

# Aric Andrew leads a collaborative effort at growing Luckett & Farley

Feb 8, 2017, 3:51pm EST

One of [Aric Andrew](#)'s employees likes to call him a "working president and CEO."

Sure enough, one of the most noteworthy parts of his corner office at [Luckett & Farley Architects, Engineers and Construction Managers Inc.](#) is the blueprint-laden drafting table that sits near a big, wooden CEO-style desk.

Beside the drafting table is a scaled-down model of a modern-looking building and a whiteboard covered in ideas and numbers.

It's a working office — not just ornamental.

An intricate building model next to the drafting station is possibly what Luckett & Farley's new office will look like when he finishes designing it ... or possibly not. The designs that litter the table also reflect the project, which Andrew considers his biggest challenge yet as an architect.

"We have 118 designers with 118 ideas of what their new home will look like," Andrew said with a laugh. "It's really understanding what's important to everybody — to create a place where they want to be."

Luckett & Farley has an employee stock ownership plan, or an ESOP, which means each employee owns a share in the business — so the pressure is really on.

The company bought the building next door to its South Third Street office, intending to move everyone in the firm over and then lease out the current office.

But, Andrew said, the firm has grown more than 25 percent over the last year and is still in "growth mode."

That growth means he had to reconsider moving the company out of the current office altogether. Now, Andrew said, the plan is to keep the second floor and rent out the first and third floors. He hopes to lease the ground floor to a restaurant.

Luckett & Farley wants to help its area — the newly emerging "SoBro" neighborhood — grow and succeed, he explained.

## Getting his start

You might not know it from his love of modern design, but Andrew grew up on a farm in Northern Kentucky. He said he and his family were constantly building and fixing things, which gave him his affinity for design.

He said he also always has loved art — a big blown-glass art piece in the Luckett & Farley lobby is evidence of that.

When Andrew grew up and decided to be an architect, he thought he'd have to leave Kentucky for a bigger city like New York or Boston. He was pleasantly surprised to find that wasn't the case.

He has spent his entire career in the commonwealth, but the projects he's worked on reach from coast to coast, he said. One of his favorite was right here in Louisville, though.

In the late 1980s, he designed the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Community Church near St. Matthews. It was one of the first projects that he got to take the lead on, and he said he likes that the design is still relevant today.

He also worked on a building on the Berea College campus, as well as a project to build a baseball and a soccer stadium for the University of Kentucky.

More than anything, though, he loves the collaboration that comes with his job. He works with the owners of a building or project as well as the designers, engineers, other architects and contractors.

“It’s all about getting consensus,” he said. “Owners know what they want. It’s just a matter of getting it out.”

Andrew took some time to answer a few more of our questions:

**How do you motivate your employees?**

We try to align the expectations of the employee-owner with the client. An example is that we are all designers and we like to do good designs; our clients like to have good design.

So, when we get those two things aligned, it takes care of itself and they’re engaged and motivated to do their best work.

**How do you recharge yourself in the middle of the day?**

I use my lunch time as creative time and will do some design work.

**What leadership traits have helped you along the way?**

I like working with people and being collaborative. I am a good listener. It’s important to listen and understand what someone is trying to say.

I am fairly diplomatic in understanding what everyone's objectives are and try to find common ground to move us forward.

### **What's the best advice you've ever received?**

Best advice came from my parents. My dad was physically and mentally so strong that he felt if he could get his shoulder under it, he could move anything.

With that work ethic as context, he said at the end of the day if you feel like you gave it your best then go to bed, start a new day tomorrow.

My mother — who was totally different and very discerning, if not critical — reminded me that we all have struggles and it's how we deal with things that speaks to who we are.

### **Why do you have the career you have?**

I was always creative and liked to draw and paint. Growing up on a farm, we were always making things and building things.

It was something about the connection with the earth, with the fusion of artistic passion that resulted in my love for architecture.

### **What was your first job?**

My first job — when I was 4 or 5, my mother gave me a gallon bucket and said I had to fill it full of peas from the garden. My older sister probably picked most of them.

Growing up on the farm, we always worked hard labor, we just didn't know any better.

### **What's your proudest accomplishment?**

Without a doubt, raising three amazing children, who are now adults. I'm very proud of them.

### **What skill would you most like to improve?**

I am a procrastinator; probably surprises people. I procrastinate because I am a perfectionist and I want it to be perfect.

It hasn't stifled me, but the tendency is there.

### **What trait do you most value in your employees?**

The entrepreneurial spirit, the intensity and the energy. If you have that, you will probably succeed in some way, but that is something you can't teach. It has to be part of your makeup.

### **Which websites do you try to look at every day?**

I enjoy designed-focused websites. There are a handful like [Dwell.com](http://Dwell.com) that I peruse.

---

**Aric Andrew**

President and CEO, Luckett & Farley Architects, Engineers and Construction Managers Inc.

**Hometown:** Wises Landing, Ky.

**Lives:** Irish Hill

**Career history:** Luckett & Farley, 2010-present, president and CEO since Jan. 1; facilities architect, Oldham County Schools, 2006-10; various positions, including senior vice president, Luckett & Farley, 2002-06; vice president, Bickel Gibson Associates Architects, 1987-2002

**Family:** Three grown children — 24, 26 and 30

**Hobbies:** Running — long-distance marathons, currently preparing for the Wineglass marathon in New York in October, and he hopes to qualify for the Boston marathon. Runs a marathon a year and uses it as a fundraiser in memory of his mother, who died from cancer; playing guitar; painting