



## What's In It for Your Firm?

The Society for Design Administration (SDA) is the largest association devoted to the practice management of the A/E/C Design Firm. Founded in 1959, the SDA has 33 chapters and many members at large.

SDA's mission is "to promote the exchange of ideas and to educate its members in the related disciplines of design firm administration."

The A/E/C administrator/manager has a very influential voice in the development and execution of organization strategy. SDA's goal is to be the primary resource for the latest and most accurate information available to help the administrator/manager fulfill this role.

## Society for Design Administration

An Affiliate of  
The American Institute of Architects

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## Society for Design Administration



*SDA enhances the professional development of its members and improves the business practices of their respective firms to increase the bottom line.*

*SDA provides educational resources, as well as networking opportunities for its firm members which lead to cost savings, increased productivity, better risk management, more efficient employee recruitment, and improved employee morale.*

*The profile of an SDA member is one who considers professional development to be a strategic part of the business practice of the firm.*



*My firm saved hundreds of dollars when an SDA member trained me to use In Design (PageMaker). I needed to learn the program so I could take over my firm newsletter. The alternative was losing two full business days at a class — in addition to the cost of \$600 for the class. AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.—Portland*

## Education

SDA excels in providing continuing education to its members. SDA's speakers are leaders in the A/E/C industry, addressing leading edge topics and trends the A/E/C industry.

*"Our firm saved \$7,000 after attending a seminar on benefits at the annual EDSymposium." Burke, Hogue, Mills—Orlando*

**EDSymposium** is SDA's annual educational conference. While held in conjunction with the AIA convention, it is equally applicable to engineering, environmental, landscape architecture and construction firms. The symposium sessions align with SDA's membership — both are dedicated to advancing best practices, skills, and knowledge with regard to design firm management. 20+ hours of continuing education in the areas of risk management, best practices, financial software (Axium, Deltek, Quickbooks) and project administrator partnerships are offered at **EDSymposium07**.

Regional Conferences and chapter meetings allow a more local flavor to the continuing education topics offered.

Audio Conferences and Webinars provide education to our members and the A/E/C community at large right in their own

office without the added cost of travel time. The sessions can be more timely, too, offering you information when you need it such as our successful "Payroll Guidelines" at the end of the year or our "AIA Contract Documents" training timed to coincide with the release of the latest version.

Leadership Conference imparts easily transferable skills back to the firm. Risk-free training to the firm's staff allows firms to leverage the employee's participation at the leadership level.

*"The special List Servs on AIA contract document software and the Webinar training on the latest upgrade have been invaluable to our firm. Our CEO was able to interact with the programmers by being a beta tester of the software with the SDA. WTW Architects — Pittsburgh*



*An administrator at Urban Studio Architects boosted employee morale without costing the company hard dollars by sharing an SDA poll that showed other A/E/C firms allow employees to bank unused vacation and subsequently adopting the policy.*

# How Many Ways can SDA Save Your Firm Money?

*Our firm saved \$300 eliminating the need to advertise and conduct multiple interviews when we needed an administrative assistant. One email to our chapter members and I had a referral. One phone call — one interview — one new employee.” Intergroup, Inc.—Denver*



## Employee Recruitment

Cost effective job bank targeting the industry means less time getting admin staff up to speed in the A/E/C world.

## Employee Retention

Many administrators/managers in A/E/C firms are the only non-technical staff in the firm. Management organizations can offer them new challenges as well as a network of colleagues in similar roles.

## Certification

SDA's certification program allows administrators and managers to pursue a certification in design firm administration demonstrating through education, examination, and experience their proficiency in the areas of administration, finance, human resources, marketing, IT, and project administration.

## Savings for the Firm

Value...so much greater than the cost of membership. Instant research at your fingertips, networking that can make connections to save you money, or land your firm a project, a sounding board to evaluate your firm's procedures with the ability to implement those changes — all without the cost of a consultant — employee recruitment through networking and the Job Bank, teaming opportunities using member demographics to find new consultants, and, much, much more!

## Circle of Information

What are the chances of finding new information in a circle of immediate acquaintances like the office or family when they have probably had the same input as you? If I'm looking for new, innovative ways to reduce health insurance costs, all the managers in the firm have probably been routed the same information on this or that insurance plan and been present at the same pitches.

If we widen the circle, however, to other firms in the area through a chapter network we will find more informa-



Your Circle of Information is so much more powerful when you can access information outside of your immediate office.

tion. They may have received other mailings or pitches. If you widen the circle even more, i.e., to firms nationally thru the List Serv, you will find even more answers.

## Professional Network

SDA's List Serv is an e-mail discussion method that encompasses SDA's membership. Members are instantly networked with other experienced individuals with years of practice in finance, human resources, marketing, office administration, information technology, and project administration/management. This professional network will expose the individual to the ways in which administrative and management situations are handled by other organizations. A firm can identify a pressing issue, distribute the query through the List Serv, and receive recommendations, alternatives, and solutions within minutes. Why reinvent the wheel? Leverage the knowledge of hundreds of other administrators and managers in the A/E/C industry with problems to solve just like yours.

## Trend Analysis

The List Serv also gives the firm the ability to test new policies and procedures on other professionals before implementation. Find out what "normal" is. Find out about trends in the A/E/C business like employee signing bonuses, percentage of companies paying dependent health coverage, number of companies charging mark-ups on reimbursables.

*"Our firm saved \$8,000 in one year by requesting information on professional liability insurance carriers via the List Serv." J.M. Calliff, AIA & Partners*

## Principals Forum

In addition, SDA has formed a Principals Forum to provide additional resources for members who have achieved Principal/Shareholder status and to mentor those on the path. It will provide:

- ✓ An arena for visionary, forward thinking and creative leadership
- ✓ A confidential forum to exchange ideas and opinions and receive honest and direct feedback on sensitive owner/management concerns
- ✓ Access to best practice information at the owner level regarding operations, transition, and growth
- ✓ Access to information critical to owner/shareholder professional development.

*"I'm impressed with the organization. It's more than a "support group" for admin staff!" Controller/VP, CATLIN Engineers & Scientists, Wilmington, NC*



SDA will improve your bottom line.