



AIA

The Architect's Voice: Advocating for our Profession

A comprehensive guide to help you communicate more effectively with your clients and in your community

About The American Institute of Architects

Founded in 1857, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) consistently works to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings, neighborhoods, and communities. Through nearly 300 state and local chapters, the AIA advocates for public policies that promote economic vitality and public well-being. Members adhere to a code of ethics and conduct to ensure the highest professional standards. The AIA provides members with tools and resources to assist them in their careers and business, including means of engaging civic and government leaders, as well as the public, in the search for solutions to pressing issues facing our communities, institutions, nation and world. Visit www.aia.org.

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“There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it, or you can inspire it.”

– Simon Sinek

Dear AIA Member,

While there is great respect for architects, there's little understanding of what we do, or how our work affects others. It's our job to help others understand what we do, and more importantly, why it's important to them. We know well that when we collaborate closely with clients, we can design and build better homes, communities and public spaces that benefit us all.

This book assists you in explaining the work of architects. It uses message points, statistics, and anecdotes that you can customize or share as examples with potential clients.

Supported by a tremendous amount of research and developed with AIA members, this guide helps bridge the gap between architects and the public.

Having this resource will help you clearly articulate the value, expertise and collaborative energy you bring to every project. Whether you are communicating in a formal meeting or casual conversation, we want to make sure your audience hears and remembers the most important part of what you say.

We recommend a message structure that will ensure you convey clear, positive and memorable points that tell your story, while also advocating on behalf of architecture and the power of design.

The guide is organized in topic areas based on comprehensive research with architects and the public. They are summarized and expressed by four bold statements:

Architects Work With Clients

We are collaborative, approachable partners throughout every design process.

Architects Strengthen Society

We demonstrate the critical role architecture and design has in our communities.

Architects Design Solutions

We offer solutions that showcase our passion, creativity, experience, and professional education.

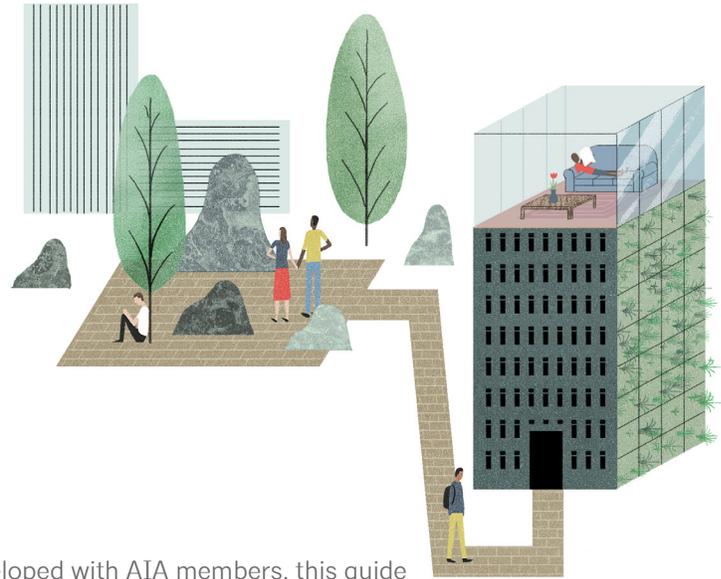
Architects Transform Communities

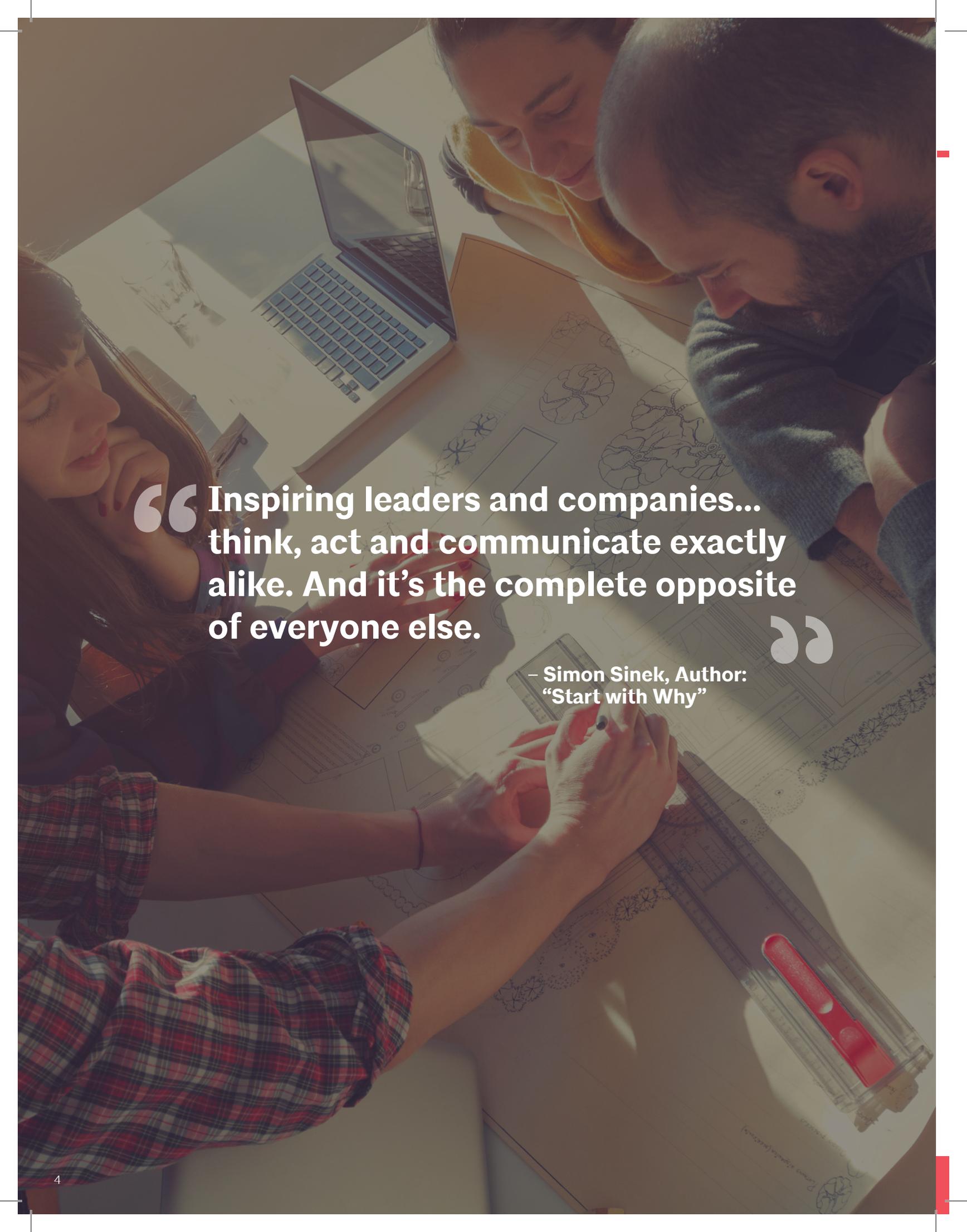
We show how architecture improves the lives of individuals and the vibrancy of communities.

That's a story we all need to tell. We emphasize these four topic areas here because they can easily be tailored to your personal area of expertise, and they highlight the spirit of our profession in an informative and memorable way.

As an architect or design professional, you embody all of these attributes and more—and we want to help you share that important distinction with clients and the public.

Sincerely,
Robert Ivy, FAIA, Chief Executive Officer
The American Institute of Architects





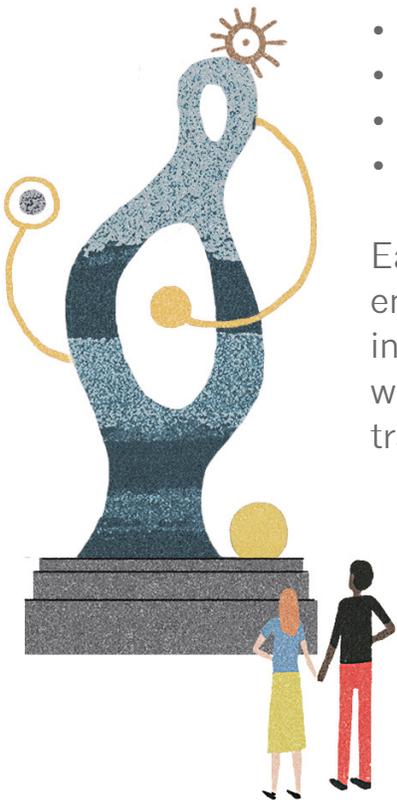
**“Inspiring leaders and companies...
think, act and communicate exactly
alike. And it’s the complete opposite
of everyone else.”**

**– Simon Sinek, Author:
“Start with Why”**

Introduction

This guide will help prepare you for interactions with clients, potential clients and the public, whether in concept presentations, public speeches, or just conversations with neighbors. It will help you express and enhance your architectural story—the tale of what you do and how it benefits all of us. And, that story will be more memorable. The guide demonstrates a way of communicating that allows your audience to remember positive messages associated with our profession. We work with and in a wide array of audiences and settings, including:

- School Boards/Districts
- Local Governments
- Institutions (Museums, Libraries, Higher Education, Religious Institutions)
- Industrial Organizations
- Hospitals
- Retail/Entertainment Locations
- Small Businesses
- Contractors/Home Builders
- Building Owners (Facilities)
- Residential Design Clients



Each of us needs to seek out opportunities to engage and communicate with professionals in these industries. We need to show them that architects work with clients, strengthen society, design solutions and transform communities.

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**WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN ELEVATE
UNDERSTANDING OF THE ARCHITECTURE
AND DESIGN INDUSTRY.**



Communication Philosophy and Techniques

The communication philosophy and message design outlined in this guide builds from the idea that we can influence what our listeners hear, believe and remember about architects and architecture.

Whether in talking with colleagues, clients, or friends, following this guide will make your communications more effective and memorable.

After research in preparing the guide and its topic sections, four bold declarations emerged. They not only summarize our contributions, but also describe our values and commitment in a positive and pointed way.



Architects Work With Clients: We are collaborative, approachable partners throughout every design process.



Architects Strengthen Society: We demonstrate the critical role architecture and design has in our communities.



Architects Design Solutions: We offer solutions that showcase our passion, creativity, experience, and professional education.



Architects Transform Communities: We show how architecture improves the lives of individuals and the vibrancy of communities.

Message Design Process

1 **STEP ONE: Begin with a list of KEY words that convey your most important messages.**

Individual words are the most powerful message driver. They are remembered, repeated, and related to by listeners. Here's a list of key words that are associated with architects in a positive way.

Use them, in their various tenses, when communicating with all audiences, large and small. The more you do, the more they will be remembered and repeated.

Accessible	Considerate	Improve lives	Solution-
Active listener	Creative	Innovative	focused
Add value	Dynamic	Inspirational	Thoughtful
Advisers	Economical	Leader	Transformative
Beautify	Efficiency	Optimist(ic)	Trusted
Big picture	(energy)	Passionate	Understanding
Build	Ethical	Problem solver	Valued
communities	Expertise	Relationship	Vision
Clarify	Fun	Builders	
Collaborative	Future-focused	Resourceful	
Confidant	Honesty	Respectful	



TIP

Always ask yourself: "Does my audience understand the technical or industry terms I'm using?" If the answer is no, you might be using JARGON.



Jargon

Jargon is any word or phrase that your listener doesn't use on a daily basis. It could be an acronym or a word that is specific to one particular industry. Sometimes, jargon is a buzzword or a word that has a new meaning. When using a word or phrase your listener doesn't use daily, remember to follow it with a short explanation.

Using plain English and layman's terms can have the strongest impact with any audience. Overly technical jargon and "archi-speak" is off-putting and can alienate clients, journalists and the general public.

For example, your listener might not use words like "fenestration," "chamber," "parti," or "planar" regularly, if ever.

Use "windows" instead of fenestration, "room" versus chamber or "design concept" as an alternative to parti.



Solutions

Speaking in terms of how design solutions can bring value (economic/environmental/quality-of-life) is the best way to bring to life the story you are trying to tell.



Sustainability

Making claims about green or sustainable design are best done when they can be substantiated with energy performance metrics or projections that can quantify the outcome of design strategies.

These valuable lessons were taken from "Death by Buzzwords? How About Death to Buzzwords," an article written to raise awareness about how architects can hamstring their own communications.

To read the entire article, please visit: <http://www.aia.org/practicing/AIABIO2041>

How to handle “negative” statements and questions

When responding to questions that you perceive as negative, don’t repeat the negative word or concept. Instead, respond positively, and try to use some of the key words listed earlier. For example, the negative word in the question below is “expensive.” Rather than repeating “expensive,” your answer might focus on an architect’s ability to “solve problems” and “add value.”



Question: How do I justify the cost of hiring an expensive architect for a small renovation?

Response: Architects add value to your project. Not only are we problem-solvers—we can also enable you to avoid costly problems. Chances are high that your small renovation will run into unexpected roadblocks that require creative long-term solutions. Hiring an architect is a good investment—one that can pay for itself several times over in the future.

Statement: I don’t understand what the value is in hiring an architect to remodel my kitchen.

Response: A kitchen remodel is a significant factor in the value of your home. Working with you, an architect can maximize that value by revealing how to transform your kitchen in the most creative and dynamic way, and yet still be economical and efficient.

2 **STEP TWO: Use HEADLINES developed from the key word list**

Your “headline” is the brief message that you want your listener or audience to remember and repeat—even if they remember nothing else! Think of the headline as the one message you hope they later use to summarize and share what you said.

For example, let’s say a residential client is meeting with you about a new project, but his or her spouse or partner can’t be present. Your headline is the succinct message you hope is relayed later to that spouse or partner.

A good headline incorporates key words because they’re easy to remember and repeat, and they reflect well on architects and what we bring to the table. By our definition, headlines are short, catchy and make a claim. The term “headline” helps remind you to not include too much information.

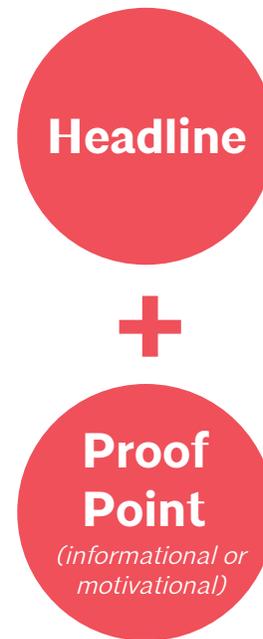
But your work isn’t done in just stating the headline—your listener will be waiting for you to prove it.

4 STEP FOUR: Put it all together by DESIGNING YOUR MESSAGE

You've gathered the basic building materials: key words, headlines, and proof points. Now put them together and design your message.

As an architect, you know design is crucial. Place that same value in how you communicate and structure your message. Thoughtful design allows your listener to remember what you say and addresses questions and comments in a clear and concise way. Using well-designed messages in your responses will help the listener feel like he or she has been heard. Adding proof points in the form of stories or quotes help strengthen and support the message.

A complete message uses the following design:



Headline:

Great design is necessary for a healthy community.

Proof Point:

INFORMATIONAL

Design can have a substantial impact on public health. A Columbia University healthy-living and walkability study found that participants living in neighborhoods designed to promote activity engaged in 100 more minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week than the average American.

OR

MOTIVATIONAL

“Our bodies, our health and buildings are forever connected. The links between architecture and well-being are richer than merely affording safety from injury; buildings can be, should be, agents of health – physical, mental and social health.”
-Richard J. Jackson, MD MPH FAAP, AIA’s *Local Leaders: Healthier Communities Through Design*

Summarizing an Architect's Contributions

Our goal is to help you tell your story. Whether you're responding to clients or others who ask about what you do, or you go out and seek opportunities to speak about your contributions, we want to help you prepare for the task.

In this guide are stories for you to consider telling. The four topic areas outlined earlier can be easily tailored to showcase your own area of expertise in a way that is both informative and memorable.

Notice how each declaration is supported by a headline, which is strengthened by a proof point. Those points should be drawn from your own personal story.



Architects Work With Clients

Headline: I am my client's partner. I feel an obligation—both personal and professional—to work with my client in a true collaboration. What emerges is transformative design that satisfies and succeeds.

Proof: If you've ever really talked with an architect, you've seen that we view what we do as not just work, or a practical process, but as a passion. I get my greatest creative enjoyment from a true team effort with my client. It's a kick to look back and say, "Together, we designed solutions. We created for the future. And we had fun." For example... (use a personal challenge/outcome story illustrating the power of collaboration).



Architects Strengthen Society

Headline: Architects help to make our communities safer, healthier and more livable. They guide collective visions and help transform lives.

Proof: We all want livable, sustainable, and inspiring communities, ones that respect the past, present and future. Values, vision, and ethical responsibility can be designed into a community. For example... *(relate story of a project whose design provided community benefits).*



Architects Design Solutions

Headline: An architect's education and experience allow him or her to not only solve problems but *avoid* them. That resolve to provide solutions isn't present in less structured design.

Proof: Architects are problem-solvers and community-builders who bring passion and innovation in helping clients achieve their goals. They take the client's vision, find ways to enhance it, and lead it to reality. For example... *(use a story of how your work, or your firm's work, added value to a vision or exceeded the client's expectations).*



Architects Transform Communities

Headline: An architect's work turns a place into a community. We look beyond the blueprints, and the buildings. We want to improve the lives of the people around us, and the people who follow us.

Proof: We see architectural solutions that can have a lasting impact on the vibrancy of an entire community. We help buildings work better for society—and enable society to perform better. It's what drives us in any project, large or small. For example... *(tell the story of a project that was transformative for your client or the community).*



Topic: Architects WORK WITH CLIENTS

REMEMBER:
Headline



Proof Point
(informational or motivational)

Headlines

- Our goal is to be transparent and approachable through all stages of a project.
- We are committed to being collaborative partners.
- Architects engage clients; they are committed to what the clients want and need.
- As your architect, I see myself as your trusted confidant and partner throughout the design process. I will always give you honest and straight-forward counsel.
- I see the work that I do as my calling. Your design needs become my priority.
- I like to think of the design process as a conversation, because I'm dedicated to listening to your needs—and meeting them.

These headlines were created using the key word list earlier in this guide.

Verbalize each headline, one at a time. Think of how to frame the narrative introduced by that headline. Then choose a proof point (story, quote, fact, statistic) to prove the headline. Your goal is to implant one “takeaway,” one key message you want your listener to remember, such as: Architects take pride in not just working for clients, but working with them throughout the design process.



TIP

Use these lists “a la carte” style. Pick and choose any headline that best relates to your audience and then follow it with an appropriate proof point to validate your statement.

Proof Points

An Architect's Insights

- **(Motivational/Informational)** Patricia Shackelford read Architectural Digest and loved architect Gil Schafer's design for a Connecticut pool house. She sent him a note, asking him what he looks for in a client. She feared that an impressive budget would be number one on the list. Instead Schafer said, "Budget is important but not the most important." He valued creativity, trust and a positive attitude. Regarding budget, he said, "No matter how big the budget, there is still a budget. Having that boundary actually helps the creativity."

Ethical and Trusted Advisors

- **(Informational)** AIA members are bound by the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, assuring clients of their dedication to the highest standards of professional practice. AIA architects must also fulfill annual continuing-education requirements to maintain their standing in the profession.

Architects Are Trusted and Respected

- **(Informational)** According to a 2014 Harris Poll, architecture is one of the highest-regarded professions in the United States. AIA's own research shows the same findings.

Big Picture for a Fellowship Hall

- **(Motivational)** A church wanted to create a fellowship hall to accommodate its congregation for dinners and receptions. What they did not envision—but their architect did—was the array of other uses the space could provide, including yoga retreats, concerts, lectures and more. Here's what the chairman of the church's Finance Committee wrote to their architect a year after the project was completed: "I thought of you this morning when the Chapel of the Cross kicked off the Sunday School year in the new facility. As you have heard so many times by now, the new building has been all that we had hoped – and much more. We are grateful for all the wonderful work that you and Lee and your colleagues at Hartman Cox contributed to make this vision a reality." Collaboration with the client enabled a dream to become a space that is used multiple times every day. – *Mary Kay Lanzillotta, FAIA, Hartman-Cox Architects*

Partners in Action

- **(Informational)** Architects depend on clients to communicate their design preferences, functional requirements, and budget. As the work progresses, a client's timely response to questions and design submissions will help keep the project on track. It is also important for clients to not hesitate in raising concerns they may have as the project proceeds, so they can be addressed in the earliest stages. Working together, the architect and client can ensure the best possible outcome for the project.

Space Savers

- **(Motivational)** An architect was working with a client who had become frustrated trying to figure out how to move her bakery into potential new space. The architect listened carefully to how her operation functioned, including who made the batter, where the ingredients were kept, and how the product was then moved to the customer. In all, the architect spent three days understanding how the bakery worked. As a result, the firm was able to design perfect solutions for the baker's move.

Feel free to use any of these examples as proof points in telling your story. Of course, you undoubtedly have plenty from your own experience. Your telling of those will be the most effective.

Quotes

- “They were sincerely interested in making sure what we wanted happening was happening...When I wanted to be interested or involved, there was no sense of ‘here comes the homeowner again.’ They made it fun for me. I kind of miss our meetings.” – *Homeowners Karen and John on collaborating with their architects at Morgante Wilson*
- “I was hesitant to send [my changes] over to the architect but his response was extraordinary. He thought the ideas were terrific and understood that’s what we wanted in the house. He embraced that plan immediately and layered in detail after detail....He really listens to you. The starting point is understanding what the client wants. He’s very flexible and malleable throughout the process without giving up on what he believes are strong architectural principles.” – *Homeowner Mark about an architect at Morgante Wilson*
- “Architects are translators. They are able to work with a client to understand their needs and translate those needs into a specifically tailored environment. In a world where few things are truly customized, architects create something unique, reflecting the aspirations of their clients. The best design comes from true understanding – understanding that is the result of close collaboration with a client.” – *Paul Mankins, FAIA, substance architecture*
- “Truly successful projects are a result of collaboration between the client and the design team. Helping a client create a project that fulfills and furthers their mission can only be accomplished with careful listening and observation. The role of the architect is to help transform the client’s needs into the physical reality of the vision.” – *Mary Kay Lanzillotta, FAIA, Hartman-Cox Architects*

Gather quotes from your satisfied clients and use them on your website, in discussions or on promotional materials. They mean a great deal to potential clients.



**Topic: Architects
STRENGTHEN SOCIETY**





Headlines

- Architects are a vital component of all design/build and community projects.
- We add value and provide solutions in a variety of ways.
- Architects build communities with a focus on sustainable outcomes.
- Design has always been crucial, but it now plays a greater role in everyone's life than ever before.
- Architects provide an essential connection between clients and the building team.
- Architects expand on your vision/concept/idea with a roadmap to guide building projects of every scale and type.
- Architects are solution-oriented.
- We are vital community partners who provide valuable skills and services.
- Great design is necessary for a healthy community.

Again, these headlines were created using the key word list earlier in this guide.

Verbalize each headline. Frame the narrative introduced by that headline. Choose a proof point (story, quote, fact, statistic) to prove the headline. Your “takeaway” goal on this topic: Architects are proud of their role in strengthening society through their profession.

REMEMBER:
Headline



Proof Point
(informational or motivational)



TIP Remember, pick the headlines and accompanying proof points that feel most appropriate for your audience.

Proof Points

Reinventing Old Spaces

- **(Motivational/Informational)** Norwegian architects turned an abandoned airport into Nansen Park, a space with housing, mixed development and a public park.

Better Design; Healthier Communities

- **(Informational)** Design can have a substantial impact on public health. A Columbia University healthy-living and walkability study found that participants living in neighborhoods designed to promote activity engaged in 100 more minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week than the average American.

Targeted Problem Solving

- **(Motivational)** Architects at the University of Kansas identify examples of what they call “urban acupuncture”—projects that deliver the most helpful adjustments to problems a community may not realize it has. One of these was remapping the bus system in Wyandotte County to provide more access to healthy food options.

Health and Safety

- **(Motivational)** Architects’ professional responsibility is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Design—including active streets, thoughtful lighting strategies, and open sightlines—can protect people from more than physical harm. It can also remove real and perceived impediments that cause anxiety, stress, and psychological harm.

Better Productivity; Better Business

- **(Informational)** Access to natural light through windows may raise productivity levels. In Orange County, Calif., over a one-year period, students with the most daylight in their classrooms progressed 20 percent faster on math tests and 26 percent faster on reading tests than students with less daylight.

As we said earlier, you can also use proof points from your own experiences to support the headlines. Personalizing the examples helps you remember them better, and relate them in a more engaging way with your audience.

Quotes

- “At their best, architects create direct, functional, and beautiful buildings that engage their larger context to create something more than merely a structure, but a vitally important and contributing piece of a larger framework.” –*Paul Mankins, FAIA, substance architecture*
- “Architects help clients to imagine beyond the norm; helping them problem solve in creative ways that the client may not have realized were possible.” –*Rod Kruse, FAIA, BNIM*
- “Architects are forging partnerships nationwide with schools of medicine and public health, taking a leading role in promoting walkable communities and visionary urban planning as a way to combat the epidemic of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity.” –*Robert Ivy, FAIA, EVP Chief Executive Officer of the AIA*
- “Architects design real homes for real people. I grew up in a home designed by an architect and it changed the way I look at the world and helped me realize what really matters.” –*Torrey Stanley Carleton, Executive Director, AIA San Antonio, Hon. AIA*
- Community responses to CHS Field in Saint Paul, Minnesota, which transformed a great neighborhood into a vital energetic force in the city:
 - “I looked down all the way to Rice Park. There were 10,000 people in the ballpark and 4,000 out on the street. You couldn’t tell where the ballpark ended and the farmer’s market started. That created a sense of community.” –*Mike Veeck, one of the team’s owners*
 - “When you build it in a way to flow into the neighborhood and, if you build it into a community that is already strong, it can really have an accelerating impact. That’s what we’re seeing with CHS.” –*Chris Coleman, St. Paul Mayor*

Collect and craft quotes that relate to your experience, or that of your firm. Your clients can serve as great sources for quotes, as well as those who have benefitted from your work.



**Topic: Architects
DESIGN SOLUTIONS**



Again, these headlines include many of your key words.

Your “takeaway” goal on this topic: Architects pride themselves on being knowledgeable, well-rounded experts who offer creative solutions.

Headlines

- We help bring the best solutions to your project challenges, and we help create new opportunities.
- We take pride in being well-rounded experts in our field.
- Architects are highly educated and trained and go through a rigorous testing process to earn their licenses.
- AIA architects have a rigorous continuing education process.
- My skills and expertise can help foster the best solutions to meet your needs.
- We learn from our experiences, and we bring that insight to our projects.
- Architects have specialized knowledge that helps them contribute as leaders in community design.
- I want to understand your ideas, and I want to use my expertise to help you succeed.
- Skills and experience enable architects to not only solve construction problems, but also prevent them.
- Architects and designers create value for your project.

REMEMBER:
Headline



**Proof
Point**

(informational or motivational)

Proof Points

Architects Add Value

- **(Informational)** Hiring an architect can actually save you money in many ways. Architects can monitor your budget and negotiate to get the best materials and workmanship at a good price. An architect's design can reduce energy and maintenance costs. Architects can turn a difficult lot into a successful building site. And they spend time planning and fully developing your ideas to avoid changes once construction is under way.

Collaborative Partners

- **(Motivational)** Architects see the big picture for your project. They help you explore what appeals to you aesthetically and what you require functionally. They coordinate teams of design, engineering and construction professionals; they sort through the maze of building codes and zoning requirements; they ensure your project is built the way it was intended.

Designing for Tomorrow's Needs: Reframing Courthouse Design

- **(Motivational)** Architects and designers are deliberate in finding the right solutions for communities and society. For example, they are reinventing the design for public buildings, including judicial buildings and courthouses. The new designs better reflect our judicial needs in a 21st century society. ("Looking Sideways: Reframing Current Courthouse Design." Research conducted by the Shape Computation Lab (SCL) at the School of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology in partnership with the GSA and U.S. Courts.)

Creative Solutions for the Greater Good: Rural Studio

- **(Motivational)** Serving the community's greater good is ingrained in architects from the beginning. A great example of that is Auburn University's Rural Studio. It was established to address the dire needs of one of the South's poorest and most underserved regions. Students of this design/build program within Auburn's architecture school build low-cost, affordable homes and community buildings for the residents of western Alabama, where nearly 40 percent of residents live below the poverty line.

📖 Quotes

- “Architecture has changed in the past year by not following any one particular trend, but by responding to the local conditions and working within that framework.” –*Jon Dick, Archaeo Architects*
- “Every educational experience, every human interaction and every project provides valuable experience critical to the successful practice of architecture. Our profession is a complex profession. Every day there is something new to learn—a new challenge, a new opportunity, a new idea, a new way of thinking—every project benefits from these experiences.” –*Rod Kruse FAIA, BNIM*
- “We know, looking forward, that architects will be in high demand to develop the kind of society and environment that will be conducive to living healthy and living well.” –*Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA, Richter Architects*

Proof points and quotes from you, your firm and your clients make your headlines even more powerful to any audience.





**Topic: Architects
TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES**



Headlines

- My job is to assess trends and look to the future.
- Design touches everyone.
- Architects enhance the spaces where we live, work and play.
- Architects can help to transform your communities for the better.
- Architects act as stewards of the environment.
- My input will increase the economic value of your projects.
- We are inspired, passionate agents of change.
- Our work can spark the vibrancy of a community, and improve the lives of its members.



REMEMBER:
Headline



**Proof
Point**

*(informational or
motivational)*

Again, the following headlines include many of your key words.

Your “takeaway” goal on this topic:
Architects can help clients improve the lives of individuals and enhance the vibrancy of communities.

Proof Points

Hospitals Show Good Design Improves Lives

- (Motivational) Forward-thinking hospitals have realized that good design, which improves patients' moods, can actually help people get well faster. "In the past, the design of healthcare facilities was focused more on supporting the patient care team than the actual patient," says Scott Habjan, associate director at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, who served as jury chair for the AIA National Healthcare Design Awards. Trend-setting designs build on research showing that the physical environment can help patients feel less stressed, require less pain medicine, and improve more quickly.

More Like Apple

- (Motivational) After Cedar Rapids, Iowa, lost its public library to flood damage in 2008, the city built a new one near public transport and bike trails. The library's director wanted the building to function "more like an Apple store and less like the DMV." Architects used low book shelving for an airy feel, replaced a main circulation desk with staff kiosks throughout, and incorporated RFID technology for tracking inventory and check-out. Thanks to an eco-friendly design, the new library is 10,000 square feet larger than its predecessor but uses less than one-third of the energy per square foot.

Rebuilding a Community: Planned Hope

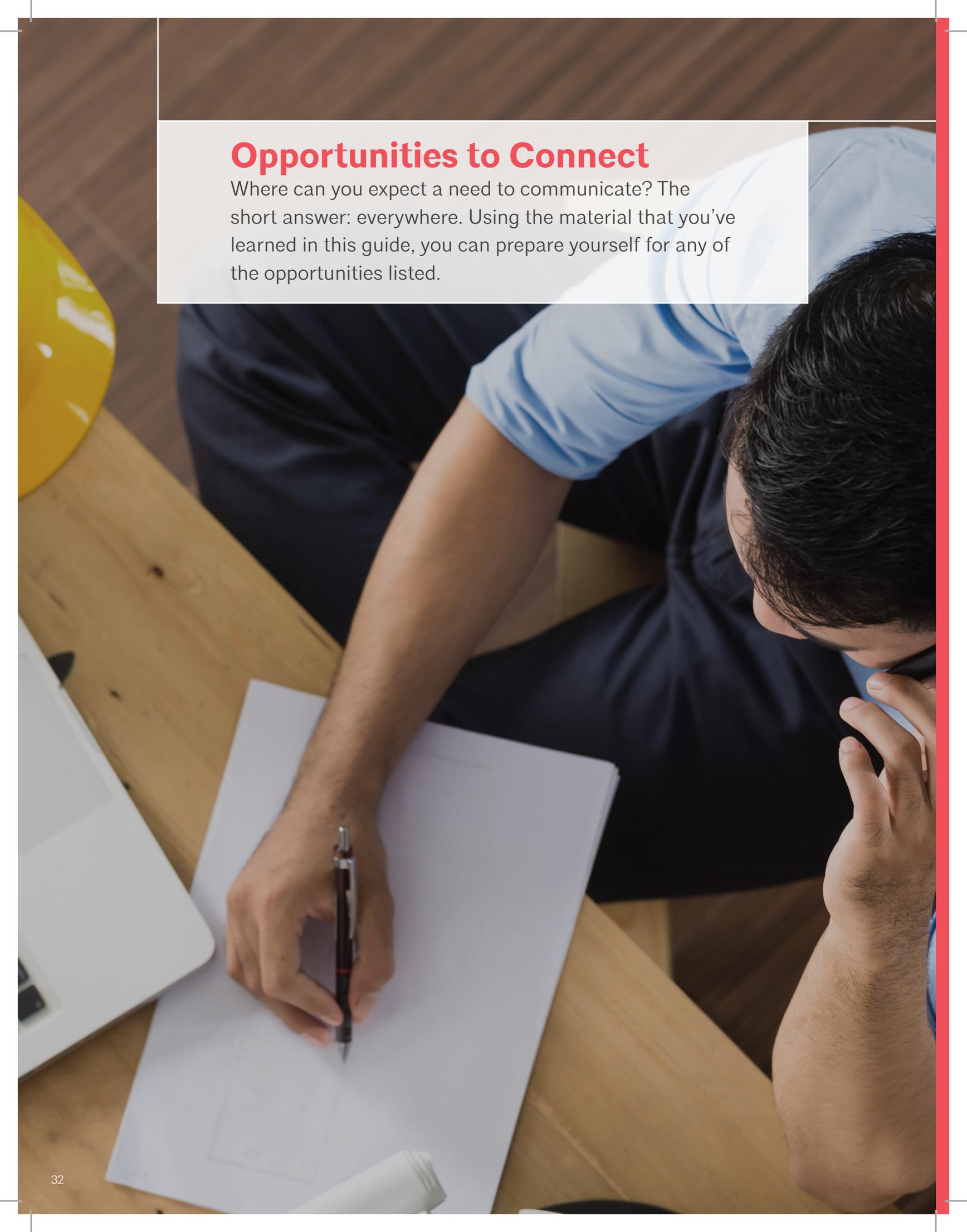
- (Motivational) In 2011, the Pratt City neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama, was destroyed by a massive tornado. AIA's Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) mobilized to help plan a recovery strategy. The team toured the community and met with local leaders and residents to discuss how to rebuild. Residents overwhelmingly said they "had a real voice in shaping our community." Due to the community involvement and the expertise and understanding of the architects, the result was a comprehensive roadmap to rebuild a resilient and safe community.

Expanding Park Space and Uses

- (Informational) Architects worked directly with local community members and user groups to expand and revitalize a three-acre public park. During a series of on-site personal meetings and interviews, the architects and community members collaborated to develop a new and relaxed concept. The more efficient solution created a single structure for aquatics and recreation, opening up almost two acres of welcoming open space within a densely-populated area.

Quotes

- “At its best, architecture is transformative. The best buildings are more than merely beautiful discrete objects – they engage and enhance the world around them. They create place, and support a community’s values and communicate its aspirations. In my view, this requires an ability to look beyond the requirements of an individual project to understand how it might positively impact the larger context.” –*Paul Mankins, FAIA, substance architecture*
- “Qualities like natural light, views to nature, and quiet and clean patient rooms all contribute to a positive patient experience.” –*Scott Habjan, associate director at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill*
- “Our projects will not only help us understand how built environments impact our users’ health, but their behaviors as well.” –*D.S. Nicholas, AIA, assistant professor in the department of Architecture & Interiors at Westphal College*
- “Architecture can unquestionably be transformative. Our clients have reported positive metrics related to human performance and the financial position of their organization, including reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, reduction in backorders, increased research funding, improved efficiencies, significant reductions in energy consumption and significant reductions in operating costs. Design excellence is more than rich architectural expression, it is positively impactful on mankind and is human purposed.” –*Rod Kruse FAIA, BNIM*
- “The COP-21 agreement presents a major opportunity for architects around the globe to provide leadership in designing buildings and communities that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Its call for capacity building for adaptation and mitigation of climate change represents exactly what the architecture profession excels at providing.” –*Russell Davidson, FAIA, KG&D Architects*



Opportunities to Connect

Where can you expect a need to communicate? The short answer: everywhere. Using the material that you've learned in this guide, you can prepare yourself for any of the opportunities listed.



Reaching Out to Local Media:

Local media are always looking for interesting stories about their community, and architects can help them with that search. Don't hesitate to contact the media and share a story idea about your project, showing how its design will have a positive impact on the community.



Interacting with Client Groups:

Finding ways to interact with community and client groups is a great way to share more information about the power of design. A few ideas include: schools and school boards; local government and city officials; hospital boards; children's organizations; library boards; faith-based organizations; business leaders, etc.



Distributing News About Your Firm:

Your firm may be involved in projects that are not only exciting to you—they may also be of interest to the public. Take the opportunity to tell your firm's story to the media. Explain how the project's design innovations will benefit the community in either aesthetic or practical ways.



Sharing Your Expertise:

Through community events, or your own public speaking opportunities, you can share your insights and expertise about design and examples of the value that architects bring to a project.



Purchasing Advertising:

Doing distinctive local advertising can be an effective way to create awareness and interest in your firm and its services.



Authoring Your Own Articles:

Regularly posting blog posts or submitting articles/columns to industry journals, newsletters and the local media can be a good way to talk about your firm and share your opinions on architectural issues.

How to Work with the Media

Whether you're speaking before a local community group or talking with the media, the most important thing to do first is practice. This guide will help you with that preparation of an effective and memorable message.

Use the following questions and recommendations as a checklist before an interview or public speaking event. Many of the same questions can apply in helping you prepare for client or contractor meetings.

Be prepared

- Do you need to consult with legal counsel or other authorities?
- Why are you doing this interview or speech: What are the “takeaways” you want to create?
- Who's your audience?
- What are your key words?
- What are your headlines?
- What are your proof points?
- Do you need to research data or statistics for the story?
- Do you have anecdotes that support your headlines?

Find out more about the interview or speaking opportunity

- What's the topic of the discussion?
- What's the makeup of the audience?
- Are you the right person for the interview or presentation?
- Does the reporter, or the audience, have a specific point of view about the issue you are discussing?



TIP Before working with the media, always refer to your firm's policies and protocols regarding that interaction.

Be comfortable and in control

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Remember, everything is “on the record.” Don’t say it if you don’t want to see it in the media.
- Speak about facts and what you know. Avoid rumors and speculation.
- It’s okay to say, “I don’t know.”
- For the media, think and speak in tight phrases. Long complicated quotes are rarely used in print media, and “soundbites” in broadcast media average around eight seconds.
- Relax; stay focused.
- Use opportunities to highlight architects as problem-solvers, collaborators and agents of positive change.



Social Media

Preparation and proper design of your message is more important than ever because of how social media can pick up and rapidly spread your words. Make sure the message that goes viral is the one you want your audience to hear, believe and remember. The message design outlined earlier in this guide will also help you structure your interactions with social media.



Social Media is a Connector

Many journalists are on social media, especially Twitter and Instagram. You can usually find social media usernames in the bylines of their articles. Engage with journalists by sharing their articles, retweeting their tweets, commenting on Instagram posts, etc.



Be Aware

It's important to be aware of what's being said about you in social media. News outlets often get story ideas from trending discussions. If you see a problematic conversation, jump in and become part of the discussion. You may not be able to control it, but you can certainly try to influence where the story goes. Also, remember that what you say may be posted on the reporter's and the media outlet's social media pages. Stay calm and avoid getting into a heated discussion; if needed, take the discussion offline.



Be Adventurous

The methodology for this guide is ideal for social media because it encourages architects to package information in a way that also fits the constraints of condensed digital formats. Key messages are compressed into "headlines" that succinctly deliver your most important points. Remember, the same communication rules apply when communicating through social media.

Top Five Tips

1

Be engaging

Ask for feedback, comments and encourage discussion.

2

Post regularly

Determine when you will post, comment, or engage and stick to it. Even if you post once every Wednesday, at least you are consistent and people will come to expect something from you regularly.

3

Be authentic and conversational

Be casual and to-the-point. Use hashtags wisely. Pay attention to trending topics and use appropriate hashtags to join the discussion. Support the architecture community by engaging with #ilookup and tagging posts with #AIA to bolster your credibility.

4

Tell stories

If you use statistics, make them powerful. Otherwise, avoid numbers and use stories to demonstrate your expertise and positive client experiences.

5

Use images and videos

Limit the use of words, and use visuals to make statements. Visual content will increase engagement.

Consistency is Key

Working together, we can elevate the understanding of the Architect and Design Industry. As an AIA member, the words and messages you communicate are a natural extension and representation of AIA and the industry as a whole. You are architecture's most powerful voice.

AIA works to advocate on your behalf and supplement and strengthen your voice with our own communications efforts. For example, for the last several years AIA has been conducting a public relations campaign titled "I Look Up." Its goal is to help key target audiences better understand the work of architects and how they might assist them in their own design and construction projects.

Other public relations efforts include:

Advertising

As part of its multi-year effort to promote the value architects provide communities, AIA has developed television commercials focused on the exciting results when architects and clients collaborate. The new 30- and 60-second commercials are airing on cable news channels and streaming platforms.

Include the link on your firm or component website at ilookup.org. Or you can embed the code from YouTube on your website!

Contact: Frank Scanlan | frankscanlan@aia.org

Earned Media

Earned media refers to news exposure, rather than advertising. It includes print, broadcast/cable, online, etc. AIA has a talented team of media affairs experts who are continually working to generate exposure for the profession and AIA. In 2015 alone, they succeeded in gaining over 5,000 stories for the Institute, its components and the profession. While this guide includes some advice on working with the media, AIA's media affairs team is always available to you as a preparation resource. And, we're always looking for experts who are prepared to talk with the media and represent the profession. Reach out and share your expertise with us.

Contact: Matt Tinder | mtinder@aia.org

Social Media

AIA has a robust and growing social media presence. In 2015, the #ilookup campaign resulted in 33 million impressions. This powerful medium allows the profession to directly and positively engage our key target audiences.

Follow us and participate in the conversation that helps us spread the message @AIANational. Also follow AIA CEO Robert Ivy on Twitter, @robertivy.

AIA employees are also available to speak to your components or provide one-on-one consultation.

Contact: Portia Obeng | portiaobeng@aia.org

Executive Speaking Engagements

AIA's Board of Directors and executive leaders follow a strategy of targeting the profession's major client groups through public speaking opportunities. These speeches closely follow the messaging found in this message book.

Grassroots Engagement

Among the most powerful and effective ways to introduce our target audiences to architecture is through your public engagement. You are architecture's most powerful voice.

You, working together with AIA and its chapters, can make a meaningful impact with effective communications. Armed with consistent and on-point messages, you can successfully educate current and potential clients on the many benefits of partnering with an architect.

The information and advice in this guide is specifically designed as a first step in making that happen. Enjoy the experience!

“All fine architectural values are human values, else not valuable.

– Frank Lloyd Wright”



AIA

The Architect's Voice:
Advocating on Behalf of Our Profession