

The Business of Landscape Architecture

Session Handout



Kona Gray

Jennifer Guthrie

Doug Smith

Joy Kuebler

SAT-B10 : The Business of Landscape Architecture

Saturday, October 21, 2017

2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Room 403

Who is this session for...

Everyone

Entrepreneurs, those thinking about stepping into ownership, those transitioning out of ownership. But we also feel this session is for anyone who is interested in an open and honest conversation about the business side of our profession.

Learning Objectives...

With you in mind

- Gain insight into the challenges of starting a firm or stepping into leadership roles within established firms.
- Explore how business struggles evolve, stepping out of ongoing cycles and avoiding issues with good contracts to manage the success of your firm.
- Gain insight into how various forms of diversity can affect success.
- Learn the value in early and innovative transition planning for long-term firm success.

Session Topics...

To foster the conversation

- Defining your firm, who you are and what you want to be
 - Structure and evolution of business model
 - Money
 - Balancing Management vs Design
 - Transition Planning
 - Employee Retention and Growth
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As Landscape Architects, we are trained in the understanding of natural systems and design of the environment. However, an in depth understanding of the essentials of running a business is missing for many. After 25 years of practice, I have come to realize we have so much to share with our colleagues in regards to business towards enhancing the way we provide design services.

-Kona Gray

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ESDA

Kona: Moderator

Location: Ft Lauderdale,
Orlando, NY, Baltimore,
Shanghai

Number of employees: 125

Founder: Edward D Stone, Jr

Current Ownership: 23
participants in Ownership group

Year founded: 1960

Structure: C-Corporation

Type of work: International practice with a mix of public and private sector clients



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The panel is comprised of representatives of three distinctly different landscape architecture firms, with firm size being one primary differentiator. Because we are all administering a design practice, we note commonality in the issues we face on a day to day basis. At the same time, there are distinct differences in how we respond. I think this panel will be very interesting for those in the audience who are curious to hear about the common themes and the differences.

-Doug Smith

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EDSA

Doug Panelist

Location: Ft Lauderdale, Orlando, NY, Baltimore, Shanghai

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From the beginning, we sensed that we weren't a “normal company.” As we reached out to experts to help us determine how best to grow as a practice, we found out that there really is no such thing as a “normal company.” But, there are some “normal” business benchmarks that are helpful guides.

-Jennifer Guthrie

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Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

Jennifer Panelist

Location: Seattle, Washington DC

Number of employees: 48

Founders: Shannon Nichol,
Kathryn Gustafson, Jennifer
Guthrie

Current Ownership: 5
shareholders

Year founded: 1999

Structure: S-Corporation

Type of work: Domestic practice with projects throughout the globe.
Mix of private and public clients.



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For many years I have felt that conference conversations around business and practice “just didn’t fit me.” My firm didn’t look anything like their firms, so it was difficult to adapt their lessons learned into something useful for me. I’m here today to widen that conversation.

-Joy Kuebler

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Joy Kuebler Landscape Architect, PC

Joy Panelist

Location: Buffalo, NY

Number of employees: 8

Founder: Joy Kuebler

Current Ownership: 1 shareholder

Year founded: 2003

Structure: S-Corporation

Type of work: Regional

sub-consultants for community engagement and design. Primarily Public sector clients.



Panel Topics

Defining your firm, who you are and what you want to be

Notes:

Structure and evolution of business model

Notes:

Money

Notes:



Balancing Management vs Design

Notes:

Transition Planning

Notes:

Employee Retention and Growth

Notes:





Doug Smith

Where you can find him:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/doug-smith-30a3b313/>

dsmith@edsaplan.com

He suggests you check out:

[Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't](#)

Oct 16, 2001 by [Jim Collins](#)

Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All
Hardcover - October 15, 2013 by [Tom Kelley](#)

Jennifer Guthrie

Where you can find her:

<http://www.ggnltd.com/jennifer-guthrie>

She suggests you check out:

LAM:

<https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2017/03/23/start-your-engines/>

Expert Opinions: <http://capelin.com/2009/04/hugh-hochberg/>

TED Talks:

https://www.ted.com/talks/casey_brown_know_your_worth_and_then_ask_for_it?language=en





Kona Gray

Where you can find him:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kona-gray-86667311/>

<https://www.instagram.com/konagray/>

He suggests you check out:

Websites: Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/>

Fast Company: <https://www.fastcompany.com/>

Books: Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World February 7, 2017
by [Adam Grant](#) (Author), [Sheryl Sandberg](#) (Foreword)

[Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation](#) by: [Tim Brown](#)

TED talks:

https://www.ted.com/talks/roselinde_torres_what_it_takes_to_be_a_great_leader?language=en

Joy Kuebler

Where you can find her:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joykuebler/>

<https://twitter.com/JoyKuebler>

She suggests you check out:

Blogs: <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>

Podcasts: <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510313/how-i-built-this>

TED talks:

https://www.ted.com/talks/john_bohannon_dance_vs_powerpoint_a_modest_proposal

