

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear AIA Members, Colleagues and Friends,

Sometimes, I wish I didn't focus on sports as much as I do. The NBA Finals were happening when I started writing this message. I would have much more time available for more productive endeavors if I didn't spend so much time watching sports. Whether it's in person, on TV or on my iPhone, I watch all sports. I've even watched dart throwing recently. Ridiculous! So, it's the Golden State Warriors vs Cleveland Cavaliers. Curry, Thompson, Draymond and Durant vs Lebron, just as predicted back in October. Why did they play the regular season if we knew who the conference champs were going to be last October?

In the Architecture world, why do we try out for projects where there appears to be a frontrunner or for projects which we haven't done our homework and aren't prepared? Let's be honest, at one time or another, we have all pursued an already released RFP that we found in the newspaper. I know. I know. The Millennials are saying, "What's a Newspaper"?

Anyway, isn't that about the worst way to pursue a project? Almost as bad is getting that telephone call or email from a consultant who has the 'inside track'. They are always reluctant to volunteer that they are already on five other architectural teams. There are lots of excuses to submit on these 'newspaper RFPs'. "It will be good practice, even if we lose." "We'll show the client that we're interested in them, even if we lose." "Maybe we'll get lucky." "Maybe everyone is so busy that ours' will be the only submittal."

Everybody has probably gotten lucky a time or two and won a longshot project. Occasionally the sure bet loses because they blow the interview. Overconfidence or answering a budget or schedule question 'incorrectly/truthfully' might be factors.

Sometimes there are limited respondents and your firm just happens to be the best. You win! I said I would run for AIA Utah President if no one ran against me, because, I thought those odds of winning were better for me. Winning in this way though may be a problem down the road, because it's just not good business development. All I can say is make sure that you celebrate these rare winning moments, because usually the favorite, the Golden State Warrior, is going to win.

Trust me, losing is really a drag. The problem is that you can't win unless you compete. I say keep competing and don't ever get used to losing.

Winning is extraordinarily tough even when you have done your homework and are prepared to compete for a project as best you can. An administrator once told me that he only shortlisted A Teams and then he picked his favorite, even though the selection committee had multiple selectors. Think about that before your next interview.

Of course, the best way to be a winner is to have a client just give you projects.....again and again and again! I think this method of winning is best accomplished by building a relationship with your client, being a competent designer, meeting budgets and schedules and doing an exceptional job.....again and again and again!

Another way to be a winner is to create a winning culture in your firm, no matter your status. Encourage diversity in your firm: diversity in people, diversity in thought, diversity in practice. Rely on the wisdom from the experienced leaders but be open to new ideas from the younger generation. Don't be resistant to change. Also, everyone needs to be in a position where they can thrive, that goes for principals as well as runners.

The prognosticators predicted that the Golden State Warriors were going to take the NBA title. Did the sure bet win?

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Lohse".

Jim Lohse, AIA President
FFKR Architects