

tutes success by fostering business-to-business activity; many designers, he says, have discovered and hired his firm as a direct result of published projects. Media exposure is a cost-effective marketing tool, particularly for practices and designers who cannot afford the high cost of advertising.

### **The Project Is Influential beyond the Borders of the Design Industry**

Does the design (or the process of realizing it) hold some societal value, such as revitalizing a run-down neighborhood, providing a source of beauty or inspiration to visitors, or otherwise enriching the lives of a community of people? Tony Chi, for instance, exploits the didactic possibility of strategic design, and strives to educate developers about their power to favorably impact urban planning. Contributing to the fabric of a project's surrounding environs is one indicator of success. Another may be employing environmentally conscious design practices or educating a client about them.

### **The Design Has Artistic Integrity**

For Todd Davis, "successful results are a combination of a professional relationship and creating a beautiful product." Budget, scheduling, functionality, client response—these are tangible, quantifiable elements of successful design. But artistry is the dividing line between successful design and good design. Judging a project's artistic merits takes into account aesthetics, innovation, ambiance, substance, and the design's underlying ideas and values. Good design can inspire and support productivity, creativity, social interaction, and a sense of community, as well as physical and psychological well-being. Individual, subjective taste obviously plays a role, but good design is more universal: a commingling of the senses and the intellect that transcends subjective taste.

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## **FOSTERING SUCCESSFUL RESULTS**

**Given the aforementioned**

Given the aforementioned attributes and indicators of success, how does a designer work toward ensuring a successful outcome? What methodologies should be employed? Although there are no hard-and-fast rules, a little common sense will go a long way. To wit:

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### **Know the Client, and Know Who Calls the Shots**

The design team should determine not only the client's intent and expectations, but also who calls the shots and what internal politics may affect the project's outcome. Whether the client is a young married couple or a large multinational conglomerate, "there is one person in the position of authority who is willing to make things happen and to operate in a smart way," says Todd Davis. "In the beginning, we ask clients who all the decision makers are, and let them know that we need to have access to them." It is very difficult, he asserts, to address the concerns of someone who seemed peripheral to or absent from the planning stage and who suddenly emerges, five months into the project, with legitimate thoughts and concerns.

"We often have to sift through fifty layers of bureaucracy to get to the main people," says Mark Oller. Likewise, Tony Chi attests to the value of navigating bureaucracy to ensure partnership with "permanent, rather than transitory" employees, those who are committed to the project's success and who will see it through to completion. Be sure that designated in-house project managers have a direct conduit to upper management and are communicating from the top down, says Richard Kronick. Furthermore, communication breakdowns can also occur between a company's international headquarters and its regional offices, he cautions.

With respect to residential projects, a husband and wife may have divergent goals and expectations. Beware the couple who claim that only one will actually be involved in the project, says Todd Davis. Both are invariably involved and will want to voice their opinions.

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### **Manage Information and Communicate**

Designers should partner closely with the client, and with attendant members of the design team, to gather essential information up front. Communications lines should be open at all times to ensure that the designer can respond to evolving needs and shifting priorities. Kronick champions the importance of listening to what the client is saying, as well as to what they are holding back. For various reasons, "the client isn't always in a position to tell you what they want," he warns.

Jana Bailey advises design practitioners to ensure that information flows in both directions: from client to designer, and from designer to client. She