

BSA Women in Design Network

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SUMMARY

The Women In Design (WID) Network, sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects, is a community of women in the design professions, at all levels, in all roles, who come together for discussion, fellowship and exchange of design and professional practice ideas. WID is a volunteer-led network with hundreds of women participating as organizers, panelists, conference volunteers, and participants.

THEIR MISSION

The Women in Design Network's mission is:

- To build a network of connections among women professionals involved in the built environment through architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, engineering, urban design, public art, graphic design, planning and construction;
- To use those connections to foster training, mentoring and professional development;
- To provide a forum for discussion of current issues in design, construction, practice and management; and
- To promote a professional environment centered on teamwork, enjoyment, and collegiality.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

The Women in Design Network offers a number of events to keep their membership engaged. One of these is "Conversations," a monthly program that features topics relevant to all professions that shape

the built environment and are attended by architects, contractors, landscape architects, interior designers, artists and others. The structure of these "Conversations" is typically a moderated panel discussion followed by a spirited dialog among the participants.

The Women in Design Conference is an annual event that takes place during Build Boston. The *Women in Design Award of Excellence* is presented each year at this conference. The award "recognizes those who have designed their own lives in design, whose work exemplifies the best processes and products and who use their experience and achievements to give back to the world of design and the community at large." Three such awards are presented each year.

The Women in Design Exhibit is also part of the annual WID Conference. Women are invited to submit submissions – built work, unbuilt work, or student work – for inclusion in the exhibit.

The monthly WID Newsletter keeps members connected even when there may not be events or programs scheduled.

RESULTS

The BSA typically receives between 20 and 50 entries for the Women in Design Exhibit. All submissions that follow guidelines are presented - the work is not juried. According to Nancy Jenner, Deputy Director of the BSA, "the intent is to be inclusive and encourage diverse projects both large and small."

With their constant emphasis on inclusiveness, the Women in Design Network has maintained a membership base of hundreds of women - local, national, and international.

The Women in Design monthly newsletter has about 1,150 subscribing members, a number of whom are outside of the Boston area and the United States. The internet has helped spread communication about this group, and they see it as an important leveraging tool; it helps open up the group to many more people than those in the local area, which will help further increase their diversity.

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HOW IT WORKS

Women in Design is intentionally not just for architects. Any woman who works in the design professions – architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, engineering, graphic design, etc. – is encouraged to join. The inclusive nature of this group has helped to sustain it.

Nancy Jenner, Deputy Director of the BSA, says that finding a champion to advocate for a group or committee is important to its success. She also suggests having a process in place to transition the leadership role from one person to another.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practice provides additional information related to this topic:

AIA Atlanta netWorking Women

For More Information on This Topic

http://www.architects.org/committees/index.cfm?doc_id=84

Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, please contact diversity@aia.org.

Keywords

- AIA Components
- Associations
- Diversity
- Women in Design

This Best Practice was developed in concert with the AIA's Diversity initiative. Any questions or comments about the content herein can be sent to diversity@aia.org.