



AIA Detroit

A Chapter of the American
Institute of Architects

AIA Detroit Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program 2017-2018 Cohort

Session 5: Closing the Deal

Date: February 2nd, 2018

Venue: HKS Architects, 2111 Woodward Avenue Detroit, MI 48201

Scholars: Palak Gadodia & Camilla Moretti

The focus of Session #5 was on understanding strategies for business development and gain skills in developing client relationships. The session was held at HKS Architects in downtown Detroit and was sponsored by Blakely Products, SmithGroupJJR, Rice Associates, and Patcraft. Upon the end of the session, scholars practiced project interview strategies with real world clients as well as gained skills and techniques in building lasting customer relationships.

Presentation #1: Business Development 101

Shannon Kraus, Principal & Senior Vice President, Board of Directors, HKS Architects



The first session began with a presentation from Shannon Kraus from HKS Architects. Shannon is a regional director for HKS and oversees three offices. Shannon's presentation, "Business Development 101" was highly interactive and focused on skills and strategies to "winning" an interview. Shannon presented an image of a target focusing on three primary categories in business development: relationships, pursuing leads, and company wins. During this presentation, scholars learned strategies in selling a "client first" approach in interviews as opposed to the "our company rocks" approach that most companies use. The adjacent picture shows an activity that demonstrated the importance of explaining design ideas in terms of the client's interests as opposed to the architect's.





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Presentation #2: Storytelling Basics & How to Sell Your Idea **Krystle English, Senior Marketing Coordinator, SmithGroupJJR**



The next session was a presentation by Krystle English with SmithGroupJJR. Krystle began the presentation outlining her story of her move to Detroit within the last year. She proceeded to use her story as an outline to introduce the five beats to a story:

- 1) Intro (the set up)
- 2) Inciting incident (the hook)
- 3) Raising stakes (answering questions)
- 4) Main event (the world as it was)
- 5) Resolution (the moral of the story)



During this session, scholars were able to practice an elevator pitch and learn tricks on calming nerves before a big speech including improvisation.

Krystle concluded the session with tips on how to market yourself as an architect and ways to market a product.

Jury and Discussion Panel: Client Perspectives

Gregory Wittkopp, Director, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research

Richard Temple, Facilities Planner and Project Administrator, Michigan State University

Pat Podges, Senior Vice President, Plante Moran Cresa

Ronald Henry, Corporate Vice President, Beaumont Health

Anika Goss-Foster, Executive Director, Detroit Future City

Tim Kay, Managing Director, Project and Development Services

The second half of our session consisted of a group activity and discussion from a panel of clients in six different practice areas. Scholars were divided into three teams to complete the activity. The given task was to respond to a proposal request from a family living in downtown Detroit looking for an interior designer to redesign the layout of their living room. Each of the three teams were asked to prepare a one minute presentation to the client panel acting as the family for the activity. The clients were asked to critique each group based on the criteria they use during a real-world interview process.



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Each group presented their interview with the client. Group one's speech was factual and practical. Group two's speech was creative and took risk with the design. Group three's speech was relationship focused and intimate. Each group was successful on relating to the client's needs but took three very different approaches getting there. The judges voted Group two as the winner because they valued the creativity and unique design.



Each judge in the activity discussed the strengths of each group and offered advice on ways to improve. Topics discussed included the importance of branding as a design team, visuals in the presentation, and having a memorable attention getter. Clients also expressed that presentations should always be engaging and stressed the importance of being flexible to the client's needs. When interviewing a firm for a project, the client would like to hear from the younger professionals putting their time and energy into the project as opposed to a senior advisor.

Thank you to all of our presenters and discussion panel for volunteering their generous time and helping make Session #5: Closing the Deal such a success!