

Assembling & Sustaining Great Ensembles

The Art of Growing Your Firm With People in Mind

CELEBRATING
60 YEARS!

TMP Architecture strives for excellence and for the last 60 years our professionals have dedicated their practice to serving educational clients. TMP's in-house philosophy of "do not let the architecture get in the way of education but let it support and reinforce educational philosophies" certainly says it all. Over the course of this year, TMP's Leadership Team will each be highlighting and celebrating the key influences that have contributed to the firm's success. Join us as we discuss the unique characteristics that have allowed TMP and our professionals to grow into the rich and diverse firm we are today.

As we reflect on our 60th anniversary, it is important to focus on the heart of the firm – our people. During our 60 years of practice, TMP has designed thousands of facilities that serve as tools to teach our children, keep them healthy, and encourage responsible life choices.

"If you have the wrong people, it doesn't matter if you discover the right direction; you still won't have a great company. Great vision without great people is irrelevant." 1.

Architecture, in large part, is the study of people, and how people respond to various conditions and environments. As architects, it is essential that we observe and understand how people use and react to the environments that we created. To put it simply, architecture would not be architecture without occupants. People are the "raison d'être," or the most important reason, behind what drives our profession.

Throughout our 60 years, TMP has been fortunate to have assembled great ensembles of people who have the talent and empathy necessary to design facilities that serve, not only the functional requirements, but the emotional requirements that space evokes.

So what is the secret of our success? The answer is our people. Assembling and sustaining great ensembles of people is not accidental and requires constant vigilance. True collaboration demands discipline and respect. It is magical to be part of an ensemble of people that allow solutions to evolve in an atmosphere of mutual respect; not driven by one person's ego or preconception of the solution. Inclusivity and openness to diverse points of view is critical. TMP has thrived and evolved by recruiting and nurturing people interested in working in a team environment to develop solutions that fit the needs and desires of our clients.



David W. Larson
AIA, Senior Vice President

David Larson is a Senior Vice President of TMP Architecture and is the co-leader of the firm's sports and recreation design group. He currently holds leadership roles for sports/recreation projects with the City of Dearborn, Eastern Michigan University, and Dexter Community Schools.

Larson has over 40 years of architectural design experience, leading the firm's efforts for aquatics and sports/recreation projects, completing hundreds of new construction and renovation projects for this complex facility type. He is actively involved with NIRSA, Athletic Business, and MRPA, often serving as a juror, presenter, and exhibitor. He has an extensive history of presentation and public speaking experience related to municipal, recreation, and sports-related projects.

How did our firm remain strong enough to weather numerous challenges to our existence through the years? To dive deeper into what differentiates TMP and has allowed us to evolve and remain relevant, we have compiled a list of guiding principles that are key to the growth of our firm.

1

GROWTH/OPPORTUNITY

Without opportunities for growth and challenges within the company, people will quickly lose interest in their work and seek opportunities elsewhere. At TMP, it is critical that our people experience constant growth and challenges. Our capacity for accepting larger workloads as a firm is dependent on the ability of our people to execute the projects, allowing for more growth and opportunity to benefit everyone.

INCLUSION

People need to be included in the team. It is tempting as a firm to keep the number of people attending a meeting, for example, to a minimum to keep expenses low. This is a false economy if it alienates the people not included. Inclusion is an investment in our people; an opportunity for them to observe and ultimately contribute to the design process.

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DIVERSITY

It is valuable to work with a team that brings different perspectives of our world. We are fortunate to have people from a variety of educational experiences and from different parts of the world. Having people that may have a different approach to problem solving is a stimulant to creativity. Diversity is a tool for keeping our firm fresh and outward thinking and an avenue for continued improvement and creativity.

MUTUAL RESPECT

Any collaborative venture is dependent on trust and respect. It is similar to improvisational comedy where anything said must be accepted and built upon. We all have preconceptions, but the trick to successful collaboration is to really listen to your team members and let the project develop. Team members will feel valued and it is good mental exercise for creative problem solving.

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There are other models where all the design output is the product of a single design leader. All the employees implement and interpret the idea of one person. Many times, the singular design leader has achieved fame and recognition for their work and aspiring architects join this person to learn and participate in projects that will grab the eyes of the world. Very exciting, but potentially limiting if you want to learn to make your own decisions (and mistakes) designing buildings.

TMP decided 60 years ago to be an ensemble and this approach to our practice of architecture has served us well. It has allowed us to grow, innovate and adapt, and has provided career paths for many professionals. Think Saturday Night Live or M*A*S*H. The players change, but the format allows for creativity and paths for growth.

We are now in the middle of a booming economy rendering a number of exciting projects for TMP. In order for us to serve our growing number of clients, we will continue to rely on our system of collaboration and trust our people by giving them increasing responsibility, and allowing them to seize the opportunities we are facing as a team.

The future looks bright. Just look at our people.



ABOUT TMP ARCHITECTURE

TMP Architecture was founded in 1959 with the goal of designing the finest buildings for education. For 60 years we have focused our practice on educational clients. Our vision statement "Life. Long. Learning." encompasses the passion, creativity, strength, and commitment we bring to each client. TMP's offices in Bloomfield Hills and Kalamazoo, MI have grown to serve the broad spectrum of needs for institutions across the country.

WORKS CITED

1. Collins, James C. *Good to Great*. Random House Business, 2001.