



Firm Size Roundtables Notes

June 2024

Introduction of our 3 chairs followed by breakout sessions based on firm size, where attendees shared their challenges, best practices, and stories.

Small Firms (1-10)

- niche of work that med or large firms not doing
- How to leverage software to do more – can spec be AI generated
- Contract drafter – How to find freelance workers

Mid-Career Firms (11-24)

The team engaged in a discussion about their mid-career firms, the challenges and benefits of managing such firms, and the growth of their respective companies. They also explored future business practices, predicting an increase in project delivery methods like P. 3 and design build models, a hybrid work model, and a growing trend towards sustainability and net zero energy requests from clients. The use of AI in their industry and ways for small firms to access resources previously available at larger firms were also discussed. The team also shared their experiences and proposed strategies to remain nimble without increasing payroll costs.

- Biggest challenge – keeping things moving
- Hard to get projects started
- Not light on work – risk on things getting shelved due to construction projects
- Medium and large projects aren't starting on time – getting things stacked on top of each other
- Get it all loaded – lots in the fire – if all goes at once, could be a problem
- Does anyone have interns? Structured internships – not really – someone would need to oversee
- Intern fellowship – plan a project for them to do – meeting minutes, field reports, etc.
- Small projects – let them run them
- Most work out there now is public work, state govt, 5% – can get 10% or 8% in – 12-14% fees – lots of paperwork – public projects are built on paper
- Have construction costs in public work from CIP – 55% arch from team
- Juggling small and large projects for a client – Project balance: Small – food and beverage – interior fit-outs – no residential
- Public work – start with task orders to get in – firms were in the space already – had background in state and public work. Gov't work will get paid on regular basis. Gov't work is difficult for funding – takes a long time to fund.

Large Firms (25+)

- Practice changing – delivery methods moving to P3 or design build

- BIM not being used by GC, not seeing drawings going away, legal and insurance keeping
- Hybrid work - trend toward flexibility.

What's Next?

- Resources we need: Creating Community Network for Idea Sharing, database of freelance workers and mentors/mentees available
- Next meeting of the roundtables at ArchEx, Nov. 6-8, 2024 in Richmond.