



By Hugh Hochberg
The Coxe Group

Those without courage step aside

Leadership, courage and staying current critical for today's architects

IF TODAY'S ARCHITECTURE WERE A SYMPHONY, all 103 instruments of the orchestra would be reaching a crescendo unlike any other, heralding more change in architecture in the next 10 years than in the previous 1,000. That's quite a statement, and it's not an exaggeration.

While the advent of digital technologies has changed certain aspects of practice, and while such technologies are catalysts for other changes in the way architects practice, technological evolution itself is not the change: The changes are far more profound than simply expediting the delivery of architecture. Further complicating the situation is that the changes are neither unidirectional nor linear. That is, the phrase, "At one end of the spectrum ... and at the other end..." is inapplicable. Additionally, few, if any, of these components of change are sudden or surprising; they have been evident for several years in most cases, and even longer in others. And now they are gaining traction as the crescendo dramatically foreshadows what lies ahead.

Practitioners have experienced – and we have observed, speculated and reported – for years such things as:

- ♦ general greater public awareness and interest in *design*;
- ♦ constantly elevating client expectations about quality, speed and cost-effective delivery;
- ♦ pressure from other fields, notably construction, for architects to improve the quality, constructability, applicability and documentation of their work ... and very receptive ears from clients;
- ♦ increasing interest in new materials and new uses of existing materials;
- ♦ clients expecting their architects to be versed in far more than just the architecture that relates to their projects;
- ♦ rapidly heightening concern for natural resources;
- ♦ globalization of players in the practice of architecture;
- ♦ invasions into the practice of architecture by non-conventional providers;
- ♦ extensions by architects into other service arenas;
- ♦ client awareness of cost-saving through off-shore production;

If today's architecture were a symphony, all 103 instruments of the orchestra would be reaching a crescendo unlike any other, heralding more change in architecture in the next 10 years than in the previous 1,000.

- ♦ increasing involvement in the design and construction process by debt and equity financiers;
- ♦ a more demanding regulatory environment;
- ♦ access to ever-increasing amounts of information on subjects of everything imaginable (and some things not imaginable!);
- ♦ advancing technology in areas of simulation and of imbedding information;
- ♦ professional societies that – all good intentions notwithstanding – lag in efforts to attain and maintain a high degree of relevance and value; and
- ♦ educational programs that, while producing graduates who are more qualified upon entering the profession than were their predecessors, due to the elevated demands of the profession are actually *behind* their predecessors at comparable early times in their careers.

All told, consider the wider span about which an accomplished practitioner must be knowledgeable to remain "accomplished." Consider, too, what the term "architect" really means. Certainly knowledgeable and objective observers will conclude that the span of the "accomplished architect" has broadened and that being an "architect" means

more than it has meant in centuries and even decades past.

These fundamental changes aren't primarily about management and architectural skill; they are much more about *leadership*. They aren't about keeping pace with competitors; they are much more about staying apprised of the changes that are happening and that *are about* to happen. They aren't about steadfastly holding to a course; they are much more about *courage* ... courage to acknowledge the significance of the changes, courage to discard the importance of those aspects of conventional practice that restrain firms from moving forward, and courage for today's leaders to change course (which may mean augmenting or replacing themselves). ■

Reach Hugh Hochberg, of The Coxe Group, at hhochberg@coxegroup.com, or 206-467-4040.

PRESIDENT *continued from page 1*

make the region an even stronger center for design, attracting and building firms and businesses that provide and rely on design, and furthering the recognition in wider markets that Portland and Oregon are synonymous with forward-thinking creativity.

Brad provided another perspective on the growing design community in Portland as a developer who has specialized in providing spaces suited to emerging creative firms. He described his vision for locally generated expansion of the creative sector and of the role of incubator spaces that nurture a supportive community while also providing affordable working space. Randy's viewpoint was that of a new creative venture, one building on Portland's creative culture and reputation and documenting the design and planning efforts, accomplishments and thinking of the region. His work also keeps him in touch with urban and regional development issues, and he raised some interesting ideas such as the potential impact of creative baby boomers retiring, downsizing, moving to Portland and rejoining the creative workforce, and the potential of the Internet to expand the market served by small creative businesses.

I've mentioned only a few of the many sessions at the conference, but some that, for me, embodied the conference theme and made me think more broadly about the role of the architectural profession and its continuing evolution in an increasingly dynamic world. I encourage you to speak with colleagues who attended the conference and continue the dialogue. ■

- PlanWell
- Digital Document Management
- Color Printing Services
- Sustainable Services and Products
- Print Equipment Placement

Portland 503.227.3424 Tigard 503.620.8868 Bend 541.749.2151

Throw everything you know about wood out the window.

JELD-WEN® windows and doors with AuraLast® wood will stay beautiful and worry-free for years. AuraLast wood provides superior protection against decay, water absorption and termite infestation. Unlike dip-treated wood, AuraLast wood is protected to the core and comes with an exclusive 20-year warranty. Learn more today at www.jeld-wen.com.

20 YEAR

RELIABILITY for real life™ **JELD-WEN**
WINDOWS & DOORS

AVAILABLE AT:

Lake Oswego 503.635.3166	Central Point 541.665.1002	Bend 541.382.1149
-----------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------