a task. If you are focused only on execution, you won't have the opportunity to create a robust value proposition. To be successful and sustainable, you need the right people with the proper perspective. Ask yourself: Who else do we need to achieve our goals?

First, Keep the People You Have

- Who are your best people? What makes them different from the others?
- What is your team thinking and feeling?
- Are they sharing that information with you?
- Are you listening?
- How can you help them continue to be engaged and successful on their own terms?

Then, Remember That One Size Does Not Fit All

Job seekers today are looking for opportunities, not just another job. They have gotten through most of the pandemic, experiencing increased trust and transparency, as well as greater agency over their working hours and workflow. They want to be valued at work, and instead of a career ladder for advancement, they may prefer a jungle gym.⁶ People are deciding what they want to do next, with whom, and where. They are highly networked, and they are doing their homework.

Make a Good Impression

For more than 30 years, Nancy Egan, principal of marketing consultancy, New Voodoo, has asked three questions related to clients. They also apply to recruiting.

- What do you know about you?
- What do you know about them (the talent you are seeking)?
- What should they know about you?

And now there's a fourth:

- Where do they hang out—virtually and IRL?

Build the profile of the person you are seeking. Develop a detailed job description to use for interviews and hiring, like the scope of service in a professional services agreement. And for the job posting, think like a creative agency. Remember that you are creating ad copy, not specifications. What's most important? Will it capture the attention of diverse applicants and make them want to learn more?

Try to think differently—how can you capitalize on the potential of different generations? Does a project manager need 20 years of experience? At the other end of the spectrum, baby boomers have been leaving the workforce, but they don't necessarily want to retire. While they may not be experts in computational design, they have years of experience with client and consultant management while delivering built work, possibly in your own backyard.

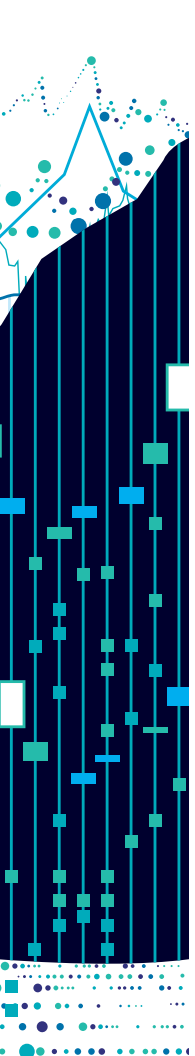
Your recruiting process should capitalize on all of your options to communicate your story and build a pipeline of potential candidates.

Jungle Gym vs. Career Ladder⁶

Sheryl Sandberg

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

"Ladders are limiting—people can move up or down, on or off. Jungle gyms offer more creative exploration...there are many ways to get to the top of a jungle gym.... The ability to forge a unique path with occasional dips, detours, and even dead-ends presents a better chance for fulfillment. Plus, a jungle gym provides great views for many people, not just those at the top."



Interview potential candidates and then move them into your firm's CRM workflow and stay in touch with them.

- Your website is a storefront for your firm. It's an opportunity for you to share your vision and purpose through well-crafted curation and messaging. And it's the go-to resource hub to learn more about who you are, what you do, and why.
- Content developed by you, your firm, or third-party media resources will reinforce your portfolio, expertise, and point-of-view. It also drives traffic to your website hub.
- LinkedIn is today's digital yellow pages—an encyclopedia of data about you, your firm, and the people in it. In addition to what is essentially an online resume, you have the opportunity to create digital spotlights conveying news and information.
- Social media platforms allow you to showcase your people, culture, process, and work-in-progress to a broad audience, including potential clients, collaborators, and employees.
- Job postings allow you to reach an audience that is exploring career options. They may or may not be prepared to take action, but they are ready to be engaged.
- Targeted networking is a proactive method to reach out—connect with someone who may or may not be ready to engage. It's an opportunity to share your vision through well-crafted curation and messaging.

Your Interview Process

When was the last time you got candid feedback from people who joined (or didn't join) your firm?

One of the biggest complaints we've heard is a lack of response. An applicant submits their résumé for a specific position, and there's no acknowledgment or even

indication of whether your firm is still hiring. Another complaint is the length of time it takes from the date of first contact (e.g., application submittal) to the offer date. Since the applicant is actively seeking a new position, they want information about their timeline—especially if they should broaden their search.

On the employer side, often a firm is waiting for information about a new potential project, and they don't want to move into the interviewing process. However, that's not a great way to build a relationship with a promising future employee.

- Hold an open house (virtual is fine). AIA/San Francisco has a series of monthly (virtual) visits to different offices. This allows firm members (not just principals) to talk about their current positions, projects and aspects of the culture and team that might not be available to an applicant during a regular interview.
- During the open house, if it's not confidential, talk about current hiring plans—internships to senior levels. It doesn't need to be detailed, but you can generate some buzz and interest.
- If someone applies, make sure that they get an acknowledgment, even if it's an auto-reply. If possible, provide information about your review process and its timeframe. Suggest a method for checking in periodically.
- If you cannot meet the timeframe you promised, give them an update. No one likes being on hold.
- If you set up an interview, don't cancel unless it's an emergency. Have a backup interviewer, just in case.
- While you're interviewing, be present—turn off your devices and take a few notes.
- Add your notes to the applicant's file, so others within the firm will be able to access them. ■



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LINDA WALLACK's integrative approach comes from a history of creating at the intersection of four critical elements—environments, processes, communications, and leadership. These elements are necessary for organizations to flourish. Contact Linda at 312.550.3120 or linda@hellotoko.com.

Resources

Brand Promise

- ¹ *Brand Purpose Is the New Brand Promise*—Substance151 (Ida Cheinman) — December 2018
 - <https://www.substance151.com/brand-purpose-is-new-brand-promise/>
- *Elements of a Successful Brand 4: Brand Promise*—Hinge Marketing — 04/27/2020
 - <https://hingemarketing.com/blog/story/elements-of-a-successful-brand-4-brand-promise1>

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- ⁶ Jungle Gym
 - *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*—Sheryl Sandberg, Deckle Edge 03/12/2013
 - <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6565764-the-most-common-metaphor-for-careers-is-a-ladder-but>

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 - <https://www.bain.com/insights/books/aligning-the-stars/>
- ⁷ *The Art of Managing Professional Services*—Maureen Broderick, Prentice Hall, 2011
- ⁸ *The four X factors of exceptional leaders*—Strategy+Business — 09/11/2018
 - <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/The-Four-X-Factors-of-Exceptional-Leaders>

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- Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow*—Harvard Business Review (Larry E. Greiner) — May–June 1998
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Strategy

- ⁴ *Uncertain about the future? A well-defined strategy can help.*—Rita McGrath, Thought Sparks, 2022
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/uncertain-future-well-defined-strategy-can-help-rita-mcgrath/>

- ⁵ The Golden Circle — Simon Sinek
 - <https://simonsinek.com/>

Trends

- Year in Review: Top 5 Topics of 2021*—Gensler Design Review 12/16/2021 <https://www.gensler.com/blog/2021-top-5-architecture-and-design-trends-topicsview>

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Featured Photographer

STERLING E. STEVENS seamlessly transitioned careers from practicing architecture to becoming a professional photographer and award-winning fine artist. Curiosity for photography emerged during his formal design studies in Texas and North Carolina. A trained aesthetic sensibility, acute empathy for his surroundings, and unadulterated joy of the still image contributed to his passion for visually translating the built environment. Based between Raleigh, NC, and San Antonio, TX, Stevens collaborates with a diverse array of clients, blending his artistic eye, architectural knowledge, and situational awareness into dynamic portraits of environmental design. View the Sterling E. Stevens Design Photo portfolio at sestevens.com, contact him at (919) 270-2605, (210) 503-0340, or info@sestevens.com.

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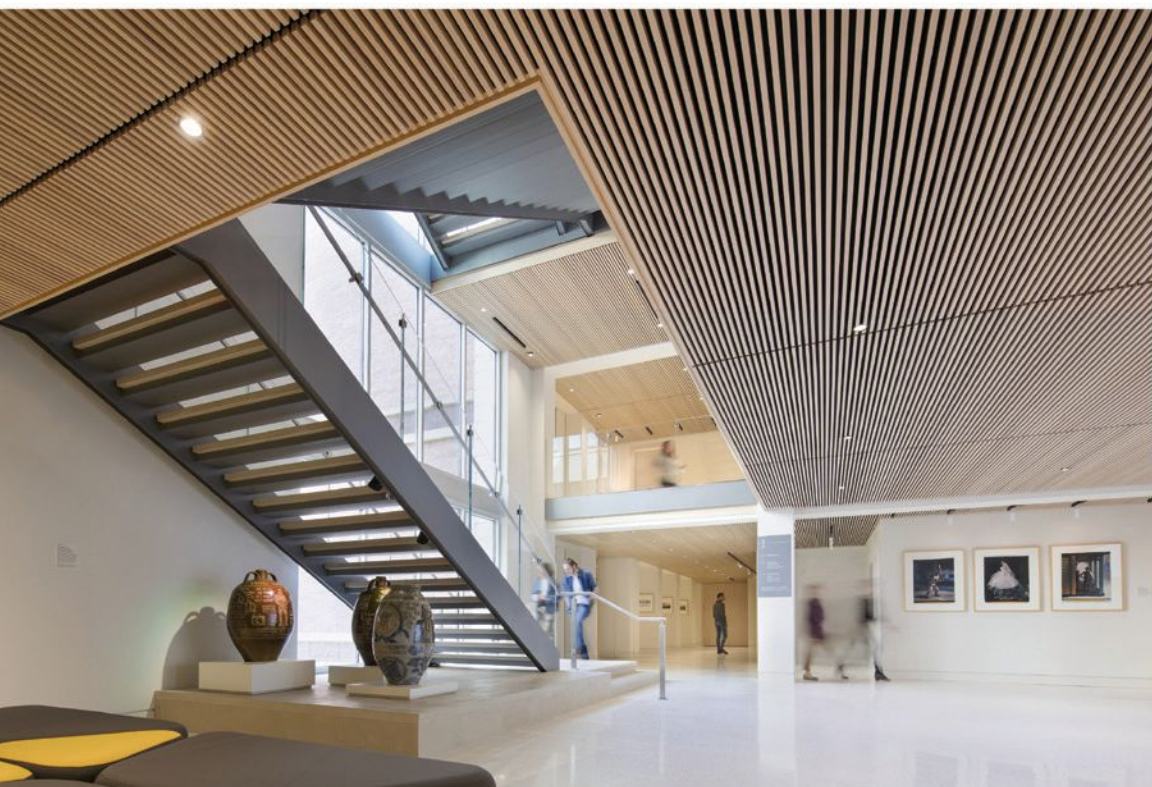
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