

Types of Training Programs

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SUMMARY

Professional development is an important part of a firm's employee retention program. A firm can offer several professional development options, including lunch seminars, tuition reimbursement programs, interactive computer-based training, and business education programs.

ENCOURAGING LIFELONG LEARNING

According to the 2000 AIA Firm Survey, 75 percent of AIA member firms with 10 or more employees offer continuing education on site, compared to 20 percent of firms with fewer than 10 employees.

Lifelong learning in the development of an architecture career is critically important. Firms can offer in-house training programs, provide time off with pay for employees to attend internal or external programs, pay for conference fees, support time employees spend on professional association activities, or subsidize dues.

There are many different ways to support professional development and encourage retention of valued employees such as mentoring, in-house programs, tuition reimbursement, intern development program, and licensing issues. The following list of specific training programs and policies may help your firm develop a program suited to its particular needs.

LUNCH SEMINARS OR ROUNDTABLES BY SPECIALTY

- Job-specific programs such as project manager (PM) training—including contracts, negotiating, role of PM, schedules and budgets, client management, and quality assurance
- Specific topic lectures (e.g., codes, Americans with Disabilities Act)
- In-house expert speakers leading interactive discussions
- Vendor lunches (e.g., materials, applications)

LEARNING WHILE DOING A PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

- Rotating project assignments to experience all phases of a project, to see the connections between them, rather than “departments”
- Task forces or committees assigned to “learning” within the firm
- Staffing assignments as part of professional development

LEARNING BY SEEING

- Job site visits before, during, and after construction
- Visits to architectural attractions, lecture series, museums, and so on
- Meetings to review sets of drawings and see what resulted (such as design review except for production documents)
- Design reviews (presentations from junior and senior staff, to learn both design issues and presentation skills at the same time)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND OTHER POLICIES

- Tuition reimbursement programs
- Architect Registration Examination support
- Process teams improvement, quality programs
- Professional skills development

VIDEO- AND COMPUTER-ORIENTED TRAINING

- Computer training
- Computer tutorials
- Computer-based training (interactive programs)
- Learning kiosks

- Video libraries for mock exams and presentations on a variety of topics
- Computer-aided design education
- Computer-based training (interactive)

BUSINESS EDUCATION

- How the firm makes money through its professional services
- The firm’s values, culture, and ethics

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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RESOURCES

More Best Practices

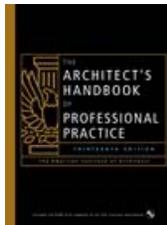
The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 09.03.15 Create a Process for Developing Great Ideas
- 09.03.12 Mentoring as a Team Sport
- 09.03.26 The basics of a Professional Development Program

For More Information on This Topic

See also “Staff Development,” by Laurie Dreyer-Hadley and Kathleen C. Maurel, Assoc. AIA, *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 9, page 242.

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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Keywords

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- Employment
- Professional development