

Marketing Design-Build Services

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SUMMARY

A leading communications specialist and presentation coach for professional service firms, Joanne Linowes has developed a special marketing program for firms seeking to enter the design-build marketplace. The six steps of this program, which Linowes calls the Master Builder Basic SixSM, are summarized below.

THE MASTER BUILDER BASIC SIXSM

“The marketing of design-build requires a different thrust from marketing design services—it requires bracing for change and repositioning your firm, both internally and externally. It requires building a new business comfort level with team members and clients.”

—Joanne G. Linowes

STEP 1—KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Your new marketing effort must target clients and prospective clients, potential team members, and your own staff.

Although marketing to clients and prospective clients may seem obvious enough, shifting your business model will create a need to attract subconsultants and contractors—to assemble a cohesive team of players who value positive partnering and open communication—and to sell the idea internally so your staff will be prepared for and support the change.

STEP 2—BUILD IN THE “TOUCHY-FEELY” GOALS

Infuse your traditional marketing goals with another, more personal dimension required for initiating different services. A good marketing plan will acquaint each target group with your firm’s new capabilities, strengths, and procedures; establish your firm’s credibility as both a design and construction firm; and build confidence in the firm’s ability to anticipate and manage the complexities of expanded functions.

STEP 3—CREATE AN IDENTITY

Design-build is not just another service that a conventional design firm offers—it is a completely different business with its own structure and dedicated personnel. The new business should have an independent identity. This can range from a different name or distinct image to a new corporate structure. Create a well-defined marketing campaign that promotes your new identity and services.

Use the most suitable media and public relations tools to market the firm. Define the firm’s features and what it is selling. Determine the corporate image that matches what the firm is selling and the clients it hopes to attract. Build consistency in the new message and among all your marketing materials, from print to your Web site.

Develop and master a new design-build competitive interview presentation, and methodically plan how to spread the word.

STEP 4—REPOSITION AND REINFORCE

Your marketing effort will need to change public perception about your firm. The new focus will reposition your firm to reflect its new role as both a design and construction firm.

Focus beyond deliverables and use this repositioning opportunity to highlight client service. Position your firm as appropriately skilled to tackle a project from concept through closeout.

STEP 5—CONSIDER CLIENT COMFORT

As you package your new design-build services, emphasize the key benefit to clients: You are the single point of contact and responsibility, and the client’s interests are your primary concern.

Create a marketing pitch to enhance the client’s comfort level with the design-build method in general and your firm in particular. Consider highlighting the following elements:

- Project relationships, teaming, and partnering

- Stakeholder relationships, good labor relations, and strong negotiating experience
- Management of design reviews and changes
- Effective communication and reporting procedures
- Business components and contracting expertise
- Scope definition and quality control
- Project management skill
- Risk management and legal acumen
- Bonding and financial management
- Value for the dollar
- Technical skill and team experience

STEP 6—PLAN FOR CRISIS

Problems inevitably arise as part of any design and construction project. Emphasize as part of your marketing effort your experience and skill in addressing challenges, including the public relations aspects of high-profile projects.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

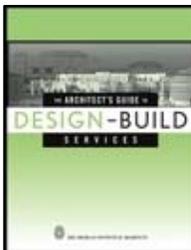
The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 09.02.04 Design-Build Insurance Considerations
- 12.03.02 How Roles Change in Design-Build
- 12.03.03 Roles for the Architect in Design-Build

For More Information on This Topic

To learn more about the Master-Builder Basic SixSM marketing strategy, visit www.linowesxd.com.

See *The Architect's Guide to Design-Build Services*,



G. William Quatman II, FAIA, Esq., and Ranjit Dhar, FRAIC, editors. Developed by the AIA Design-Build PIA, *the Guide* offers the real-world expertise of 30 industry leaders from the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

See also “Design-Build” by Ron Gupta, AIA, et al, *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 18, page 612.



See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



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