

The community at large is also your audience. You have an opportunity to be known by people who are not part of the design and construction industry, or who may not even be potential clients. But if “six degrees of separation” has any validity, many people can affect your business, through introductions, recommendations, or recognition.

Internally Produced Material

Historically, design firms use printed brochures as a means of communicating their experience and expertise. Volumes can be printed on this subject, but suffice to say that the best brochures express the firm’s work by showing how it addresses specific client needs. The preprinted portfolio of images that was used predominantly in the past is being supplanted by just-in-time electronic project pages, combining the requisite photographs with text that can be customized for any given situation. These types of pages can be reconfigured and recombined, creating a brochure system that is flexible and responsive to customer issues. A base brochure system like this can be supplemented with smaller custom pieces that apply to a specific market sector, project type, or service offering.

With the advent of the Internet, electronic media have made rapid gains in acceptance and importance. A web page offers the opportunity for unlimited worldwide access to your people, portfolio, and “pitch.” A web page is a dynamic tool, but it takes a skilled writer, a superb designer, and a technology guru to help get the message across. And unlike a brochure, it is never done. It must be changed, updated, and periodically reinvented in order to draw people back for multiple visits.

Exhibits are another great way to be seen. Some sectors, albeit not all, offer great opportunities to promote your projects and your people. Both “unmanned” exhibits and exhibit booths are accepted tools for marketing professional services. Opportunities to exhibit include gatherings of European real estate entities; annual conventions of the American Society of Hospital Engineers; various meetings of the Urban Land Institute; and the annual convention of the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Advertising is gaining more acceptance in the design industry. To be most effective, an ad campaign must be coordinated and repetitive. For the majority of firms, this is just not financially feasible. A full-page four-color ad may

cost between \$4,000 and \$15,000 in our world (and that does not include the national business magazines, where a page may run upwards of \$30,000), so a few a year is a major investment, especially for a return that is difficult to measure. Still, some firms are making the foray into building their brand through advertising.

Externally Produced Material—Getting the Press to Cover You

You work hard to secure new projects. You should work almost as hard at getting them written about. As design professionals, we struggle mightily to get the eye of our own industry publications. And while it is a definite coup to be featured in *Interior Design*, *Interiors*, or *Architectural Digest*, it is just as useful to be featured in your client's trade press. An article in *Modern Healthcare* or *Facilities Design and Management* can be very influential, and more likely to be seen by those who can hire you. It is also beneficial to land in the local newspaper, not to mention *The New York Times*. You must court editors and writers as you court clients. Get copies of their publication calendars, and see if they are contemplating any articles that might logically include one of your projects or a sage quote. Let them know about work in progress. Think about story lines that would garner interest. Send press releases about new projects, at selection and at completion. Send press releases about promotions and awards, too.

Print media—magazines, newspapers, or trade journals—are a potent means of conveying information about you and your firm. The fact that someone would write about you or your projects is a powerful endorsement, worth many times what you can say about yourself. Enclosing reprints from recognized trade publications (both design and client-focused) lends credibility and caché to qualification packages and proposals. A monograph or book on the firm, published by a third party, is an unparalleled marketing tool.

Be an Expert

If a client is to entrust you with his project, he must feel you are an expert. It won't do just to tell him; you have to provide evidence of it. A stellar list of projects is the best way, but that is icing on the cake if your *curriculum vita* includes a nice list of publications and speaking engagements. Authoring an article, either on your own or with a colleague or client, gives instant credi-