Furthermore, a happy client feels that the work of the design firm is meeting the established expectations and objectives of the client. Very frequently, clients have not worked with a design firm and have not experienced the design process. For the design professional, each project offers new opportunities for the design firm to deliver a project that exceeds expectations and delights the client. For the client, it is critical that the process is working toward meeting his or her established objectives, on this project. Frequently, a client will not realize until the end of the process—typically when the space comes on line—that the work of the team truly exceeds the expectations and objectives.

Finally, a happy client believes that quality, as defined by each client, has been achieved. Quality may pertain to the overall design of a new facility, to the materials specified, to the building systems engineering, to practical details, to the absence of errors, to the perceived value of the facility against the cost—or to all of these. The project manager cannot achieve quality without establishing processes and procedures within the design firm and with the client/design firm team. The project manager is responsible for establishing and enforcing these processes and procedures. Even though this responsibility requires a rigor that may be difficult to deliver in the heat of a project, especially when project schedules are tight, that rigor costs the design firm little compared to what would happen if the processes were not monitored and enforced.

A Professionally Fulfilled Design Team

The project manager is responsible for providing opportunities for professional fulfillment for his or her staff. Project managers can easily become so focused on serving the client—sometimes at all costs—that they overlook the professional fulfillment of the design team. If the individuals on the design team are not challenged, given the opportunity to produce quality work and to grow professionally, the immediate project may suffer, but the design firm will suffer in the long term. It is increasingly difficult to find and retain staff due to the shortage of professional staff and the economic stability the country is experiencing. The work of a design firm is nothing more than the work of individuals. All of the firm's credentials, standards, and procedures are nothing if the corporate memory walks out the door. To retain valuable staff,

the project manager must perform a difficult balancing act: balancing the client and project requirements with the individual requirements of his staff. The project manager must have an astuteness and attitude, borne of experience, about what motivates and inspires people. The client can only benefit from the leadership of a project manager who achieves this balance.

A Financially Successful Project—for the Client and the Design Firm

If a project is to succeed for the client, it must be a financial success: it must meet established budgets. It is equally important that the project be a financial success for the design firm. Design practices are businesses. No design practice can exist long term if its products—the services it sells—are not financially successful. The project manager, more than any other individual on the client/design team, holds the key to the financial success of the project for both the client and the design firm.

Competition is typically fierce for design projects, and as a result professional service fees remain highly competitive. Fee negotiations between clients and design firms are typically tough negotiations. Yet clients do want to work with firms that are financially sound. Most clients realize that it is reasonable to expect to pay a fair price for design services. Their problems grow exponentially when a design firm incurs financial difficulties while delivering their project.

Once a fee has been established, it takes a skilled project manager, utilizing a variety of tools, to guide a project through the entire process and achieve financial success. As will be discussed later, the process begins with planning the project and establishing expectations, and continues throughout the project with ongoing monitoring of hours spent against progress on the project. If every project proceeded according to the initial project plan, it would be relatively easy to monitor the expenditure of fee. Rarely does a project proceed that easily. A project manager must have the skill and flexibility to manage change over the course of the work and still achieve financial success.

For the client, he or she will develop budgets, and manage the delivery of design services and products to those budgets. For the design firm, he or she will establish the number of hours required for each component of work, and