A FIRM FEE—AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Several months ago an architect was interviewed by an industrial client to design a building. At the close of the interview the architect was asked whether he would be willing to reduce his fee to meet that offered by other architects. Although this particular architect at the time wanted the job, he graciously apologized and indicated to the client that he must stand by his fee for the 'kind of work and services he, the architect, was expected to perform.

Undaunted, the client pressed ahead and asked whether the architect would at least assume the cost of the blue prints. Evidently the other interviewed architects had agreed to this. With this request by the client, and showing real disappointment, the architect rose, started to leave the office rent has been increasing, as well as fringe benefits, which are required to obtain and to hold the right kind of employees, and increases in Social Security taxes have all added to the cost of doing business.

Two years ago the FAIA introduced the recommended minimum fee schedule which is presently being reworked, and in 1968 "The Elements of Architectural Services and Customary Compensation" will be introduced. This document, old and new, was introduced to provide increased benefits to both the owner and the architect. This will result from improving the quality of architectural-engineering services, raising the level of programming and analysis and renewing efforts at superior design, budget-setting and adherence, systems selection, materials selection, and research into new ideas. It will result in more competent preparation of complex drawings and specifications, produce better bids, require fewer change orders and build better buildings.

For the architect, this compensation schedule will provide for more appropriate salaries for staff members, better working conditions, higher level of design achievement, additional services where required, and increased personal satisfaction in the profession. In fact, it may provide opportunity for additional professional study and continued education, which we all want and need, and which are necessary to keep abreast of technological advances and to serve clients properly.

In short, you, the architect, must know your cost of doing business and more adequate compensation will result in higher professionalism, increased client satisfaction and better buildings.

The tragedy lies in the fact that many architects become parties to a process that guarantees they will suffer financial losses and/or diminishing public, professional and self respect.

One of 12 architectural firms in the nation lost an average of 5% on last year's gross business. Architects are currently averaging a loss on one project out of four. This is serious for the architects, but it has deeper implications for the owners.

City building inspectors say too many architects, including some of the best known, present plans for approval that are sadly deficient.

Contractors say architects would get better bids on their work if plans and specifications were better prepared. They add that a major reason for sloppiness is that the architect just isn't getting enough pay to feel that he can afford the time it would take to do better.

If this is a serious indictment of some members of the profession, but the blame and the penalty must be shared largely by the owner, who thinks only of cost and not of value.

Clients are increasing their demands and continuously more complex building technology is increasing the costs of professional services by the architect-engineer.

We are in an era when more and more technical skills are being required. Much more sophisticated structural systems and other influences are being envisioned and incorporated into buildings today. Programming, designing and integrating the increasing array of technical building components requires much more of the architect's time in research and coordination.

The functional requirements of buildings are changing rapidly in every building type. The need to avoid the pitfalls of obsolescence and create buildings with an economic life equal to structural life demands more research by the architect.

It is also true tighter building budgets are being experienced as well as greater speed of construction and the need for more knowledge of needs of specific buildings. Although these can work to the advantage of the owner in savings, they do require additional architectural and engineering time.

Rapidly changing building costs, increasing variety of materials and systems from which to select, affects price. The architect is now required to have a much more sophisticated cost control system within his office.

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BEACHCOMBER LODGE & VILLAS (Pompano Beach). Benjamin Kilpatrick, Owner: "We investigated...and found Climate Master best. Guests like the individual controls as they can regulate their own room temperatures. Compared to wall units...these are unobtrusive, much quieter and cost considerably less to operate."

JAMES STUART FAMILY RESIDENCE (Sea Ranch Lakes). James Stuart: "...we wanted every detail...to be of the finest, trouble-free quality. Because of its established record of dependable, economical operation and the fact that it is built to cope with Florida's specific heat, humidity and cold problems, we selected Climate Master."

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THE FLORIDA ARCHITECT
Louis I. Kahn, FAIA, of Philadelphia, is one of today's acknowledged masters of architecture. These are his remarks at the October convention of the FAIA.

Mr. Kahn was introduced by Larry King, moderator, whose pungent prefacing quips brought much laughter from the audience, and from Mr. Kahn.

I think that humor can heal all. I think that the home should be the center of humor, so if I say anything that even touches on humor, I want you to laugh like hell. I'm going to not be very orderly in what I say, I have no notes. I can tell you honestly that I will say nothing new from what I have said before. It is impossible without notes or preparation to say anything new before so many individuals. I think the only thing ingenious can come when one person speaks to another person. It is impossible to generate in front of so many similar personalities. I can't reach you.

I met a wonderful architect in Mexico—his name is Barragan. I went thru his house. It was the result of a belief in something without borrowing from any other source. This reason for living is really to express. I know of no other reason for living. Life itself is very enjoyable, but one thing that really strikes you is that of expressing well. The architect in that way is very fortunate, because he is constantly engaged in having to express himself. There is an atmosphere of understanding among those in the profession.

This man—Barragan—asked, "What is tradition?" At first I didn't know, and then because of my respect for him, which was after the first meeting that day, I still didn't know and yet I did know, and I said, "My mind goes to London. Shakespeare had just written "Much Ado About Nothing." I couldn't get into the theatre; I did not have a ticket. But I looked thru a chink in the wall. The first actor who opened his mouth to speak fell as a heap under an escutcheon. The second actor fell also and the audience reacted. There it was—nothing. It made me realize that nothing that happened ever before can ever in detail be recaptured. It is motionless. There is a residue left which we make as that human value which is indestructible. When you see the artifacts from the sea, like an old mirror, you do not see a face, but you can imagine a face. Nature cannot make an engraving or a beautiful mirror. That is something that does not die. The actual details or the circumstances cannot be recaptured. They are gone. Really, in a way, it is of no value, except the residue. Even history must be measured not by the battle, but by the plan of the battle before it happens.

Therefore, I said to him, "You know what I think tradition is? It is that power which can give us powers of anticipation. Not history. We, as architects, have got to have powers of anticipation. You've got to see people walking up the stairs, people in a room, people using a building.

A wonderful thing to know is that architecture stems from the creation of institutions of man. When a man you did not know, a teacher under a tree, you had to have none, you listened to the teacher, and the student felt the need for a teacher—at that moment the institution to learn was given expression. Everything in nature records—how it was made, how it was mixed. In the rock is the record of the rock. Physics is a very good example of what I say. Every record of many, many years from the beginning of time is recorded in the charts as it is in the rock. There is a sense of how we are made. Thru this special ability or characteristic of man, we derive our impressions and are able to express them. It is a great quality a building should have—not the sense of it, not the eye appeal of it, but something which gives you the feeling that you have expressed something. I would say that buildings today ought to look primitive, but what do they look like? They look like that lobby out there—an atrocious thing. You have to have a humorous mind to accept it. I brought an Indian architect with me and he did not express himself because he was really tongue tied.

The inspiration to learn is the basis for all our institutions of learning. We must think of the wonderful leader we had in the first school. Who should teach? What is a place? What are the realm of spaces where it is good to learn? The money stands very realistically in front of you as a kind of limit with maybe some consideration to the cause. Though you must meet all of the requirements, a feeling of a space to learn is the essential. You will find a gallery is never a corridor or a place where all the re-
Art is the language of man. Not science. Schematics of art. Science gets you in touch with how you are made, and which, when you have an understanding of it, brings you closer to what your feeling of a mission really is—to express the unexpressable. The inspiration to live serves the inspiration to learn. You might say that man wanted to make an instrument, but he had no instrument and he went to nature which can express all things. It is not the will that makes architecture—it is the will of man. In nature, the sunset says, "I'll make a better one tomorrow." The reaction is what a man paints, and that nature cannot do. And nature becomes very jealous indeed.

Art is the seeking of the expressions of the soul. One can say that a mind can be measured only by the degree of soul that can penetrate and the instrument which is the brain can allow it to penetrate. That is why some people have a Stradivarius and others have 10¢ fiddles.

These inspirations of man are the making of the institutions of man. This brings about philosophy, ambience and thought. It brings about ways of religion. The many aspects of school were brought about by the inspiration to learn. The aspect of wanting to live forever to express brings about sport, athletics, health, doctors. Institutions of government, institutions of health, all stem from inspirations within us.

Someone asked me the other day how I would explain this epoch. I would explain it as the time of the white light and the black shadow. I know of the revolt in our institutions. Men are new to the mind which just need expression. We all know it takes two leaders to make something work—one who knows what he wants and the other who knows how to make it. To take on two jobs is taking on two roles. When you put a grasshopper in a fire, and the grasshopper wants to give something to the world in the way of expression, then the result is something that has the feeling of building. Schools—the results may sometimes be beautiful on the exterior, but with lack of rule, lack of function, very shallow buildings in the long run. The sense of the coming of new institutions can be thought of in this way, by even how you make our present institutions come up to our present time.

The building I am doing in Pakistan—the second building which includes the Supreme Court—it occurred to me that the Supreme Court needs something to express its position and meaning in Pakistan. I thought of this idea that the Supreme Court needed a school of the Supreme Court in the Supreme Court. Just as the Assembly needed a school of the Assembly in the Assembly. I felt that if there were a school of the Supreme Court where a scholarship were offered to the lawyer and their duty would be only to find the essence of the Supreme Court as against its being—the Supreme Court takes law as law in relation to man and has nothing to do with the circumstances whatsoever. If this essence of law is fixed in a school, I am sure the Judge ascending the scales of a chamber would feel the pull of the essence and would be a better Judge. If the environment makes the Supreme Court understand itself, then these powers are very important. One must find the center of every building—a house, a school. It could be that the gallery becomes the religious center of the school. Maybe a school should be a great variety of rooms, not be made of just one type of room—well organized, but exactly like the others. I know that if I sat with a few of you, or perhaps just one other, near a fire place and on a rug, I know I would say something entirely different from what I am saying right now. The environment is so very important.

The mind is the teacher, as against the instructor who is a very different mind. We must produce an atmosphere in order to get into the mind of the student the sheer wonder of wanting to express something; we have to gather together a kind of an appreciation of what is an expression to the student.

We have bad buildings, bad bathrooms. We are doing pretty bad things in my opinion. They are not inspired things. They simply satisfy square foot requirements and they never arrive at being superior at all. They have no spatial expression; they are merely dumb and expensive. When I said "white light and black shadow"—I believe that even the sun is on trial at this time. I don't think this is a great period, because there is no wonder in it. There is no core. But I believe as soon as wonder enters, I think we will find the service of your new institution being expressed. Even the institution of well being.

These institutions need the mind of a great statesman to come and put this before us, but what we are getting today to a great extent is repair. Nothing, really, that seems to put something before us that generates—that which overshadows—not something that is just repairs, like our redevelopment projects which are usually a combination of real estate and Pinkerton's. And the so-called culture center, even the bank has culture. There is no more inspiration. Lincoln Center destroyed many neighborhoods. When there was just one facility in one neighborhood, the people in that neighborhood had pride in it. They are all new lamps for old, without the genie.

Now one thing—I feel the architect should feel that architecture does not exist. No more than music exists—can you touch it? What does exist is a work of architecture, in the hope that this work of architecture will be received by architectural spirits as belonging to the treasury of architecture. Because architecture does not lose scale. It becomes a miracle, a miracle which expresses a world within a wall.
SEMINAR
NEW INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND SCHOOL DESIGN

If you haven't set foot in an elementary classroom since passing grade 6, you wouldn't recognize what has happened to one. No longer is it a square or rectangular box built for a teacher and 25 or 30 children. It might be a group of hexagon-shaped spaces clustered around a central arena, and collectively called a "pod." It will house approximately 120 children looked after by four teachers, and the group is not divided according to grade.

Such are some of the new and challenging educational concepts and architectural responses outlined to the Daytona Beach Chapter, AIA, by Dr. William Feild, Supervisor of Educational Facilities for Dade County Board of Public Instruction, and John Totty, Research Director of Pancoast/Ferendino/Grafton, consulting architects to the Dade County BPI.

The Seminar comprised the program of a regular Chapter meeting and was an innovation by the FAAIA in continuing education for the profession. In attendance as guests were the entire Volusia County School Board and others in the Education Department.

On display were five designs of elementary schools over a period of four years, the latest still being in the working drawing stage. The designs traced the evolution of team teaching, non-graded educational concepts. Basically, these concepts placed children in groups of 120 under the guidance of a team of four teachers in a space called a "pod." This space will usually contain a central arena around which are grouped supporting areas for art, science, food service, teacher work and the library.

Dr. Feild pointed out how through consolidation and reassignment of square footage, the schools now have doubled the teaching space while not increasing gross floor area. This has been possible for several reasons. New buildings are compact and air conditioned, cutting down area devoted to covered walks. The traditional cafeteria has been eliminated and a scullery area provided at each school. Food is prepared in a central kitchen, brought to each school, and served from steam tables to the children in each pod.

Construction of the buildings is by methods and materials standard to South Florida. Exterior walls are concrete block with stucco finish. Most interior teaching spaces are carpeted, an essential feature of open areas for acoustical control. All buildings are air conditioned and virtually windowless.

The purpose of team teaching is to give more freedom and flexibility to the educational process. Pupils can be taught in large groups while at the same time, one can receive individual instruction from another teacher. Orientation to team teaching methods requires time and experience. A school principal must be in favor of the concept and be able to help his teachers in fitting their individual abilities to the system.

Dr. Feild reported that at first teachers tend to organize the space along lines of a traditional classroom. Later the organization becomes much more informal and eventually even the movable visual barriers are pushed aside, unused, as student and teacher adapt to open spaces. Indications are that both teachers and students are enthusiastic about teaching and learning in this new environment.

The Seminar was well-received by the audience. It is contemplated that this same program might be presented at other Chapter meetings around the state during the coming year.

THE FLORIDA ARCHITECT
LETTERS

Just a note to congratulate you on the November issue of *The Florida Architect*.

I thought the content, the arrangement, and the design of the issue set a high standard of excellence.

The editorial on page 6 was very much to the point. We need to remind ourselves constantly that the magazine is read for the most part by non-architects, and that one of its major objectives is to serve as a medium to acquaint the public with the architect and what he does.

The series by George Kahn promises to be an instructive and profitable one, and I look forward to the remaining articles on the gentle art of persuasion.

William T. Arnett
Professor of Architecture

POST CONVENTION ORIENT TOUR
JUNE 27 - JULY 14, 1968

An absolute maximum of thirty architects and architects' allies (here defined as any student of environment) will reach for Japan next July. A special tour is designed not as a casual relaxation, but as an intensive use of two precious weeks of the professional's time: a full exposure to, and an interchange of reaction to, a profoundly different environment and philosophy.

The economies of group travel and an efficient schedule create a remarkably low cost opportunity to plunge into a compact, vigorous, exotic country whose ancient and modern design has so much to say to our own expressions.

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ARCHITECTURE

RESIDENCE FOR MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM K. HATCHER — JACKSONVILLE

WINNER OF THE 1967 FLORIDA ARCHITECTS’ “WOOD AWARD”
SPONSORED BY FLORIDA SECTION, SOCIETY OF AMERICAN
FORESTERS AND FLORIDA ASSOCIATION, AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS.

ARCHITECT William Morgan, AIA
Within the box-shaped cube of this residence has been packed an amazing amount of spatial variety. In reality it is a four-story house with an ascending spiral of two-story perimeter spaces. Family activities occur on the second and third floors. A study-guest area occupies the top floor and utility areas are located on the first floor. Four structural towers, one on each side, contain plumbing, fireplaces, air conditioning and stairs.

The house won the First "Wood Award" for its utilization of wood. The structural system consists of clear heart southern yellow pine 6" x 6" posts supporting 6" x 12" beams. Floor decking is 2" x 4" edge grain pine alternating with 2" x 3" spacers, exposed below for finished ceiling. Horizontal drop siding is clear cypress, dressed and matched. All wood, including door, trim and cabinet work, is natural finished with preservative bleaching oil.

The architect states that wood was used in this residence to provide warmth compatible with residential character, to expose structure as an integral part of the spatial conception, to facilitate erection and to minimize maintenance.
THE ARCHITECT

ARCHITECT’S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

ARCHITECTURE — Throughout history, architecture has recorded an enduring expression of civilization. It has been a vital force in the growth of America and the shaping of its destiny. Architecture is an art and a science blended in to a profession intimately associated with the largest segment of our economy—the construction industry. Yet its realm is not limited to buildings only; it deals basically with people, their lives, work, recreation, and worship. All human activities are strengthened through its influence; our schools excel in teaching and learning environment; efficiency is reflected in our office buildings; our industrial plants are attractive and productive; our churches enrich our worship, and our homes afford us every comfort. Thus our architecture molds a social structure that typifies our national character.

Architecture concerns function, structure, and form. Function determines the size and shape of spaces for human needs and the relationship of such spaces, one to the other. Structure is the enclosure of these spaces and their adaption in terms of color, materials, and mechanical controls for human habitation. Beauty is the quality that classifies a structure with architecture and which gives pleasure to those about it.

THE ARCHITECT — The architect is responsible for imparting these distinctive characteristics and qualities to our buildings. In so doing he serves not only his client, but the public interest as well. Rarely will a building affect only its owner; seldom does it stand alone. Our buildings are planned with respect to their natural surroundings, and with regard for all physical relationships and circulatory patterns. In this way our communities develop and their architecture has its impact on all society.

Our accelerated mode of living is changing and expanding our cultural needs. To meet this challenge the architect applies his skill in adapting new techniques and principles made possible through scientific advancement. Because of continuing architectural research, new materials, structural systems, and methods of erection are employed to create buildings that are safer, more durable and economical than ever before.

VALUE OF THE ARCHITECT’S SERVICES — In the 15th century Leonardo da Vinci in advising the authorities concerned with the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Milan wrote: “Just as it is necessary for physicians . . . to know the nature of man and of life and health, and to know how a balance and harmony of the elements preserves them . . . in the same way all this is needed also for the sick cathedral. It needs a physician—architect, who understands the nature of a building, the rules from which a correct method of building proceeds, and the sources of its destruction. He must use these rules, and the causes which hold a building together and give it permanence.”

The employment of a qualified architect for a proposed project assures the owner of satisfaction because his building will be of high quality. The quality will be apparent in terms of efficiency, convenience, economy, healthfulness, and safety with the result that the building will satisfy the physical and psychological needs of its occupants. And as better designed facilities are provided, more of the occupants’ time is released for other pursuits, and by means of the economies afforded more funds are available for other purposes. The value of the architect is demonstrated also through the economies achieved by means of his judgment in the selection of materials and in his administration of an efficient building operation. Throughout all phases of the work the architect is mindful of the owner’s budget. He is a constant adviser to the owner, guarding him against loss and legal entanglements.

The practice of architecture calls for men of scientific mind, artistic talents, sociological attitudes, and business abilities. It constitutes a profession, like medicine or law, demanding faithful service to the client and to the public. The architect’s function is to provide the leadership from concept to completion of the building process, so that the completed projects are a success and a source of satisfaction to all that use them. A contemporary architecture is the result of such philosophy—an architecture that functions for its need, and reflects the relationship of the society. The building thus achieved, within available resources, results in a complete integration of utility, structure and attractiveness.

PROFESSIONAL CREDO AND ETHICS

CODE OF ETHICS — As is essential to every profession, a code of ethics, recognized by the public, is observed by the architect. Although the interest of the ethical practitioner may be served by means of established standards of practice, their true purpose is for the benefit of the public. The American Institute of Architects has taken a lead in codifying the standards, to which the majority of architects subscribe. The Standards of Professional Practice, AIA Document J-330, covers all principles of good practice, as well as the Mandatory Standards. The following provisions of the Bylaws of The Institute form the basis for the enforcement of the code:

“All deviation by a corporate member from any of the Standards of Professional Practice of The Institute or from any of the rules of the Board supplemental thereto, or any action by him that is detrimental to the best interest of the profession and The Institute shall be cause for the condemnation of the professional conduct on his part, and ipso facto he shall be subject to discipline by The Institute.”

MANDATORY STANDARDS — The first part of the code, the Obligations of Good Practice, calls for the promotion of the highest standard of conduct and service for the guidance of the profession. In Part II the document spells out its Mandatory Standards in detail and with interpretations.

The regulations further provide that “The Board of Directors of The American Institute of Architects shall have sole power of interpreting these Standards of Professional Practice and its decisions shall be final subject to the provisions of the Bylaws.”

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS — The letters AIA carried after an architect’s name indicate that he is a member of the national organization that represents the highest ethical conduct. The AIA insignia is widely known to the public and the government, and the courts have recognized it as a symbol of professional merit.

The American Institute of Architects is pledged “to organize and unite in fellowship the architects of the United States.” It is dedicated to the advancement of the profession through education and training and through architectural, scientific, and practical efficiency in practice. This professional society further pledges its efforts on behalf of the public by way of coordinating the building industry and the profession to insure improved living standards and to make the profession a source of ever-improving service to society. Its objectives are carried out by means of its staff in the national headquarters at Washington, D.C. Its membership throughout the United States is organized into local and state chapters.
includes study of the project site and how it can be effectively developed to best serve the owner's needs. The final solution is determined through a comprehensive study and research resulting in an integration of natural and human factors. Frequently the architect is called upon to assist in preparing the program, in arranging for financing the project, and in securing approvals from zoning authorities and building officials should such special services be required.

His knowledge in the fields of structure, mechanical installations, materials and construction methods indicates his capabilities as a scientist. His designs must be consistent with the budget available for the project, and the construction must conform to local, state, and national building and safety codes. The working drawings and specifications must be complete and concise so that costs can be figured accurately.

Advice regarding the selection of contractors is another important duty of the architect. He analyzes proposals and assists in overseeing construction contracts. Throughout the entire building operation the architect is the client's adviser and agent guarding against losses and seeing to it that he gets full value for his money. The architect reviews all contractors' requests for payment and upon completion he certifies for final payment.

BASIC SERVICES — The basic services of the architect are usually divided into four phases as follows:

Phase 1: Schematic Design — This work consists of an inspection of the site and conferences with the client concerning the building program. The client's needs and requirements are carefully analyzed. Zoning regulations and other applicable codes are studied. Sketches and statements of probable construction cost are prepared for the owner's approval.

Phase 2: Design Development — Upon approval of the Schematic Design the architect proceeds with the development of the plans and elevations of the building. Type of construction, mechanical systems, and materials are considered and recommendations discussed with the owner. Drawings, establishing all major elements, and outline specifications are prepared. A revised statement of probable construction cost is made. All of this material is then submitted for approval.

Phase 3: Construction Documents — Working drawings and specifications are finalized and all work is coordinated with mechanical layouts. Material and color schedules are discussed with the owner. Bidding forms are prepared and assistance is given in drafting contract forms. Cost statements are reviewed and approval obtained from the owner and from controlling agencies.

Phase 4: Construction Contract Administration — The architect assists in qualifying bidders and obtaining proposals. He analyzes the proposals received, advises relative to the award of contracts, and assists in the preparation of such contracts. During the construction period, the architect reviews and approves shop drawings, prepares such supplementary drawings as may be required, and reviews contractors' requests for payment. He makes periodic visits to the site to determine if the work is proceeding in accordance with the contract documents, and keeps his client informed relative to the progress and quality of construction, issues contract change orders as required, makes final inspection and, when construction is determined to be satisfactorily completed, issues a certificate to that effect.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES — In addition to the basic services the architect may be requested to perform additional services, for which additional charges are appropriate, as follows:

- Making changes after owner's previous approval.
- Providing planning surveys and special analyses.
- Making measured drawings of existing work.
- Obtaining detailed or semi-detailed cost estimates.
- Preparing documents for alternate bids and change orders.
- Services resulting from fire or other loss during construction.
- Services resulting from default or insolvency of contractors.
- Services when construction contract time is exceeded by 25%.
- Preparation of display drawings and models.
- Design of furnishings and special equipment.
- Preparation of "as-built" drawings.
- Inspection prior to expiration of guarantee period.

COMPENSATION — The architect's compensation for the basic services discussed above is usually based on one of the following methods:

- A percentage of the construction cost of the work.
- A professional fee plus reimbursement of expenses.
- A multiple of direct personnel expense.
- A salary, per diem, or hourly rate.

Fees are variable depending upon the type of project and they vary in different parts of the country. For this reason some local AIA chapters prepare suggested schedules of proper fees for various types of projects. There also is some variation in the charges made by architects, and for this reason these chapter recommendations are given as minimum amounts for basic services on the particular type of project indicated in the various schedules.

Regardless of the method of payment as listed above, the architect's fee is a small fraction of the total building cost.
It's Not-So-Far East on Northwest.

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Our shortcut routes have shrunk the globe.
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GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR COMPANY

If I were a mathematician I would try to work out a formula to prove that the number of sales you make will depend on the amount of knowledge you have about your company. It may not hit it on the nose, but I bet I could come pretty close.

A salesman cannot expect to sell effectively if he does not know his company and his product. Such ignorance can be compared to sailing a boat without a rudder. Company and product information are at the very foundation of good salesmanship.

Some of you doubting Thomases might say: "What about that fabulous salesman, Charlie Smith, who made a million just on those facts. The customer is not buying charm and personality; he is purchasing your product on the basis of what he knows about the producer.

The guy ahead of you may have given the prospect a thorough picture of his company and its product and services. You can expect the buyer to compare your offer with that of his competition.

As Les Rysen, sales manager for a chemical company, tells his men: "Remember, that prospect has got a scorecard in his head. Whenever you make your pitch, he is mentally adding up your points to see how they stack up with your competitor's."

Knowledge Inspires Confidence

Company knowledge plays a positive part in selling. A buyer feels more confidence in a salesman who demonstrates that he is familiar with his company's product, policies, price discounts, organization, credit procedures, key personnel and servicing practices.

Your outfit may be a multi-million dollar corporation with an A-1 reputation. But to your prospect or customer 500 or 1,000 miles from headquarters, your company is you.

But let's forget about the prospect for a moment. I want to concentrate on you. Factual information about your company and product is bound to increase your confidence in yourself and make you a better salesman.

If you know your outfit is well organized, progressive and reliable, you'll feel better about working for it. A salesman can't do his best for a company he knows little or nothing about. It always gave me a good feeling to know that my firm was financially sound, well regarded and kept its word with both its salesmen and customers.

Selling the Company First

What should you know about your company? Experienced and successful salesmen I've discussed this matter with put these items at the top of their list:

1. History and development.
2. Size, including branches, divisions and other holdings or subsidiaries.
3. Financial structure. The buyer wants to know he's dealing with a sound firm.
4. Reputation. If you can truthfully boast about your company's reputation you've got a fine selling point.
5. Everything about the product, starting with the raw material.
6. Company's distribution system. Your firm's outlets should be ingrained in your mind.
7. Credit policies. Be sure you're right on this or you can be in hot water with both the customer and your boss.
8. Handling of orders. The salesman should know how the order is processed, routed, etc. He should also find out who at the plant is responsible for the processing amount of inventory and the billing system.

Information Sources

This kind of data is available to the salesman from several sources. They include sales training programs, sales conferences, plant tours, promotional literature, financial reports, employee publications, brochures, sales kits and manuals.

And don't forget the best source of all—the people in your company. Ask questions whenever you need information. Plant tours, guided or unguided, are a must for the man who wants to build up his product and company knowledge.

An eastern sales manager compels his men to visit the factory at least twice a year. The trip is then discussed at a subsequent sales meeting attended by the heads of other departments. Your company's annual financial report is easily available and will take only an hour of your time to read and digest.

If you're just breaking in with a firm, ask old customers what they think of it. Chances are that you'll get a flock of endorsements that you can profitably use with prospects. I always found my regular customers eager to plug the firm. If you can answer "yes" to nine or more questions, you're moving toward success.

Have You Met Your Company?

1. Do you really read company literature, manuals given you? Yes □ No □
2. If a prospect stumps you with a question about your firm, do you do anything about it? Yes □ No □
3. Are you interested in the operation of other departments? Yes □ No □
4. Have you ever visited the production line at your company? Yes □ No □
5. Could you this minute describe your firm's distribution system? Yes □ No □
6. Do you have a pretty good idea of your outfit's financial structure? Yes □ No □
7. Can you honestly tell a prospect how his order will be handled? Yes □ No □
8. Do you know your firm's inventory on products you sell? Yes □ No □
9. Do you feel customers have confidence in you? Yes □ No □
10. Do you keep a file on company data? Yes □ No □
11. Do you worry about not having enough knowledge about your firm? Yes □ No □
12. Do you know the actual size of your company? Yes □ No □
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