Understanding the role of human dynamics in the practices of Cleveland
area landscape architectural firms

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dedicated to

Mom and Dad,
Grandma,
<u>and</u>
Margy and Jerry

who have supported me in my education

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Abstract

This thesis aims to discover, understand, and evaluate the contemporary client and user involvement practices of landscape architects in the Greater Cleveland area. The research used narrative interviews with firms and their clients to answer the following questions:

1. **Do landscape architects correctly interpret their clients' needs?**
2. **Are clients' needs incorporated into designs?**
3. **Are clients satisfied with landscape architectural services?**
4. **Do landscape architects involve users on a regular basis?**
5. **Is there a set of best practices to adopt when working with clients?**

The results showed that landscape architects focused on understanding the needs of their clients from the beginning of the design process through one-on-one communication with them. This input was incorporated into designs to the satisfaction of the clients. Landscape architects felt that part of their job was to educate clients about good design. This allows their practical and creative input to combine with the client's producing a design that satisfies their needs and holds up over time. Clients appreciate the practical recommendations and high level of communication that the landscape architects offer.

Users do not participate in the design process on a day-to-day basis, although most firms work with them sporadically. The methods for working with them are not well defined by the interviewees.

Both client and user involvement is limited by budget constraints, project type, and client wishes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction.

At the beginning of my final year of undergraduate study in the field of landscape architecture, I began to reconsider my career path. I didn't just question whether I enjoyed what I was doing, or even if I could envision myself in this position for the rest of my life. Instead, I discovered myself contemplating how I could make a positive impact on the world as a landscape architect.

When I first started studying landscape architecture, I saw myself as a "beautifier," but as I took more classes and worked as an intern, I learned that there is more to landscape architecture than making places "pretty". Aesthetics play an important role in landscape architecture, but there are also practical considerations which make the aesthetics complement the living systems that the designs will impact. The ability to enhance human and environmental dynamics is both the landscape architects' specialty and their vehicle for positively affecting the world.

Looking at my experiences as a student, I realized that I had many opportunities to learn about the function and interactions of environmental systems. However, I did not feel that my education on the subject of human systems was equally thorough. In our studios, we were always encouraged to think about how people would fit into the design: a pathway needs to be so wide, railings are needed in such and such a situation, and one can see at so many foot-candles of illumination. We were required to explain how people would use and occupy the spaces we designed and why. All of our projects were real projects, and many times we had contact with a real client[*]. Nevertheless, I felt that we had difficulty extracting information from the client and incorporating that feedback into our designs. The result was that our designs seemed to reflect more what we thought should be there rather than what the client preferred. This was even truer when it came to users of the sites. We simply had no understanding of how to find out what they wanted. It seemed a bit egotistical to think that my classmates and I could effectively design successful spaces for people when we had so little understanding of how to meet their needs.

I turned to "real world" resources for guidance on how to work with clients and users. In *Landscape architecture*, a widely read trade journal published by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the majority of articles deal with environmental

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[*] For the purposes of this thesis, *client* shall be defined as the party who will be paying for the design. *Clients* may or may not use the site. *User* shall be defined as any party that will use the site, but does not pay for the design.

concerns such as green roofs, storm water management, and planting choices. In fact, in the year 2006, between January and September, only 4% of their featured articles addressed the topic of client or user involvement. I tried to learn more about the profession by interning at several firms in the Cleveland area, but while I was an intern, I was not often involved in contacts with clients or users.

Although client and user involvement in design didn't seem to be very important, the landscape architecture profession depends on clients to purchase their services and users to use the spaces they design. In light of this, how could a successful designer ignore their needs? Are practicing landscape architects unresponsive to their clients? Does the stereotype of an egotistical designer, perpetuated by television series such as *Ground Force* and *Extreme Home Makeover*, define how professionals work? If the egotistical stereotype is true, then the profession of landscape architecture risks loosing the support of the public and, consequently, its' potential to enhance human and environmental dynamics.

Therefore, I originally assumed that client and user feedback and involvement was an important part in a successful design. Based on the lack of emphasis placed on client and user involvement in my education, reading, and internships, I hypothesized that landscape architects were not doing enough to facilitate this involvement. To test my hypothesis, I went to those who are actually working on landscape architectural projects: landscape architects and their clients. I planned to interview landscape architects and clients to investigate the following:

6. If the landscape architects were able to correctly interpret their clients' needs
7. If the clients' needs were incorporated into the designs
8. If clients were satisfied with the process
9. If users were involved and
10. If there were a set of best practices to adopt when working with clients

In the following pages I will present the results of these interviews.

Chapter 2

Background Research.

I began researching this topic by looking at the main trade journal of the profession, *Landscape architecture*. *Landscape architecture* is published by the national professional organization, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). The readership is broad and the magazine is well supported by the members of ASLA. It seems as though *Landscape architecture* is in the office of nearly every landscape architecture firm.

Between January and September 2006, *Landscape architecture* published one hundred forty-nine feature articles. Topics ranged from sustainable living, art, and politics to water management, plant selection and technological advances. Articles also highlighted various influential designers and projects. Topics were broadly distributed. When reviewing the articles, fifty-six related to living system dynamics, but only a third of those specifically involved human dynamics. Overall, this represented 13% of all the articles. However, articles that actually explore and relate how landscape architects create successful *human* dynamics make up only 4% of the published articles. A closer look showed that of those articles, thirteen detailed how people's needs and concerns were addressed and six that demonstrated how people were involved in the design process.

One of the articles that discussed how people were involved in the design process was the March 2006 article entitled, "Reflection on Healing," which detailed how involving cancer survivors helped meet the healing objective of the Cancer Survivors Plaza in Tampa, Florida. The landscape architecture firm interviewed cancer survivors to help them understand what symbols would be most meaningful to them. The design also incorporated artwork by children battling cancer. The article attributed the resulting comfort of visiting survivors to the thoughtful design process and considers the project a success (Connor).

Also in the March 2006 issue, "A Gem of a Park in Portland's Cultured Pearl" by George Hazelrigg described how the city of Portland, Oregon was looking for a designer who had experience working with the public to design a series of new parks. The article emphasized how the designers revisited their design to incorporate community feedback. Both this article and its' Elizabeth Chan's corresponding counter article, "A Vibrant Draw in Summer, Not So Winter Friendly," raved about the number of people who enjoy the park. While "A Vibrant Draw in Summer, Not So Winter Friendly" did lament the

lack of winter amenities, the article focused on how this project enhanced the social dynamics of the city.

In Kathy Madden's February articl,e "One day, two Paris parks," she wrote, "one park seems designed for designers, the other designed for people. How do they stack up? (Madden, 126)" She compared Parc André Citroën and the Luxemburg Gardens by evaluating the people-friendliness of each. Madden commented on what it was about the spaces in Luxemburg Gardens that contributed to the more than 1,500 people there on that day versus the 150 people at Parc André Citroën (Madden 126, 128). In this evaluation, the author simply equated a good park with one that has many people in it.

Susan Hines' column highlights successful professionals. The majority of human dynamics articles were found in this column as those practitioners gave advice and explained their design process. Bruce Clodfelter worked with individual residential projects and described his client-oriented practice: "I let them [the clients] do all the talking and even encourage them to tear pictures out of magazines to help me understand what it is that they want." (Hines, "Work Chic," 40) Charles J. Stick took his clients to see inspirational villas in Italy to explain his concepts. "If I'm removed from the people for whom I work, it will not give me a chance to do what I want," said Stick (Hines, "The Bespoke Landscape," 76). He personally committed himself to the care of their landscape and continues to assist his clients for years. Skate park specialist, Steve Rose, has gone door-to-door to gain local residents' support for his projects. He hired professional skaters to skate with the communities' boarders to find out what type of elements they most enjoy.

An article on Mark Cameron focused on his work with Maryland's Neighborhood Design Center (NDC). NDC is a non-profit organization that provides free professional design services to communities that are unable to afford them by matching up volunteer designers with projects. Cameron saw his work as not only affecting individual designs, but as a way to improve the overall quality of life in a neighborhood. He remarked that he enjoyed

> "…working directly with people on community gardens and residential block projects that you don't tend to think of as landscape architecture. I could use my skills and ideas and theory in places that are not often touched by landscape architects. I found it really invigorating because it affected so many people, and we helped them take the ideas they had and figure out how they could do them in a particular place (Hines, "Nurturing Everyday Landscapes," 138)."

This article was followed the next month with an article explaining how NCD worked. Their services were based on designing with the community by meeting public groups on the site, working to address their needs, and empowering them to encourage their neighbors to get involved as well. However, it seemed as though the employees of NDC did most of the community work instead of the landscape architects themselves. The NDC will even took the burden of public calls and questions from the volunteers (Hines,

"Designing for the People," 64).   In addition, the article pointed out the flagging interest in community design and volunteering.

The waning interest indicated by those articles corresponded with a comment from my thesis advisor, who originally expressed her surprise at my interest in a topic that was often marginalized and considered "not stylish" in landscape architectural design. My academic research supported her statement.   There have been no books written specifically about human dynamics in landscape architecture since 1975. There were a few recent books dealing with inclusive design. However, they were relating it to other design disciplines such as architecture and interior design. Landscape architecture had no equivalent.

I found the 1975 book, *Neighborhood Spaces*, by Randolph Hester Jr. to be quite helpful. Hester's research was similar to my own, but his was project-oriented, while I wished to understand human dynamics from a practice standpoint. He chose well-used, well-known community designs and evaluated them based on qualities of social suitability, which he defined as the correlation between user criteria, designer criteria, and the performance of a space.   He also investigated impacts on the community, user involvement, and the communication between landscape architects, their clients and users. He collected his data by interviewing the designers and community members involved in the process.

From interviewing these designers, Hester found an extremely diverse and creative range of techniques used to gather information from potential users and stakeholders. The techniques distilled into meetings, individual questioning, and observation. The most common technique was conducting meetings. Some designers staged a neighborhood forum or round table discussion to gather ideas from anyone who chose to participate. Brainstorming sessions helped generate design ideas. Buzz sessions were similar except they were less focused more on neighborhood issues in general as opposed to concrete design suggestions.   Other times, meetings took the form of a panel discussion that explained current design moves.

Several more complex meeting formats were also discussed.   One type of meeting involved synectics, or group problem solving. In a synectics meeting, the person running the meeting defined the main social design issue in general terms from information gathered through previous meetings or personal experience. Then the group of neighbors identified what they felt was the specific problem and worked together to solve it.

Another option was role-playing in a meeting. Many times this technique was used to help define problems and resolve conflicts between different groups about the space. Role-playing had the potential to create an intense situation and required careful monitoring and professional aid. The idea of role-playing was sometimes incorporated in less confrontational manners such as subjunctive written statements or other physical representations.   The most involved of the group meeting techniques was gaming. Games such as U-Dig, POP, or SOS, used concrete forms and sometimes money to get participants to make decisions and agree on compromises.

Techniques that gathered individual feedback included one-on-one interviews and questionnaires. Designers tailored these two feedback mechanisms to help answer specific questions. Semantic differentials could be included in these techniques or used alone. Semantic differentials asked for relations between simple words with definite connotations and concrete objects on the site, or in the community.

Observation was a qualitative research method that designers used to gather data on current conditions. It included recording the activities people engage in, numbers of people, groupings, intensity and location of activity. Some designers asked a sample of neighbors to compile activity logs detailing their own actions on the site and/or the actions of others.

The success of his research encouraged me to use interviews as my data collection method. The understanding of such a wide range of techniques helped me to formulate my interview questions. Hester's simple diagrams that use arrows to indicate communication dynamics were a helpful example of how to distill and simplify the large amount of information gained from the interview process.

Chapter 3

Methodology.

Once I had decided to interview landscape architects and clients, my advising professor suggested taking a narrative approach so that I could gain a holistic view of the design process. The interview process was conducted in accordance to the University Committee on Human Subjects at Cornell University (UCHS) guidelines and regulations. Questions and consent forms were approved by UCHS on December 15, 2006. All interviews were conducted with the written consent of the interviewee. The interviews were recorded digitally with the permission of the interviewees. Interview recordings will be kept confidential and will not be released for publication. They will be kept on record for three years and then destroyed. Interviewees shall remain anonymous.

The pool of interviewees was generated from the Greater Cleveland area where I had completed my previous internships. To sample a general cross-section of practitioners in the area, I contacted every firm listed as providing professional landscape architectural services in the Greater Cleveland Yellow Pages. I then delivered a letter of introduction that explained the project and the interview process (see appendix A) to each firm.

Before respondents sat for an interview, I sent them an outline of the questions and signed an approved document of consent (see appendix A). The questions were organized into three sections. The first set of questions was based on the general design process and was written to encourage the landscape architect to explain the process that he goes through when working on a project from beginning to end. The second set of questions dealt with more specifics about working with clients and users. The questions focused on how the interviewee attempted to understand client and user needs and wants and how these were incorporated into their designs. They also addressed other variables that might influence landscape architect and client communication, such as size of project, frequency of contact, and clarity of discourse. Finally, I asked each interviewee to describe two projects that exemplified how their process worked with a focus on client and user involvement.

Once I began conducting interviews, my technique changed to allow the interview to flow more naturally. I found it nearly impossible to neatly separate process, examples, and specific situations. I encouraged the interviewee to describe their client and user involvement in terms of their process. In doing so, the majority of interviewees would answer my questions. Thus, the second set of questions became follow-ups that were asked for clarification as the interviewee spoke about that topic.

In most interviews, the allotted hour ran out before the interviewees were able to go into detail about two specific projects in their entirety. However, as the landscape architects spoke, they would bring up specific project examples that demonstrated how their process worked in a specific situation. In the end, the interviews became more narrative and the results more topic-oriented versus question-oriented.

Following each interview, I asked each interviewee to deliver a letter of introduction to two of his clients to see if they would sit for an interview. I asked the landscape architect to deliver the letter so that I would be able to solicit participation without asking the landscape architect to release any confidential information about his clients. Therefore, I did not know anything about those contacted until I received information from them agreeing to participate (see appendix B).

The client interviews were carried out in a similar manner to the landscape architect interviews. Prior to the interview, an outline of the questions was sent to the interviewee and they were asked to sign the same document of consent as the landscape architects (see appendices A and B). The questions again focused on the process that clients went through when completing their project, from what they were looking for when they hired a landscape architect to if they would recommend the firm they worked with to others. The interviews were also conducted in a narrative style with the questions serving more for clarification and topical guidelines than to get a specific response. Originally, I had hoped to visit the project sites with the client to see and record the final projects myself, but, because not all of the projects were completed or convenient to where the interviews were held, I was not able to gather that data.

Upon completing the interviews, I transcribed them word-for-word so that I could really listen to what the interviewees were saying and how they were saying it. These transcriptions became the basis of my results. As per UCHS restrictions, the transcriptions will not be made publicly available. Brief outlines of the interviews approved for publication by the interviewees are included (see appendices C and D).

Of the nineteen landscape architecture firms listed in the Greater Cleveland Yellow Pages, seven responded to my request for interviews. Each was given letter-number designations to protect the identities of the firms and interviewees. The letter designated the type of firm based on the following specializations:

Firm Type	Specialization
A	Residential design-build
B	Residential and commercial development
C	Municipal and institutional
D	Unspecialized- projects span specializations

In each of these categories, other than Type A, there were two different firms that fell into each category. To differentiate between them, the number 1 is added after the firm with more employees and the number 2 is added after the firm with less employees. For

example, the firm designated C2 would be a relatively small firm specializing in municipal and institutional projects. Two landscape architects with different positions in the Type A firm agreed to be interviewed. Their interviews will be differentiated A_0 and A_1.

The following section is a brief overview of the interviews that introduces the processes attitudes and communication dynamics of the interviewees. In the landscape architect interviews, firm processes are summarized in charts that highlight where involvement is higher or lower. Clients spoke little about the process itself. Instead, they presented general views of that they were looking for. For both types of interviews, diagrams represent the perceived communication dynamics. The diagrams include the designer and non-designers that were involved in the process. The direction of the arrows relates to the direction of communication and the thickness relates to the frequency of communication. Dotted lines refer to indirect feedback through research or feedback that was filtered through another person.
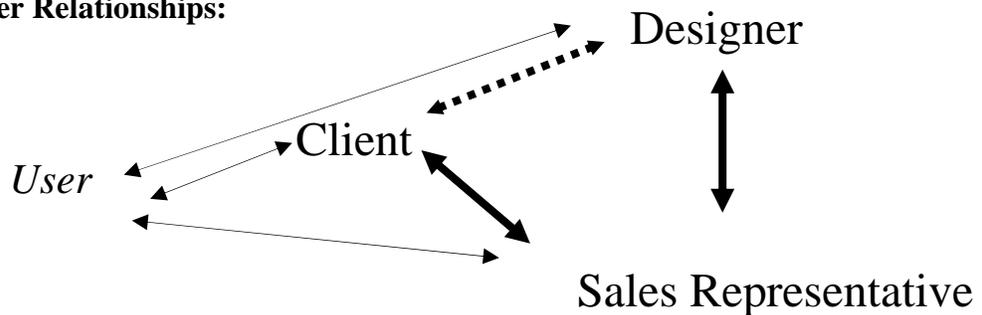
Chapter 4

Introduction to interviewees.

FIRM A

Project Types: Predominantly residential; commercial, institutional or development
Size: 40-50 Employees
Stakeholder Relationships:

Designer

Client

User

Sales Representative

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Site study	■					■				
Conceptual/Preliminary Design				■						▓
Design Development				■		■				
Install			■							
Evaluation					■			▓		

Interviewee A$_0$

Interviewee: Sales representative
Date of Interview: December 28, 2006
Duration of Interview: 01:08:54

The best way to work with clients is…to communicate efficiently and help people achieve their goals.

> "So the more you talk with people, the more you learn from them, the more you get where they're coming from. People respect you if you're

open with them and you're honest and you don't try to hide anything whether it's big or small (A_0, 60:10)."

A good design is…one that takes the surroundings into account and fits in aesthetically. A good design also achieves the feel and goal that the client wanted.

> "It's really hard because it's like a feeling; it's like a notion you get (A_0, 63:06)."

> "I think it's like a combination of things that make it feel right making it a successful design. It's not easy, otherwise everybody would do it (A_0, 63:06).

Interviewee A_1

Interviewee: Senior Designer
Date of Interview: January 3, 2006
Duration of Interview: 57:53

The best way to work with clients is…to work *with* them. A good design stems from a balance between designer, salesperson, and client in which everyone works with each other and learns from each other.

> "…work with them. Don't tell them what to do, don't wait for them to tell you what to do; work with them. …working with people, with the area, with the environment, with the plants, with the dollars. It's all part of a teamwork. That's what I like (A_1, 04:30)."

A good design is…one that leaves the client happy and is cared for over time.

FIRM B1

Project types: Commercial and residential development
Size: 90-100 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Designer ⟷ Client

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Program development				■		■				
Design Development				■		■				
Construction documents, Bidding, and Approvals				■		■				
Construction			■			■				
Evaluation			■			■				

Interviewee: Project Landscape Architect
Date of Interview: December 26, 2006
Duration of Interview: 01:52:06

The best way to work with clients is…to have good people skills and to document everything so if something goes wrong they cannot sue you.

> "…being able to express yourself and listen to them, a lot of people out there don't want to listen, they just want to talk. And I've seen plenty of that, where you go into a meeting and there's one guy just going. And, after a while, nobody's listening to him (B1, 67:25)."

A good design is…one that has good communication and coordination between the client and designer and also with the contractors installing the project. It addresses all of the needs of the clients up front so that one does not have to go back and put unattractive "band aids" on the project.

FIRM B2

Project types: Residential and commercial development
Size: 10-15 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Designer ⟷ Client

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Preliminary plan					■	■				
Approvals			■			■				
Construction documents, and Construction			■			■				
Evaluation			■			■				

Interviewee: Landscape Architect Project Manager
Date of Interview: December 26, 2006
Duration of Interview: 01:18:08

The best way to work with clients is…to keep the client in the loop and help direct them in the right direction. Present different options, but keep to what they originally intended.
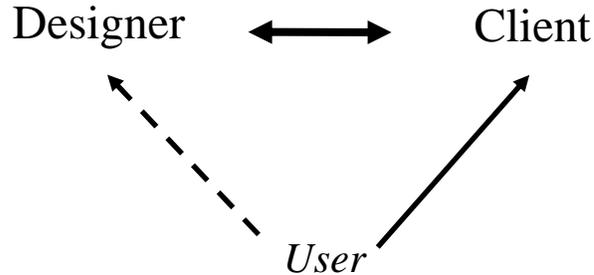
A good design is…one that happens when a client knows what they are doing and there is good coordination with everyone involved.

Firm C1

Project types: Solely projects in the public sector; municipal and institutional
Size: 10-12 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Identifying core client group					■				■	
Defining program					■					■
Schematic design					■					■
Design development		■				■				
Construction documentation		■				■				
Bidding		■				■				
Construction		■				■				
Evaluation			■			■				

Interviewee: Principal
Date of Interview: December 27, 2006
Duration of Interview: 01:10:28

The best way to work with clients is…to build trust and have a dialogue with them throughout the whole project. It is important to educate them about good design decisions.

> "…maintain an ongoing level of conversation that extracts information that you need from the client but also gives them information that they need to be able to make informed decisions on what form the design should take and also to be able to deal with the problems that come up in the course of the project…(C1, 67:25)"
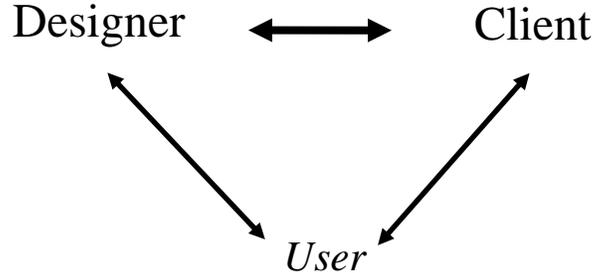
A good design is…one that people use and that holds up over time.

FIRM C2

Project types: Public, institutional, and non-profit
Size: 4-5 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Analysis/Program Development					■	■				
Schematic design					■					■
Construction drawings, bidding and construction administration					■	■				
Evaluation			■					■		

Interviewee: Principal/Owner
Date of Interview: January 4, 2007
Duration of Interview: 46:17

The best way to work with clients is…to give them the design guidance and service that is right for them.

"Each client is going to be different based on who they are, what their needs are, … [they are] looking for guidance in different ways...(C2, 19:10)"
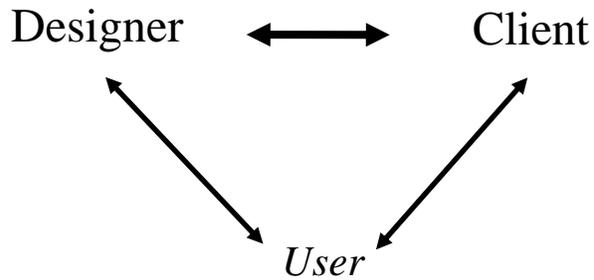
A good design is…one that is done right and built to last.

FIRM D1

Project types: Residential development, commercial, public, institutional
Size: 4-5 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Designer ⟷ Client

User

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Conceptual/Preliminary Design					■					■
Revision					■	■				
Construction documents and Construction				■		■				
Evaluation		■								

Interviewee: Principal
Date of Interview: December 29, 2006
Duration of Interview: 01:06:51

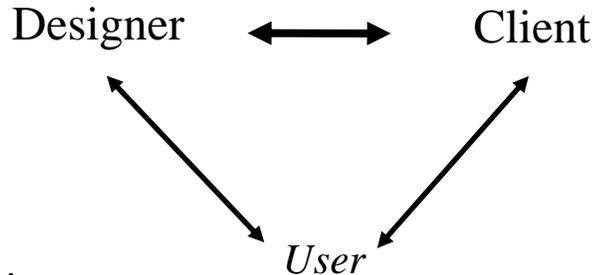**The best way to work with clients is…**to work with those that you have a good rapport with.

A good design is…one that satisfies client needs and wants, is buildable and affordable.

FIRM D2

Project types: Commercial, public, residential, institutional
Size: 2-3 Employees
Stakeholder relationships:

Designer ⟷ Client

Designer ↘ ↙ Client

User

Client and User involvement in design process:

Design Phase	Client Involvement					User Involvement				
	Low				High	Low				High
Job acquisition					■	■				
Define program					■	■				
Determine levels of involvement					■	■				
Understanding client and user needs					■					■
Design Development		■				■				
Construction		■				■				
Evaluation					■			■		

Interviewee: President and Vice President
Date of Interview: January 5, 2007
Duration of Interview: 51:04

The best way to work with clients is…to work openly, honestly, and face-to-face.

A good design is… "[s]omething that twenty years later we can go back and say, 'that looks fantastic' and 'look at how many people are using it.' To me that's a successful project."-President (D2, 50:06)

The following charts expand the best practice recommendations and criteria of good design mentioned in the previous section.

Criteria	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2	#	%
Sustainable				x	x		x	3	43%
Done right			x		x		x	3	43%
Happy client	x		x		x		x	4	57%
People using it	x	x	x	x			x	5	71%
Fulfilled client goals	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Good communication	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Well-balanced process				x			x	2	29%
Follow through							x	1	14%
Health, safety and welfare						x	x	2	29%
Understand project	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Best design for best price		x		x	x	x		4	57%
Image is most important		x				x	x	3	43%
User involved				x	x	x	x	4	57%
Maintenance and staff involved		x		x		x	x	4	57%
Timely			x		x		x	3	43%

Criteria for good design

All firms agreed that a good design fulfills client goals. The other design criteria, understanding the project and good communication, contribute to fulfilling client goals. Over half of the firms agreed that keeping their client happy was very important as well. The clients themselves all agreed that the landscape architect did an excellent job communicating and they fulfilled their goals. The firms seemed to be succeeding in meeting their top three criteria for "good designs."

Criteria	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2	#	%
Provide direction	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Long-term sustainability			x		x		x	3	43%
Flexibility					x			1	14%
Personality					x	x	x	3	43%
Understand client needs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Done right					x	x	x	3	43%
Client is most important part	x		x		x			3	43%
Good relationship	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Good, consistent communication	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Upfront	x	x	x			x	x	5	71%
Honest	x			x			x	3	43%
Face-to-face				x	x	x	x	4	57%
Provide alternative views	x		x	x		x	x	5	71%
Meet budget		x	x		x	x	x	5	71%
Meet schedule			x		x	x	x	4	57%
Balance client with other aspects			x				x	2	29%
Happy client	x		x				x	3	43%
Trust	x			x	x		x	4	57%
Two-way dialogue	x	x		x	x	x	x	6	86%
Educate	x	x	x	x	x			5	71%
Document everything	x	x						2	29%
Prove your ideas to clients	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Work for the client	x	x	x		x	x		5	71%
Give back to the community		x						1	14%
Personally explain graphics	x				x			2	29%
Understand how space will be used	x				x		x	3	43%
Balance time and client communication			x	x				2	29%

Best Practice Recommendations

The above chart is a summary of what landscape architects indicated were their best client relation recommendations. The most common responses define the job of landscape architects. It can be broken down into service, communication, and client relationship.

Landscape architects agreed that the best service combined satisfying client wants with education, design direction, and logical proofs to back up their recommendations. This indicated a one-way relationship. However, the aspects that related to communication indicate a two-way dialogue. In fact, 86% of respondents said that this was their

preferred *modus operandi*. They all agreed that they should be in relatively constant communication with their clients throughout the process. Their communication was mostly related to trying to understand their client in order to provide the appropriate level of service.

The landscape architect's recommendations for client relationships showed that the majority of landscape architects wanted to have a personal relationship with their client. They valued trust and honesty in these relationships.

The best practice recommendations demonstrate that the preferred relationship between designer and client is one that works both ways. They suggest that the landscape architect listen to the client, the client listen to the landscape architect and both of them engage each other in a dialogue at the appropriate stages of the design process.

CLIENT A$_0$c

Project: Private residence
Project completed: No
Stakeholder relationship:

Designer ⟷ Client

Interviewees: Husband and wife
Date of Interview: March 20, 2007
Duration of Interview: 38:15

We hired a landscape architect to…give appropriate services for the particular project location, size, and type.

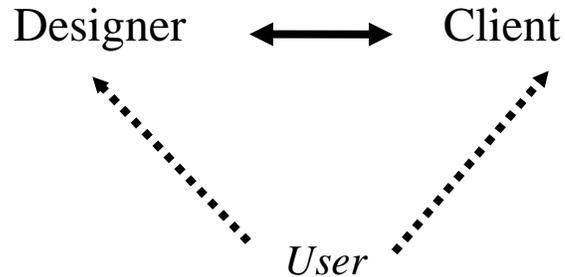"[we want]…a competent landscaped yard on completion (A$_0$c, 04:00)."

I would recommend this firm to others because…although they are a bit expensive, they have done similar projects and have flexibility to work in stages.

CLIENT B1c

Project: Commercial waterfront square, among others
Project completed: Yes
Stakeholder relationship:

Designer ←——→ Client

User

Interviewee: Regional Director/Development at a large local development company
Date of Interview: January 5, 2007
Duration of Interview: 37:39

We hired a landscape architect to…work with my goals and objectives to create a more successful project.

> "At the end of the day, I want a firm that already ideally understands who I am and what's important to me as a developer. So they're already sensitive to those kind of considerations (B1c, 15:00)."

I would recommend this firm to others because…their specialization suits our needs and they understand us.

> "… we do a lot of work with B1 because they think like the owner and understand the owner's priorities probably as well as any firm (B1c, 15:00)."

CLIENT D2c

Project: Private school auxiliary campus and playground, among others
Project completed: Yes
Stakeholder relationship:

Client stakeholder group

Designer ⟷ Client

User
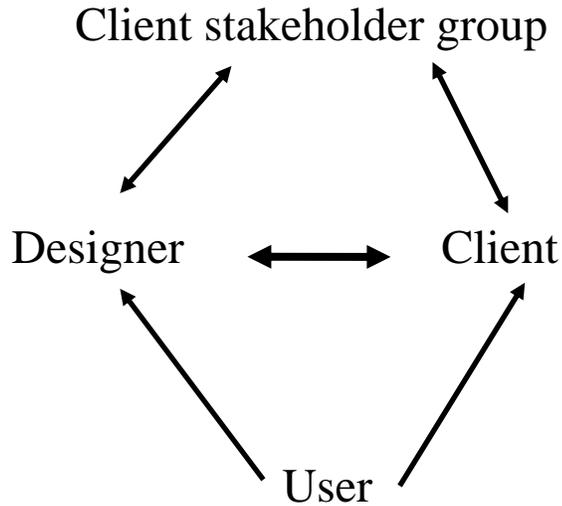
Interviewees: Private school facilities director
Date of Interview: March 22, 2007
Duration of Interview: 13:24

We hired a landscape architect to…be sensitive to and work with our school's philosophy of doing what is best for our students and involving them as much as we can.

I would recommend this firm to others because…of their enthusiasm and willingness to work with us on whatever size project comes up. They are professional and are very detail oriented.

> "…I think they're really good at not letting the ball drop in any one portion of the job (D2c, 08:08)."

Chapter 5

Results.

The results that I will present in the following section represent the most relevant findings with regards to the relationship between landscape architects, clients, and users. Thanks to the exhaustive comments of the interviewees, there are many other aspects of the design process and success that could be included. HOwever, the results will focus on the importance of clients in the design process. They will also present client and user involvement and feedback methods.

The results are presented with the following two qualifications. First, because the process was self-selecting, I assume that these professionals who were willing to take an hour from their day to speak about client communication feel that the relationship between client, landscape architect, and user is an important discussion. Therefore, responders should represent the highest levels of involvement and concern with clients and users.

Secondly, there were only three client interviews. Their comments were fairly divergent, making direct comparisons difficult. Additionally, certain clients were not able to speak to all of the parts of the design process either because they were not involved in all of them, or their design was not completed at the time of the interview. Nevertheless, in this section, these three interviews will be taken as representative of clients in general and clients working on projects of their specific type so that general comparisons can be made.

The statistics regarding the state of the profession indicate that landscape architects are doing a good job working with their clients. According to the "2006 ASLA National Salary and Business Indicators" survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects, landscape architects' salaries are up by over 20% since 2004. The survey also indicates that demand for landscape architectural services is rising faster than people are going into the field. ("Landscape Architect Salaries Up By 20 Percent" [online])

Feedback from the interviews confirmed what these organizations published. "…people come to us because they need something. Ultimately, we're a service industry so we want to provide services and meet the needs of the client, (C2, 00:00)" says C2's principal. The interviewee A_0 remarked,

> "…you can't be an introvert if you're a designer. I suppose you could
> and create some sort of an enigma around yourself, but there aren't that
> many people who do that. …unless you're like, super, super-talented or

something like that, you can't go into your own little corner and then expect people to realize your genius because most of the time you die before anyone realizes how good you were, like all the famous painters, so you know, who wants that? So what you have to do is, you have to like people; you have to like to talk to them, and you have to like to help people. …what you're trying to do is help other people out (A$_0$, 60:10)."

Landscape architects seem conscious of their client's concerns and will go out of their way for their clients.

In the very first stages of a job, before they are hired, every firm would have meetings with prospective clients. The general process was similar to what the president of firm C2 described:

"…for the initial meeting we don't charge anybody anything. Just go out and talk about it, look at the site and meet with them for an hour or so. Whatever it takes to get an understanding of what exactly the project is. … Clients will have questions about what's this mean or what's that mean, and some will just be a sort of old client … they just tell us to do it and we do it. And then we send them a bill and it's as simple as that (C2, 14:00)."

It is clear from this description that firms felt that they knew their old clients and had established a strong enough relationship with them to already be aware of their general needs. "…the relationship with the client I don't think is ever done…(C2, 19:07)" comments the owner of firm C2. Of the seven firms interviewed, C2, D1, and D2 stated that they did not do any active marketing and relied solely on word-of-mouth referrals and return business. C1 and B2 stated that they also have a fair amount of return business. Firms B2 and A relied on active marketing and/or networking to bring in business. Nevertheless, the interviewee from firm B2 expressed a preference for working with return clients because both parties already had an understanding of how the project would work. One might consider that clients of type A firms would have little reason to return for new projects.

When encouraged to describe how they maintain these ongoing relationships with their clients, the landscape architects responded very similarly, citing three specific techniques that they used. Each firm seemed to incorporate all of them into their process, but there was always one technique that was more important to them than others. Some firms focused on developing personal relationships. Firms like B1 and D2 tried to make connections and promote informal communication. The president of D2 remarked, "…even in the original presentation trying to get the job you're trying to make a connection with the client…(D2, 02:07)." The project landscape architect from B1 affirmed, "…the client-landscape architect relationship is really important. I'm close with all my clients and some of them are really good friends and some of them call and request me to work on their project (B1, 32:00)."

Firms D1 and C2 felt that working with their clients' personalities helped create good relationships. "Each client is going to be different based on who they are, what their needs are, but there's ultimately personality at work too, you have to be sensitive…(C2, 19:10)," acknowledged the owner of firm C2. Both interviewees from firm A agreed that the purpose of their questionnaire was to help them get to know their clients by learning about their lifestyles.

On the other hand, firms B2 and C1 used their expertise and previous successful projects to demonstrate their competence. According to the president of C1,

> "… [we try to] build credibility and trust with the client so that we can get them to the point where they feel good about recommendations that we make. ...they'll look at the body of work that we've done and say, these guys know what they're doing so if they recommend this, then this must be a reasonable way to go (C1, 25:00)."

Although each firm focused specifically on one aspect of relationship building, the fact that they worked with all three areas was significant because clients felt that all three techniques were important. All of the clients interviewed emphasized the benefits of working with an expert who was personable and accessible. They also commented that the personality of their landscape architect contributed to their positive experience. Most firms mentioned that their clients would ask them about their familiarity with similar projects. Clients B1c and A_0c stated that they hired firms B1 and A to do their projects specifically because they trusted their expertise. B1c and D2c were return clients who decided to rehire these firms based on their past relationship and because they already had a general understanding of their needs and business operations.

Every firm indicated that good communication with their clients was a key to a good design. They felt as though they kept the client in contact throughout the whole process, although the extent was mainly thought to be determined by the client. The interviewee from B2 commented,

> "Some clients really like to be involved in the process and you're hearing from them daily when things are really going on… There's other clients that just really trust us and they'll give their input and step back. And they expect us to take care about the details for them (B2, 66:14)."

Upon closer scrutiny, client involvement was highest in the first stages of the design process when firms focused on understanding client needs, whereas client involvement dropped off sharply later in the process, as seen in the overviews of the firms' process. The president of C1 offered the explanation that,

> "…generally, once you have decided on all the things that will be in the plan, that's where the owner's real input stops. They know they're going to have these ten components in the park or in the project and as long as

they're there…the owner really isn't interested in design once the schematic design is agreed upon (C1, 30:13)."

None of the clients mentioned that they were not interested in the later phases of design, but neither did they feel as though they had been left out at any point. Therefore, their responses supported this explanation.

Despite the fact that landscape architects valued client input and clients did influence the amount of involvement they had, other practical business aspects also factored in. As the interviewee from firm B2 noted, "I guess you can't have too much communication, you know, letting them know what's going on, but it also takes time to communicate with them as well (B2, 71:00)." The time that the landscape architect had budgeted into their rate to spend working with the client impacted the amount of client involvement. Additionally, the clients of smaller projects were given less communication with the landscape architects. The landscape architects explained that this was a result of a heavy workload and the reduced complexity and timeframe of the smaller design problems. As the size and complexity of a project generally dictated the budget allotted, it seemed as though money also influences client input via project size. However, all of the clients contacted felt that the amount of communication that they had with their respective landscape architect was satisfactory and addressed the needs of their project.

The landscape architects that were interviewed agreed that, in addition to general communication with their clients, incorporating their input created for better projects. The firms interviewed all found that face-to-face meetings where the client was encouraged to discuss their project were the most helpful in determining what client needs were. Firm A had a formulated list of questions ready to ask at the meeting, while many of the other firms changed their questions depending on the project and relied on their experience to know what to ask. Firms C1, C2, B2 and A also showed pictures or visited sites to help them understand where a client was coming from, or to confirm what a client wanted.

The level of client input at these meetings varied based on the type of project. Firm A worked to cater not only to a client's needs, but also to their lifestyle. They used their questionnaire to ask questions that give them a broad idea of how their client lives. They felt that client input was important because, "…you can always refer back and say, you know, we're not going to live here. We're not going to be the ones experiencing this landscape all the time. Let's go back and see what it is they actually wanted here (A_0 12:00)."

Landscape architects in firms B1 and B2 asked the client for their program and then designed their space for them. Client input was considered less important because they were designing primarily for project profitability. The landscape architects found that once they understood the environment the client wanted, relying on their experience was the most effective way to design a financially successful project.

Firms of type C had two different kinds of client involvement. On projects where they responded to Requests for Proposals, the client had already clearly defined what it was they wanted. Yet they had projects that involve clients who did not have well-defined needs. Then they went through the meeting process with much more depth. Many of their projects are paid for with public funding so the public is the client. Then they might suggest forming a committee of representatives or making the meetings public. Although theoretically, the public is considered a client when funding a project, only firm D1 considered the public a client. The other firms that work with public projects see them as users. Therefore, public meetings will be covered with user involvement.

The president of firm D2 seemed to speak for the landscape architects when she explained the client input meetings.

> "Well, for the most part it's really lending an ear to your client and really listening to what their needs are and trying to help them focus it into what direction the project should take. Most times they have this wish list of things, but you know, sometimes they're just not sure how to turn that into the final project…(D2, 03:26)"

The end of her quote resonated throughout the interview responses as the landscape architecture interviewees sought to describe their part of the design process. Landscape architects gather client input, but only to a certain extent. They are looking for concepts and overall ideas, not specific aesthetics. A_0 summarizes, "…they know what they'd like to see, but you know how to get it for them…you need the concepts from them. And your job as a landscape architect is to translate that concept that they want…(A_0 29:30)." Several interviewees indicated that there is a point where client input is no longer helpful. They use words like "program," "concept," and "element" to define the ideal result of client input. Although the landscape architects interviewed did not want their client to dictate the entire design, every firm, except B1, mentioned that they did not want clients who had no idea what they wanted either. According to their responses, an ideal client should have a generally defined program or concept, but be open to their design recommendations. These recommendations came from their own creative ideas and practical suggestions.

Most interviewees focused on the recommendations that stemmed from their experience and expertise. All firms felt that their expertise could benefit the client in practical ways. They indicated that many times clients did not understand how far their money would go, or why a certain design move might meet their needs better than their original idea. B1, B2, C1, all gave specific examples of where they were able to positively able to change a client's mind about something they originally wanted because of practical concerns that they knew as experts. These ranged from the appropriate locations for a sledding hill, or retention basins, to safer vehicular circulation. The landscape architects felt it was their responsibility to prevent clients from going ahead with designs that would be "foolish," "not in their best interests," or unsafe.

However, ultimately the client decided whether they build the project or not, so landscape architects attempted to educate them and provide them with logical arguments and proofs to support their recommendations. Sometimes they showed them examples of other projects that prove their point. Firm B2 went as far as putting together educational booklets and making calendar schedules for clients who were not so used to dealing with the complex physical and legal limitations of development.

Although landscape architects may seem egotistical by dictating what their clients "should" and "should not" do, all interviewees said that they would always draw what the client wanted. Additionally, none of the landscape architects went through the design process on their own. All firms asked for and incorporated client input to some extent. Firms A, B1, D1 and D2 used their co-workers or other members of a design team to come up with better ideas. Firms C1, C2, D1 and D2, solicit the input of end users of sites to add to the pool of ideas. The principal of D1 advised, "…flush all the ideas that you can get (D1, 42:13)."

Firms C1, C2, D1, and D2, actively engaged the end user of their sites. Firms C2 and D1 felt that it was the contact client's initiative either to speak for the public, or ask for public meetings because they affected the amount of time and money spent on the project. Firms C1 and D2 actively suggested levels of user involvement. The president of C1 commented, "We always encourage them [the clients] to get a fair representation of the people who have to manage the facility, maintain the facility and use the facility (C1, 44:02)." When firm A did projects outside the residential sector, they too, actively incorporated user feedback. These firms involve users to gather ideas and support for projects. User support was considered especially crucial in publicly funded projects and projects where maintenance cooperation was needed. The techniques used to gather user input are as follows:

	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2
Public meeting, programming					x	x	x
Public meeting, comments					x	x	x
Public meeting, charrette						x	x
Committee meeting				x	x		x
Public questionnaire						x	x
Sample group questionnaire	x			x			
Sample group charrette						x	x
Informal Poll	x						

User involvement techniques

The clients interviewed felt that the level to which the landscape architect involved them was suitable to their needs. Each client was looking for slightly different levels of involvement, but, because they worked with firms that were prepared for the type of

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projects they were looking at, they were satisfied. They all mentioned that there had never been any difficulties in communication during the design process. While A_0c felt that their landscape architect did not understand their needs right away, eventually, he was able to discern them. Clients appreciated the expertise of their landscape architect firms as value added to their project. D2c summarized,

> "I guess it's not so much having a landscape architect be attentive to your needs, but really being able to communicate with you…and continue to evolve. Because sometimes you hire people that are so eager to do whatever you want, but you hire them for their knowledge. And if they can't offer that knowledge-base, you're not really gaining anything (D2c, 11:46)."

In the end, the clients' needs corresponded with those perceived by the landscape architects. Each type of firm was able to cater to their particular client base through the design process and the final design. The following table illustrates the correspondence with the levels of importance that landscape architects and their clients attached to different aspects of the design process.

	A firm	A client	B firms	B client	C firms	D firms	D client
Client Feedback	Highest	Highest	High	High	High	High	High
Designer Expertise	High	High	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest
Budget considerations	Medium	Medium	Highest	Highest	High	High	High
End User Involvement	Low/None	Low/None	Low	Low	High	High	Highest
Evaluation	High	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Good design	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest	Highest

The only place where landscape architects practice was different from their clients was in their evaluation techniques. Even if the evaluation process was not what they had expected, clients did not have a problem with it. However, a majority of firms mentioned that they would like to or should do more thorough evaluations of their projects. The current evaluation techniques are as follows:

Criteria	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2	#	%
Don't request feedback					x			1	14%
Check on projects	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	100%
Don't have resources to do it formally					x		x	2	29%
Request feedback	x						x	2	14%
Formal process	x	x				x		3	43%
Internal reviews	x	x				x	x	4	57%
Always evaluating		x					x	2	29%
On client request		x	x			x	x	4	57%
Learn from mistakes		x	x	x			x	4	57%
Self-educate			x					1	14%

Chapter 6

Conclusions.

My original hypothesis that landscape architects were insensitive to their clients' needs was disproved by my research. The responses to my interviews demonstrated that landscape architects *were* considerate of their clients' opinions and diligent in understanding their needs. They communicated with them throughout the whole design process, solicit their input, and incorporated that input into their designs. The extent of client participation depended on the type of project and client, but clients were satisfied with their level of involvement. Although clients could be more involved in the later stages of design, overall, responses were positive and clients were pleased with their designs and the design process.

However, if this were an ideal world, I would not draw the same conclusions. Landscape architects did *not* always include their clients and users in each stage of design despite their protests that feedback was of highest importance. Landscape architects needed to balance client wants with practical, safety, and monetary concerns. They also had to be able to persuade their client that their recommendations would make a better project than what the client proposed. They needed to streamline the feedback process in order to stay competitive. Additionally, they took some artistic license with their project and incorporated their own sense of aesthetic. Each landscape architect struck his own balance that between all of these factors. Theoretically, a landscape architect could ignore client input and focus on technical issues, or do exactly what the client wants and neglect practical concerns. Either of these paths seems easier than trying to make all of these aspects work together. The responses demonstrated that although clients and safety laws limit designers from going to extremes, the landscape architects themselves had a design ethic that drove them to consider the best design one that balanced client and user involvement, their own contribution, and the budget constraints. They felt that their job was to design environments for both clients and users to enjoy in the long run.

Although this negates my hypothesis, I feel that my incredulity was justified. Firms consistently involved clients in their design processes, but their techniques were not well developed and formalized. Among the landscape architects who agreed to be interviewed about this topic, many had a difficult time articulating the process they used to gather input from their clients. They had a tendency to change the subject when asked for more details on *how* they communicated with their clients. Several interviewees were not familiar with some of the more common client practices mentioned in Hester's work or ones that I had heard about in previous interviews. In general, the landscape architects

did not seem to be aware of the different techniques that could help them improve their interactions with clients and users.

In addition, the landscape architects were self-critical about many aspects of design, but they did not review their client and user interaction processes. Each landscape architect had a fairly rigorous evaluation process that involved return visits to sites to observe how successful their designs were in terms of material durability and human interactions. Yet while they had good personal relationships with their clients, only two mentioned that they would ask their client what they felt about their design. These were the only firms that asked for client feedback in their evaluation process. The landscape architecture literature does not provide resources to landscape architects to learn about social analysis methods that could be applied to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their interactions with their clients and users.

Nevertheless, the landscape architect interviewees did have a consistent, well-defined framework for working with clients. One hundred percent of firms agreed that it was good practice to provide clients with logical guidance and education to allow them to make informed decisions. They also felt that a consistent two-way dialogue and good communication skills were a must. Finally, firms placed great emphasis on building and maintaining client relationships. These principals were expressed in their own design approaches and produced successful designs that satisfied their clients and brought them return business.

My results do not allow me to directly judge user satisfaction. However, five of the seven firms interviewed indicated that user feedback produced a better design. They specifically considered user needs, yet the majority did not advocate for user involvement on a regular basis. Two firms do not involve users in their design process at all. These were the type B firms that catered to the development industry, which has a reputation for being inconsiderate of public opinion. Landscape architects, especially those working in these types of firms, have an opportunity to advocate for more public involvement in the design process. They could actively suggest user involvement because, while clients have the final say, they respect and consider landscape architects' recommendations. By so doing, landscape architect will also be able to address issues raised by users from the beginning. Therefore, I conclude that while clients are sufficiently involved in the design process, users may not be.

I feel this research opportunity has been a great learning experience and has made me feel more confident about joining the landscape architecture profession in the near future. I am encouraged to find such caring, open-minded people in my profession. I hope that my research motivates landscape architects to think about how their client and user practices impact the quality of their designs.

My lingering question is, why were we not taught about how to interact with client and users the landscape architecture program? Perhaps, as many landscape architects mentioned, good client communication comes with experience. However, I feel that speaking to these firms has helped me understand the different aspects that need to be

considered when working with clients and prepared me to learn more about them in the future. My desire is that any student who reads this thesis can gain some awareness of how clients and users fit into the "real world" of landscape architecture.

Appendix A

Landscape Architect Documents.

PRELIMINARY CONTACT LETTER

To: Address
From: Sonia Jakse
Cornell University
BSLA candidate '07
Regarding: Request for interviews for thesis research
Date: December 17, 2006

My name is Sonia Jakse and I am a senior studying Landscape Architecture at Cornell University. I am currently working on my senior honors thesis and was wondering if you would be willing to assist me.

My thesis focuses on the communication between landscape architects and their clients. I am looking to discover how landscape architects attempt to understand their clients' needs and how these needs are incorporated into designs. I am also interested in comparing client-stated needs with needs perceived by landscape architects. I am hoping that the results of my study will be instrumental in challenging and improving interactive communications between landscape architect and client.

I am looking for practicing landscape architects to participate in this study. I am from the Cleveland area and so am particularly interested in the landscape architectural practices here. I am attempting to interview landscape architects from six firms. I hope to include two firms that specialize in projects that have more than one client, two that focus on individual clients and two that work with both individual clients and collective client projects.

If you decide to participate, you would be interviewed during the first two weeks of January. I anticipate the interview taking no more than an hour. With your permission, I would record the interview in order to obtain the most accurate transcription and attribute any responses published to you. Your responses will be published as part of my undergraduate honors thesis under the approval of the Cornell University Department of Landscape Architecture, but your name and information will be kept confidential. You may still participate in the study without being recorded, if you so choose.

During the interview, we'll discuss two typical projects that demonstrate how you

communicate with your client, along with some general questions. I am interested in specific personal experiences. If you would like, I will send an outline of the questions I would be asking ahead of time.

I also intend to interview the clients of the projects we discuss to assess landscape architect-client communication from the clients' viewpoint. I need your help to do this. If you agree to the study, I would forward you a brief letter to send to clients who you think might be willing to participate in my study. They would respond back to me if they choose to participate.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Sonia Jakse
Cornell University
BSLA candidate '07

Primary Researcher Contact   Research   Advisor   Contact
Information: Information:

INTERVIEW PROMPTS FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT INTERVIEWS

Questions are prompts only and may be modified depending on the circumstances of the interview. Some questions are follow-ups depending on the response.

I.   Design process
    A.   Here I'd like you to explain how you work. I'll want to know things like:
        1.   How do you get a commission?
        2.   How do you proceed during an initial client contact?
        3.   How do you come up with a design concept?
        4.   How do you go from concept to final design?
        5.   When do you present designs to clients?
        6.   What happens after you have finished a design?
        7.   Are you involved in the construction?
        8.   Do you evaluate your work? How?
    B.   I would also like to know; what is the most important factor to consider when designing?

II.   Clients-here are some more specific questions on how you work with your clients. Some of these may have already been answered in the first part, so we'll skip them.
    A.   How do you define a client?
    B.   Are clients' needs important when putting together a design?
        1.   How do you assess them?
        2.   Does this get incorporated into the design? How?
    C.   What about clients' wants?
        1.   Are they different from needs?
        2.   How do you assess them?
        3.   Does this get incorporated into the design? How?
    D.   Have you ever had a project where there were other 'non-clients' who would be using the site?
        1.   Did you involve them in the design process?
        2.   How?
    E.   Does the size of a project or number of clients affect how clients are involved? Example?
    F.   Have you ever come across clients that have a hard time expressing what they need?
    G.   Are there some clients who know too well what they need, or that have so many needs that not all of them will work onsite?
    H.   Have you ever had to deal with conflicting needs when dealing with multiple clients? Explain.
    I.   Do you request client feedback after a design is completely installed?
    J.   Was there a particular project that you feel was especially successful?
    K.   Was there a project that you feel was particularly challenging?

III.   Selected projects-It is important to have concrete examples of how your process works in practice. I ask you to think about two completed and installed

projects that you feel comfortable talking about. Here are the types of questions I will be asking

A. Project A
  1. Can you tell me about this project? How did it begin?
  2. I will be looking for specifics such as
     a. Where it is installed
     b. # Designers involved
     c. # Clients involved
     d. Were there other users? How many?
     e. How long it took
     f. How many meetings w/ clients/users or how often did you communicate
     g. What client/user needed; was it incorporated
     h. What client/user wanted; was it incorporated
  3. Was there any part of the project that was particularly challenging? Successful and smooth?
  4. How do you feel about the project as a whole?

B. Project B
  1. I'll be looking at the same type of specifics as project A.
  2. Was this project different from project A?

IV. Conclusion
  A. Why did you pick these two particular projects?
  B. In your experience, what is the best way to work with clients? Why?
  C. Why did you sit for this interview?

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to complete this form because you have expressed interest in participating in an interview-based study on communication between landscape architects and their clients. Please read the following carefully and ask any questions you may have before signing.

Goals of this study:

1. Discover how practicing landscape architects attempt to understand their clients' needs and wants.

2. Compare client-stated needs with needs perceived by landscape architects.

3. Understand how the clients' needs are incorporated into designs.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication between landscape architects and their clients to produce best practice recommendations.

What you will be asked to do:
The researcher will ask you to set aside no more than an hour for an interview. The interview will ask questions based on the attached interview outline. Questions may be adjusted to fit the circumstances of the interview. Responses will be published as part of an undergraduate honors thesis under the approval of the Cornell University Department of Landscape Architecture. All participation is anonymous. You will be provided a copy of the transcript and relevant sections of research to review during a two-week window of time. During this window please inform me of any concerns with the presentation of your responses so I may make the appropriate changes. Also, with your permission, I would like to record the interview so that I may collect the most accurate information. Audio recordings will be archived once the work has been published.

Any responses that you give in this interview are a gift to the academia and those reading the publications. There will be no direct benefits to you, however, I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the final report. It is my hope that this report will help improve communication between landscape architects and their clients.

Questions and concerns: *I do not anticipate any risks to you during your participation in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.*

If there are any questions in the interview that make you feel uncomfortable, you are not required to answer them. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions before, during, or after the study, please contact the primary researcher:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the University Committee on Human Subjects (UCHS) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Compliance/UCHS/homepageUCHS.htm.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study. I consent to allow my responses to be published as outlined above.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview recorded.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

❏ I would like to receive a copy of the finished thesis.

Thank you.

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the UCHS on December 15, 2006.

Appendix B

Client Documents.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

<div align="right">January 3, 2007</div>

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Sonia Jakse and I am a senior studying Landscape Architecture at Cornell University. I am currently working on my senior honors thesis and was wondering if you would be willing to help me. I am looking for clients of landscape architectural firms to participate in this study.   You are receiving this letter because you have recently completed a project with a landscape architectural firm. The landscape architect who you worked with, thought that you might be willing to help me. He/she is forwarding this letter to you. I will/do not have any of your contact information unless you give it to me yourself. Any information provided will be used only for the academic purposes of this study.

My thesis, entitled, Opportunities and Challenges in Landscape Architect and Client Communication, focuses on the communication between clients and landscape architects. I am looking to discover how landscape architects attempt to understand their clients' needs and how these needs are incorporated into designs. I am also interested in comparing client-stated needs with needs perceived by landscape architects. I am hoping that the results of my study will encourage landscape architects to evaluate and improve their client communications.

If you decide to participate, you would be interviewed regarding your experience working with landscape architects. I will send an outline of the type of questions I would be asking ahead of time for your approval.

I anticipate the interview taking no more than an hour. Responses confidential will be published as part of my undergraduate honors thesis under the approval of the Cornell University Department of Landscape Architecture. With your permission, I would record the interview in order to get the most accurate transcription. You may still participate in the study without being recorded, if you so choose. I will also be interviewing the landscape architect that you worked with to get feedback from both sides of the relationship.

If you are interested participating, please contact me or simply send the enclosed slip back to me and I will contact you. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Sonia Jakse
Cornell University
BSLA candidate '07

Primary Researcher Contact Information:

Research Advisor Contact Information:

CLIENT RESPONSE SLIP

I am willing to be contacted regarding the interview process for your honors thesis. The best way to contact me is via (circle one) email/telephone/USPS.

Please fill in one or more of the following:

Email address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Signature:_____

Appendix C

Landscape Architect Interview Summaries.

Interviewee: Sales representative A_0
Date: December 28, 2006
Firm: A
Size: 40-50 Employees
Project types: Residential, some commercial and development
Time: 1:08:54

00:00 Introduction

00:38 Process overview
- Concepts
- Sign contract
- Design installation
- Master Plan
- Act like "owner's agent"

02:00 Unique process
- Two heads are better then one
- Think out of box
- Prevent tunnel vision
- Makes for big design charrette

03:00 Marketing
- Networking
- Advertising
- Help with fundraisers

03:49 Initial meeting
- Bring portfolio of projects
- "…we have like a questionnaire that we put together and it's like four 8.5x11 sheets pages long. And really what it is, it's not really a list of questions, it's really like points of interest that we know people have, … so we can kind of get to know them as a client."
- Questions about their lifestyle
- See what kind of things they are drawn to in what I show them
- Incorporate their answers into recommendations
- Tour their yard and get them to talk

11:00 Design is fun
- See someone else's interpretation
- Clients have fun
- "This is a leisure type business, and it's kind of nice, … no one's going to be seriously hurt or stressed out or affected by their landscape, because it can only, well not only, but for the most part only give you a positive effect, which is nice. So it's kind of stress free."

12:00 Questionnaire questions
- Always revising
- Make sure you don't miss anything
- Refer back to if people change their minds or you get on the wrong path
- "…you can always refer back and say, you know, we're not going to live here. We're not going to be the ones experiencing this landscape all the time. Let's go back and see what it is they actually wanted here. And so sometimes you have to go back, look at the questionnaire, look at your notes, and say, you know, we're kind of off track. I don't think we're going down the same path that they want us to. It's nice to kind of keep you on track, and also fill you in on all the things that they want to be able to do."

14:00 Contract and Cost estimate

15:23 First feedback
- After site study and get concept
- Try to get feedback
- Ask and answer questions
- "And sometimes they'll have comments right away. Usually not, because they're not used to looking at that and understanding it. I also will have … a couple perspective sketches of sort of things that I know ware important to them, or that would really communicate how the bird's eye view works, and sort of an idea of how it's going to end up looking. And that kind of helps out too because most of the time they like those because they're just impressed by the drawing, but you can't be fooled by that because the drawings are impressive, but that doesn't mean they're going to like the space they end up with. So I try to make sure that, just because the sketch is nice, that they actually like the design, and we can always redraw, things to help communicate it. So I try to make them think about the design, and say, well look, this is just the concept, this is not, this doesn't have to be how it is, it can be, if you really like it, and don't see any problems with it, we can just finalize this, or we can make revision."
- Give time to look, then follow up

17:34 Final phase
- Revision

- Details
- Permits
- Do not sell bid documents or construction administration because we do the construction

19:13 Cost and contract

20:56 Frequency of client contact
- Three meetings minimum
- "…at any time where we thing feel we have something to present them to get feedback on, then we keep them involved, because obviously they're the most important part of the whole design process. So you know, what's the point in hiring somebody if you're not doing it *for* somebody? You know, if we're not keeping them in mind when we're doing the, the design then what's the point of the whole thing? I mean, they could just email us their property and we could come up with a final design and that would be it. And that's not good design at all. We need to take their needs into account."
- "…so it never hurts to call and get feedback from clients. You know, you can't be afraid to call them, you know, because they're people like you and me and they just want to be, be kept involved. Even if things aren't going well for whatever reason, just keeping them informed and letting them know…"

23:00 Telephone effect
- Need to be there to explain designs
- Get people on the same page

23:58 Most important thing to do to help client understand design
- Take them someplace similar
- Explain verbally
- Plans and perspectives
- 3-D rendering
- Pictures from magazines
- "And it's obviously, there's a little leap of faith, because every project is different so it's not like buying a Mercedes. It's a lot easier to say, well, here's the Mercedes and here's the Honda, you know, which one do you like better? But obviously people will like the Mercedes. But when you're selling something that doesn't exist yet, or you're trying to get people to understand something that doesn't exist yet, you have to use the closest examples possible."

26:44 Commercial projects
- Go to places they reference
- More experienced clients

- Do research
- The best is to go and look at real projects

29:30 How much is too much?
- "…they know what they'd like to see, but you know how to get it for them and basically what you should do, is don't let them tell you that they want, you know, I want this patio to be blady blah, and I want this space…you need the concepts from them. And your job as a landscape architect is to translate that concept that they want…"

30:11 Hospital project example

31:51 Successful project
- "Cause that really what defines I think, a successful landscape, is whether or not people are using it and whether it achieved it, the main concept that people, that they wanted for it."
- Spaces people enjoy

32:32 Thinking of end users
- Keep in mind all possible users

33:40 Aesthetic fit

34:50 End users
- "You're always worried about, you know, who may come and use it, especially if it's a public space."
- Also consider users in residential setting
- All "stakeholders"

35:36 Example of surveying end users

36:45 Example of informal poll

37:54 Involve stakeholders whenever you think you should

38:11 Alternate ideas
- Present multiple designs in addition to the one that is exactly what they said
- Ask about significant monetary additions
- Seeing alternatives is the fun part

41:00 Communicating with the designer
- Use contract
- Use initial meeting notes
- Use questionnaire

- Talk over on site study
- Diagrammatic plans
- Charrette/argument "…and you can disagree and other people might have a better idea. As long as you can admit that, and if you can't then you shouldn't be doing designs.
- Agree on direction
- Show pictures the client might give

44:20 Managing projects

45:28 Encouraging client to talk

47:19 Clients that know what they want
- Put in extra work to show them different ideas

49:28 Importance of alternative approaches
- Catch things you didn't think of
- Is a problem for some design-build companies who have one person doing everything
- "I mean, you have to be pretty conceited to know exactly what these people want, and you're going to give it to them in one shot, or … that thing they told them is going to drive you because you know you can, well, you know you can sell it because it's exactly what they wanted, but whether or not you think it's the best design ever, it's kind of secondary. So I think that when you give somebody a different, look at it … you can only make it better. And they can turn it down. And that's fine. Maybe that's what they wanted and that's fine and they're happy and the main thing is that they're happy. But we should at least give them an opportunity to look at a different perspective on their idea to see if they like that one better. And you know, … usually it's a combination of the new thing, and what they wanted before, so they feel like they still knew what they wanted, but we added our little bit to it. And you know, that's the design process. So I think it's always good to get second opinions and get other people involved. Usually only good, good ideas can come out of it."

51:30 Installation
- Work with strengths and weaknesses of crews
- Help with client change orders

55:28 Example of a smooth project
- "…whenever there's a lot of communication and everyone's working toward the main goal, and the client understands what they're getting. I mean it's all about communication, the better communication, the better. The ones that don't go so well, it's basically because at some point the client got confused or didn't know what was going on or didn't understand

something. And that could be my fault or it could be somebody else's fault in the field or whatever, or both. And when it's both it's really bad."

56:45 Example of a challenging project

58:29 Evaluation
- "Depending, we don't evaluate every one but we'll pick. Frank, who runs the field, is in charge of picking a project… I'll have to rate the designer on the project and the project manager on the project. And the project manager rates me and the designer, and the designer rates me and the project management. …and then we have a we'll have these things that we call project manager meetings, where we'll discuss these kinds of things like what happened on this project? Why did it go well and why didn't it? What did you learn on it? What's new? What materials look good together? Stuff like that. So we do, we always evaluate. And we also send out quality audits, we call them, for our customers to fill out. And they have pretty straightforward questions on them, like how was your experience with the field staff? or the office staff? …would you recommend us? What do you like the best about your project?"
- WOW competition for WOW's said during feedback

01:00:10 Key to working with clients
- "So the more you talk with people, the more you learn from them, the more you get where they're coming from. People respect you if you're open with them and you're honest and you don't you don't try to hide anything whether it's big or small. I mean just be up front and let them know and keep people involved. So I would say communication is easily the first. And then … you can't be an introvert if you're a designer. I suppose you could and create some sort of an enigma around yourself, but there aren't that many people who do that. …unless you're like, super, super-talented or something like that, you can't go into your own little corner and then expect people to realize your genius because most of the time you die before anyone realizes how good you were like all the famous painters, so you know, who wants that? So what you have to do is, you have to like people; you have to like to talk to them, and you have to like to help people. So if you're more of a team player than an individual player, then you're going to do well in design because what you're trying to do is help other people out. You never know who you're helping out either. It may be that something you put in made somebody's day better on that particular day, or maybe something pretty profound, like maybe someone lost a loved one and somehow you were able to comfort them while they sat in the space you designed or built. And that's pretty fulfilling. And a lot of times you don't really know about that, so you kind of have to imagine it, but a lot of times people will write you and tell you, and that's great."
- Get letters from people

- Want to help people achieve their goals
- Be happy for other people

01:0306 Good design
- Things that fit
- "It's really hard because it's like a feeling; it's like a notion you get."
- Take surroundings into account
- Achieves the feel that the client wanted
- "I think it's a combination of things that make it feel right making it a successful design. It's not easy, otherwise everybody would do it."

01:06:15 Pros and con of three-way process
- Hard to streamline time
- Don't want to sacrifice quality design for time
- More expensive

01:07:04 Why sit for interview?

Interviewee: Senior Designer, A$_1$
Date: January 3, 2007
Firm: A
Size: 40-50 Employees
Project types: Residential, some commercial and development
Time: 57:53

0:00 Introduction

00:50 Different set up
- "We're kind of different here at A because we don't necessarily have direct input with the client."
- Sales representative has the contact

02:11   Initial sales representative meeting
- Questionnaire
- "…the questionnaire tries to pinpoint who that client is, what they need, and what they want."
- Sales representative represent the client
- They make the initial contact and bring the information back to the designers
- During design charettes the sales rep protects the client's wishes and controls the cost of the project to reflect the client's budget
- I give feedback

03:14 Helping a client understand their needs and wants
- "Sometimes the client has too big a want and need; sometimes the client doesn't realize what they're asking for or the potential of the places that can happen."
- Our job is to understand the clients wishes, present all possibilities, and sometimes expand the project in ways the client has not thought of before
- At the same time, we must try to keep in line with any budgets or rationalize what the client is asking for which may cost more than what the client wants to spend at the time, but could be phased in

04:18 Client wants vs. needs

05:33 Three-way input
- "The client will talk to the sales representative, the sales rep will come in and talk to us, we will refer the sales rep back to the client or sometimes we'll talk to the client directly. So it kind of becomes like a charrette between the three of us. The sales rep may be representing the dollar side of a client needs or wants, me as a designer representing the aesthetic part of the client's needs and wants and then the client being the one that has the emotional tie."

- By breaking down the client's wishes into dollars and phases their wants and needs are prioritized

06:08 Site study
- Define site potentials and problems
- Photograph
- Measuring
- Base plan
- Understand site

08:32 After doing the site study and analyzing the project, you start to get a vision of the project's potential

[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- The base puts areas in perspective
- Job is further defined and priorities pinpointed during the site study
- Priorities become evident as base is finished and preliminary designs are formulating
- Preliminary estimates help further refine any phases, allow for sequence of future construction]

- Best ideas are usually the first ones
- I get help from my co-workers
- "And then once you get that idea on paper that makes sense and that looks logical, and you can throw color on it enough to make it readable to the client… It doesn't have to be finished, but it has to have a theme or a sense of logic to it. You can take it back that client and that client can start to say, yeah that's what I was looking for, or no it wasn't, but that preliminary that you take to the client needs to be in some form of an agreed finished state that the client would understand."

11:22 Helping the client understand the design

[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- Photos of proposed plant material; photos of proposed materials- concrete, pavers, stone, etc.; photos of similar design ideas are helpful for the client to visualize
- The designers must first sell the Sales Rep the vision so that they can then in turn convey the vision to the client]

- Sketches overlaid on photographs
- Don't understand plan views
- Examples
- Perspectives
- Do not personally explain, sales representative does

14:03 Design designs itself

- Rely on existing conditions
- "So your sales rep doesn't totally direct you, the client doesn't totally direct you as a designer, I'm not directing what's going on in the yard, … it's that input from all three that helps make it work. If any one part is too strong I think it gets very frustrating."
- Need to set limitations

00:00 Lack of feedback

[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- Priorities become evident as You have to make decision based upon how you would like to use or see the space; treat it like you were living there]

- "…if I don't get good feedback from the sales rep about the client and I don't have any limitations or restrictions, it's kind of like swimming in that ocean and you don't know where the shore is."

00:31 Limitations on open field

02:06 Help client understand the design
- As much information as possible

03:11 Educate client
- "And as [our owner] always said, you've got to educate the client all along the way what you're doing for them. …that way they start to get onboard and see that vision that you've got in your head. Or the sales rep has got in his head from you. Hopefully."

03:44 Multiple designs give options

05:00 Master plan incorporates ideas from all three parts of the discussion
[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- But Master plan doesn't select specific material, which gives you budget flexibility
- Can make the project more expensive or less expensive depending upon if you choose stone or concrete.]

- "…one more idea that incorporates the client's feedback the sales rep's feedback, from the client's response, and ideas that you see happening, merging all those together."

05:34 After master plan

[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- Final Drawings are created but not construction documents

- Major decisions have to be made now that will finalize the cost estimate and pinpoint exactly what is going to be done]

  - Cost estimate
  - Details
  - Permits

06:27 Meadow example

07:15 Design finished on implementation

08:15 Evaluation
[Additional comments May 10, 2007:
- Evaluate your work depending upon how well things sell. Evaluate your work when you go out to see things…no that is not what I had pictured…
- Evaluate garden as it matures and what it looks like years later…did it thrive on it's own? Can it win an award?]

  - Constant self-evaluation

09:48 Other outside work that involved feedback

11:41 "The client is the one that pays."
- If you can't contact the client or user you need a representative

12:33 Most important factor in design
- Must have a reason to do it

13:15 Feedback during busy times
- "So you may be working on two projects a day and you fire them out really quickly, …you don't have the time to get engaged in each one of those little ones.
- "…if it's a heavy workload and we got to do twenty jobs in two weeks, the feedback is quick, and fast, and not as often as you probably should have. Right now our workload is light, but our projects are huge and so our feedback can be daily, twice a day with the client rep, but [it's] hard to reach the client."

16:31 Large jobs pose many technical questions

17:13 Oak tree example

19:15 Large vs. small jobs

19:35 Client feedback
- During and after design

- "Our feedback is cut back somewhat." ... "My feedback is filtered now."
- Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't
- "It insulates you in some ways from anything that goes wrong -- you don't have to face the client. So you don't have to bear the brunt of all the issues that come forth in design construction, but you also don't get to share in that relationship that develops with the client all the time. So the relationship develops between me and the sales rep then."
- "I would rather face a client with a team beside me then as an individual. I think that's why I chose this position."
- Feel I get a good understanding of what is going on
- Clients wouldn't be happy if we weren't doing a good job

22:38 Straightforward emotional connections make design easier
- Residential vs. institutional

24:50 Compromise example

27:11 Successful design
- Happy client
- Cared for over time
- Little successes throughout the process

29:00 Challenging design
- "I think the commercial ones where you don't have individuals' feedback."

00:00 Challenging design, cont.
- "...new ones where you don't have a personal client, you have a client representative."
- Use what you think

02:06 Example cont.

00:00 Example cont.

04:30 Best way to work with clients
- "...work with them. Don't tell them what to do, don't wait for them to tell you what to do; work with them. Now I don't know, it seems to me that some of the greatest designers and architects that get recognition, they're all very forceful and demanding, but I think the best project comes along when you work with somebody. You make concessions, because things can't always be the way you want them. ... I've seen cases where somebody with a real strong personality tries to make what they want happen on the job and some clients will let you do that, but I don't always think that's the most successful design. ...that's working with people,

with the area, with the environment, with the plants, with the dollars. It's all part of a teamwork. That's what I like."

06:15 Why sit for interview?

Interviewee: Project Landscape Architect
Date: December 26, 2006
Firm: B1
Size: 9-100 Employees
Project types: Mainly development, commercial
Time: 1:42:06

00:00 Introduction

01:00 Start a project
- Client gives program for site
- "… the way we work with the client is: they give us a program of what they want, and then, beyond that, we work off the program."
- Work with client to develop program
- Rely on industry standards

3:40 Example concepts
- Relate to different aspects of a site
- Relate to program

7:00 Budget restrictions
- Work to help client spend less money
- Conform to city requirements
- Money and budget sells ideas

11:12 Example of how a concept is incorporated

12:27 Selling concepts to clients
- Graphics
- "…if you sell your concept enough, then the client is going to say, well, I like that."
- Example of how to sell concepts

16:20 Office charrettes
- Includes all the landscape architects in the office

17:40 Presentations are mostly conceptual

18:06 Designing to budget
- "…these projects it's all about making the client money.

18:54 Advocating green design with financial logic.

20:02 Most important thing to consider in design
- "I think on the landscape design on a project it's the overall image of the project."

- Attractive local projects

21:45 Work with landscape installer

22:20 Bidding

24:00 Construction supervision
- Report back to client

26:55 Punch list

27:33 Driving directions to nearby project

28:58 Post-construction visits and maintenance follow-up
- Go when in the area
- Keep an eye on maintenance
- Mention issues to landscaper

32:00 Personal relationships
- "…the client-landscape architect relationship is really important. I'm close with all my clients, and some of them are really good friends and some of them call and request me to work on their project. It feels good when it's the right client."

32:23 Client base

34:09 Considering retailer's needs

39:00 Exhibit drawings

43:49 City requirements

44:12 Chain of consideration
- City ->developer->larger stores->smaller stores

44:45 Cities' attitudes toward development

49:16 Representing clients
- Office may represent multiple clients on a project

52:16 Effects of project size
- Both small and large projects can be needy
- Each client thinks that their project is most important

54:44 Answering questions about the project
- Contractors

- Be sure you already have the answers and documentation

57:28 Explaining project and standards
- "..we do the same type of projects all of the time,…we come in as the expert at that and help them, walk them through it basically, teaching them about their project."
- Explain how things have worked in the past
- Clients also know how things work
- Back and forth

01:01:04 Working with evolving industry needs
- Little extras
- "I think that the client needs to come to us early on about situations and tell us what there needs are. They know what their needs are better then we do a lot of times."
- Learn new things and apply them to the next project
- We have some stuff written down about what to ask a client

01:03:37 Stakeholder meeting
- "One thing that worked well on one project was a meeting full of people from different aspects, their maintenance people, their leasing people, our people, some of the engineers. They just said, everybody sit down for a few minutes and write out a wish list of what you want on this project, how you want things to work. …it's a way of getting everything out on the table early. And there's always going to be something that is overlooked. That happens."
- Try not to miss anything. Write it down

01:05:28 Background research

01:08:20 Community amenities
- Help make the project lucrative and benefit the community
- "…it's our job, as well as the developers'."

01:12:13 Clients want something that you don't approve
- "We do address it, but we're not sneaky about it or anything. We just keep telling them our recommendations."
- Cover ourselves for liability

01:13:09 Client wants vs. needs

01:15:37 Client feedback
- Ask for it on the whole project

01:16:05 Representation

- Plans
- Sketch-up
- "…there's not a lot of sketches and stuff that get done that are just internal. If you feel it's valuable enough to draw, then you're usually using it to relay your ideas to the client."
- Photographs
- Orientation that is easy to understand

01:23:50 Returning to the site
- Sometimes go back
- Make recommendations to landscaper

01:24:57 Evaluation
- Recent meeting with all studios working on "open-air lifestyle centers
- "What do you think worked well on this project? What did you think didn't work well? What did you like? What didn't you like?"
- Keep from making multiple mistakes
- Share information
- Everyone is always evaluating each project

01:27:27 Early feedback
- Can suit design to needs
- Do not want "Band-Aids"

01:30:13 Check out how things work in field

01:32:47 Project duration

01:34:43 Client contact depends how busy the project is

01:35:00 City presentation

01:36:08 Contact with stakeholders
- "… I know the client direct lines, they know mine, they call me when they need something."
- Depends on the client
- Many emails

01:37:24 Smooth project example
- Good coordination in construction

01:40:00 Nothing hard about it

01:42:24 Big vs. Small project
- Many more people are in on larger projects to coordinate

- Easier to miss information on larger projects
- Need to have everyone together to make a decision

01:44:40 Check time

01:45:11 Reason for examples

01:46:43 Most important thing dealing with clients
- People skills
- "…being able to express yourself and listen to them. A lot of people out there don't want to listen, they just want to talk. And I've seen plenty of that, where you go into a meeting and there's one guy just going. And, after a while, nobody's listening to him."
- Documentation so you don't get sued

01:49:28 Why sit for interview?

01:50:41 Conclusion

Interviewee: Landscape architect project manager
Date: December 26, 2006
Firm: B2
Size: 10-15 Employees
Project types: Mainly development
Time: 1:18:08

00:00 Introduction

02:29 Get contacts from the boss

03:27 Return clients
- Know what they're looking for

04:03 Initial contact

05:19 New client
- Explain service
- Find out what they're looking for, where they're coming from
- Give options if they don't know what to do

08:00 Confusion between the several project managers a client may have

09:11 What an educated client brings to a project
- Usually well-researched
- Let them know what is practical
- "So it's a matter of steering them in the right direction, saying what you're doing here is great but, we think that you may want to consider this, this, and this. And so it's kind of a back and forth kind of thing."

11:55 Preliminary plan
- Streamline by internet
- Bounce ideas back and forth three or four times

13:13 Financial concerns
- Clients focused on bottom line
- Won't buy into the best design ever if it doesn't meet the budget

15:00 Balance between bottom line and good design
- Clients all about bottom line
- Should want something to be proud of

17:29   Exemplary development company

18:46 Balance between bottom line and good design

- "…a project that may be done just to meet the bottom line … may not be the best design in the world. A lot of those end up failing because they're not a project that somebody would really like to go visit and …stores open for so long and [then it] closes because it's not a notable project."
- Want something company can be proud of
- "…if somebody came in and just really totally wanted something that would just be absolutely horrible and everybody knew it would be horrible, but still wanted it anyway, would I do it? …If it was a client that we deal with all the time, then yeah, you're working for him and you're trying to maintain good client relationships, and you're going to do what the client wants, but there's also that ethic that is also involved to try and steer them away from doing bad stuff."

22:04 Client education
- Explain processes
- "And in a lot of cases it's, it's tough to take work like that because you know it's going to take a lot longer to do the work than if it was with a client who really knows what he's doing. Things go much smoother with a client who knows what he's doing. We always kind of hesitate to take those projects. We don't want to turn away work, but it's, it's tough to take those because in the end it always ends up being, not always, but in most cases, ends up being more headache then it's worth."

23:12 Example of a difficult project

26:26 Another example of a difficult project

27:49 How to educate client
- Show pictures
- Past examples and show why it was done that way
- "…we'll create little booklets when we're working on plans, especially if they [the clients] haven't worked on a project before. The booklet will consist of all the information that we put together and a little narrative of where we found all the information. … So those booklets are very helpful for somebody who doesn't understand the process. And they can just flip through it at their own leisure and understand why we're doing what we're doing. Because if you just give somebody a plan, and say, "here you go," who has no idea why it's done that way, he'll look at it and say, why can't we move this over here? Move this over here? If I give him the booklet they'll say, oh, that's why they put that there."
- Write dates on a calendar

31:29 City approvals
- "…a lot of times there's not a whole lot of communication that goes on during that time. Sometimes the clients want to be really involved in the process, um where they'll actually attend the meetings with us and there's

some clients that actually will attend the meetings instead of us. But we always like to be at the meetings just so we kind of know what's going on.

36:04 Construction
- Client involvement varies
- "And a lot of them, they don't really want to deal with the whole process of things and so it's just a matter of keeping them up to speed. Where on the flip side, it's a matter of just providing the drawings for the client and having him do what he needs to do after that. And just basically whenever he runs into an issue, he gives us a call and we give him the answer."

37:26 Defining project completion

39:07 Follow-up evaluation
- Visit sites periodically
- Notify client of anything wrong when I stop by

40:16 Evaluation
- Punch list
- Visiting places
- "…it's important to do that stuff because each project you want to do a better job. I don't usually go way out of my way to look at things on a schedule, but if I'm in the area, I always try and look at projects that we've done in the past to see how they're doing."

41:38 Most important factor
- Making sure client's happy
- On schedule
- Bend over backwards when needed

42:18 Stakeholders to consider
- Builder
- Developer rules over all stakeholders as our client
- Utility companies
- Conservation companies
- Regulatory agencies
- Historical society

49:23 Example of a successful project
- Client knows what they're doing
- There's good coordination

50:32 Difficult projects
- Too many people with their hands in the cookie jar
- Cumbersome

52:00 City regulations make modern development difficult

54:15 Educating on cluster development

58:43 Working example

01:06:14 Client contact
- "Some clients really like to be involved in the process and you're hearing from them daily when things are really going on. There's other client that just really trust us and they'll give their input and step back. And they expect us to take care about the details for them. And as far as meetings with the client go, sometimes it's just a matter of having an initial meeting with them, and a few kind of sporadic meetings as needed throughout the process of the development."
- "…some of the small-scale projects, they're in and out so fast you don't really deal with the client a whole lot, just the beginning and the end."

01:08:14 Too much communication

01:11:00 Effects of client input
- "There's some clients that, if you have more input and you're meeting with them a lot, it can actually make things go smoother. But there's some clients where it can be completely opposite, where dealing with them on a more regular basis can just slow things down and kind of muck things up because if they don't have the quite the understanding of what needs to happen, it can make it quite difficult. Where in some cases, it's easier to let us do what we know how to do. So the amount of meetings does definitely affect how a project goes and how much communication… I guess you can't have too much communication, you know, letting them know what's going on, but it also takes time to communicate with them as well."

01:12:46 Example of good communication

01:14:14 Best way to work with client
- Keep in loop
- Keep to what they originally intended
- Pay attention to what they're looking for
- Help direct them
- Present different options
- Constant contact

01:16:15 Why sit for interview?

Interviewees: Principal
Date: December 27, 2006
Firm: C1
Size: 10-12 Employees
Project types: Public sector; specifically no development
Time: 1:10:28

00:00 Introduction

01:00 Requests for Proposals
- Client will spell out exactly what the project is
- Give supporting credentials and fee proposals

3:11 Not clearly defined projects
- "…when we get hired to do a project, but the project is not well-defined: …we will go through a series of meetings where we will extract the information from them as to what they want or what they think they want. And a lot of times we will get them to put together a steering committee of interested individuals that will be representatives from the owner of the project, but it will also include the end user group and people who have to maintain whatever it is that needs to be designed."

4:03 Example of committee

6:25 Consultant to architect
- Double check needs with client

7:29 Getting proposal

09:35 Determining client needs
- Ask questions

10:34 Budget restrictions
- Many clients want more than the budget can allow
- Get clients to narrow down what is really important
- Break it down into phases
- Put out alternate bids

14:00 Outline first stages of work with clients
- "…the client could be one person, or the client could be a committee of thirty-two. So one of the things we do early on is try to identify a core group that will make the decisions and work with that group. And we try to give them logical choices …and say you can do it this way or this way and that. And we'll go through a series of presentations: conceptual design, master plan, preliminary design … we'll give them multiple options…So the final plan usually ends up as a hybrid of a lot of the

earlier ideas. And then we'll take what they liked out of plan A and what they liked out of B and what they liked out of plan C and try to put that together into one plan."

15:35 Design logically and with the land

16:49 Make case for design moves
- "Part of what we do is trying to convince them…there are things in addition to what they want that may make sense as part of the project. And there may be things that they want that make absolutely no sense as part of the project…so what we do is we try to build a case that they can use to defend the final design..."
- Example of sledding hill
- Give them pros and cons
- Help to explain to constituency
- "So it's a process of trying to figure out how to get the client what they think they want in the best arrangement on the land available."

19:40 What they think they want and what they want
- Based on logic, what makes sense

21:33 Requests for Proposals are very clear

23:05 Take client to similar installed projects
- "So a lot of times we are involved with helping them try to figure out what it actually is that they want and need because generally we've built whatever it is they want to build…"
- Use pictures
- "So we try to show them good examples so that they have some idea when we tell them, we ought to do it this way, they have some idea of what we're talking about. Because what we find is that most clients don't read drawings very well. Sketches they're ok with, and elevations to a degree, but plans they just don't have a clue. So it's easier to show them pictures or take them to a site."

25:00 Credibility
- "… even though we've already been selected for a project, we're still trying to build credibility and trust with the client so that we can get them to the point where they feel good about recommendations that we make. ...they'll look at the body of work that we've done and say, these guys know what they're doing so if they recommend this, then this must be a reasonable way to go. And it's not that they will just absolutely accept everything we say at face value, because they won't, but what we find is that they'll still ask questions, but they're generally better questions if they've seen either the work that we've done or work that other people have done that we recognize and show them that this is a good example of

what you want to do… Once they decide that we know what we're doing, it becomes much easier."

26:07 Project phases
- Schematic design-preliminary ideas, multiple solutions
- Design development-refine design
- Construction documents
- Cost estimates
- Bidding
- Award contract
- Construction

30:13 Client input after schematic design phase
- "So you're tackling a very specific problem: the grade doesn't work between two points, or the layout of the walk isn't what the owner hoped it would be. So you have a very isolated condition that you're designing. And generally the owner doesn't really want to have any input into it other than, I don't like it the way it is; make it work."
- "…generally, once you have the decided on all the things that will be in the plan, that's where the owner's real input stops. They know they're going to have these ten components in the park or in the project and as long as they're there…the owner really isn't interested in design once the schematic design is agreed upon."

33:02 Client determines user involvement
- Depends on the personalities
- Sometimes strong dominant personality and no involvement, sometimes clients are more open to including others

34:00 Multiple client making decisions
- Make it a bit more difficult
- "…the only thing that they all agree on is that they want to do this project."
- Poll for levels of importance to get decisions made

37:00 Come up with questions for user with main client and/or people in the office

37:14 Example of committee process
- Client identified committees
- Orientation meeting
- Second meeting answered questions and asked users three main questions about project
- Third meeting summarizes answers to questions and presents solutions
- Forth meeting finalizes

44:02 End user
- Get input indirectly through representatives
- Input varies depending on what the client wants
- "We always encourage them to get a fair representation of the people who have to manage the facility, maintain the facility and use the facility. And one of the things that we learned a long time ago was you need to get the maintenance people involved in the design."

46:12 Maintenance involved
- Get ownership
- Help keep it in better condition

49:27 Example Requests for Proposal

52:53 Example scope of services as architectural consultant
- Architect passes on client feedback to us
- We do also have client contact

56:20 Client contact frequency
- "It really varies, and it depends on the size of the project, the client, how much involvement the client wants to have, how much hand-holding the client needs. Some clients are better than others. Some are very very nervous through the whole process and they want to have a lot of meetings so they know what's going on every minute.
- Determine fees based on how much contact time there will be.

58:04 Evaluation
- Review local projects
- Generally get input from client
- "But a lot of times we will go back to projects after they've been in place for a year and we will go though it and look at what's working and what's not working, what could have been done better, and try to incorporate that into the next project of that type. And we have a habit of going back, periodically, after things have been in place to see how some details hold up."
- "We don't have any real formula or any kind of checklist. It's purely observation. …if there are people in the space, it's generally a successful project."

01:01:38 Been here for a long time so our system works

01:02:07 Selective of projects
- "But we're only really interested in working for people who value design and are looking to do a quality design and that, so we're somewhat selective in who we work for. So I think we eliminate some of the potential problems."

- No developers because of their egos, dollar-driven decisions and they don't want to go through design process
- Development business comes and goes

01:04:38 Difficult clients
- Ones who just want you to draw what they want
- Try to guide away from big mistakes
- "…the only problem we ever have is when we get clients who really don't want to go through the design process. They want you to draw what they have envisioned, and generally they haven't thought the project through entirely and there are problems that they had not envisioned."
- Try to help client understand their contract with contractor

01:07:25 Best way to work with clients
- Build a trust
- "…maintain an ongoing level of conversation that extracts information that you need from the client, but also gives them information that they need to be able to make informed decisions on what form the design should take and also to be able to deal with the problems that come up in the course of the project…"
- Educate clients so they don't do anything foolish.

01:09:12 Why sit for the interview?

Interviewees: Principal
Date: January 4, 2007
Firm: C2
Size: 4-5 Employees
Project types: Public, institutional, nonprofit
Time: 46:17

00:00 Introductions

00:45 Acquiring work
- Word-of-mouth
- No active marketing
- Return business

01:32   Project   types

00:00 Design Service
- "…people come to us because they need something. Ultimately we're a service industry so we want to provide services and meet the needs of the client, ultimately.

00:11 Proposal
- Based on previous discussion
- Include fees
- Process oriented levels of service
- Fair fees

02:50 Process overview
- Analysis
- Site visit for first impressions
- Programming opportunities and how they would work with site
- Sketch concepts
- Review session (s)
- Approval to proceed

05:04 Client involvement in the process
- "So every step of the way we seem to be constantly in contact with a client whether it's just an email or phone calls, if we have a question when we're designing something or at the very least face-to-face meetings on an ongoing basis -- every two to three weeks or month depending on the sophistication of the project … But we do not run off half-cocked and come up with a great idea and then try and convince the client that that's exactly what they need to do. I mean we're much more responsive than that because we are just trying to provide what the client wants in the end,

but with design expertise in a response that seems most appropriate for the specific project and the specific site."

06:00 Client meeting
- Look at drawings
- Presentation verbalizing graphics
- Contextual references
- Clients don't understand plans so illustrations in 3-D
- May show alternatives
- Note responses
- "…it's also an opportunity for the client to verify that their program is exactly what they're after because there are a lot of times they'll cite references. Oh it's something like…you know… they'll cite another project or another experience that they had somewhere. …at least we've looked at what they like and understand that there may be aspects of that project that would be appropriate for this and here's why or why not. But more often than not we're pretty responsive to exactly what the client likes or wants."

9:00 Determining client likes and wants
- References
- Maintenance
- "…yes, it takes some…intuition, I suppose, just to understand what they are inferring. But as you get to know somebody, you know, you kind of get a handle on what they're looking for or what they're after."

10:31 Client ability to express what they want
- People have background

12:23 Important questions to ask
- What is budget?
- What is schedule?
- When used?
- How used?
- Access points?
- How perceived?

14:00 First Response
- Proposal
- "And you know, for the initial meeting we don't charge anybody anything. Just go out and talk about it, look at the site and meet with them for an hour or so, Whatever it takes to get an understanding of what exactly the project is."

- "Clients will have questions about what's this mean or what's that mean, and some will just be a sort of old client … they just tell us to do it and we do it. And then we send them a bill and it's as simple as that."
- Wait on funds to implement

17:00 Bidding
- Help with the process, review bids
- "…we'll often serve as the client's representatives by attending job meetings and answering questions on the contract or on making sure the owner's happy with the project as it's constructed. So it can be an ongoing relationship."

19:07 Ongoing relationship
- "…the relationship with the client I don't think is ever done because … it's like having a child in a lot of ways. You end up having return visits to say, well this is working, and this isn't working and what should we do to correct it? Or we want to change this or that and it's sort of an ongoing relationship to adjust the specific site design to either the changing needs or the changing conditions of a site or just to fix things that didn't quite work out right. And then sometimes it's just that they want to build on it, add to it. Continue to refine it. So I think that's a lot of our work with return client is due to the fact that we are sort of thorough and available to be flexible to revisit things and then add to it as needed."

20:45 Self-evaluation
- Not on a regular basis

00:00 Contractor relationship
- Make sure design ideas are correctly interpreted

00:50 Most important factor to consider in design process
- "…a good client, I should say, is looking for the best quality that they can get for the budget that they have available so that they count on us as designers to provide them with expertise and skill that goes beyond what they can provide for themselves. So ultimately it seems as though the most important thing really is to provide the client with good, solid, direction and guidance that they can't get on their own."

02:00 Design guidance
- "Well, guidance … expertise that provides them with a valuable tools and direction really so the resources that their funds, whatever budget they have, is being spent well so that it has a longevity and a sustainability and is just something that's going to ultimately perpetuate itself and not necessarily become something you have to keep putting money into or that doesn't last and that they have to tear out and redo. …it's guidance as to

how you approach the particular need or specific site design. …guidance as the design service."

04:11 Quality Project
- Done right and built to last

05:06 Cases of multiple users, public projects
- Clients tend to speak on the behalf of the public users as they are usually elected or appointed officials

06:00 User input
- "And I think ultimately when we can get that kind of input our designs tend to be a lot more successful than if we're directed, just design and here's the program and do your best effort. Some of those projects come out in some cases lacking or not addressing some specific needs that we may not have been aware of."

06:52 Public meeting
- More eyes and ears and back and forth
- Comment and question sessions
- Formal presentations
- Notes in large format
- May break down into breakout groups to discuss specific issues
- "But ultimately it's a session where people can hear opposing points of view and share design ideas. And oftentimes some great ideas come out of those kinds of sessions. So we find them very valuable. And in certain project types it's very worthwhile and helpful."
- "…we'll suggest that it ought to happen and usually it's the client's call…"
- Mostly cities will set them up, but we do sometimes too

09:47 Questionnaires
- On-the-spot written feedback
- May take to others not at the meetings
- Want on-the-spot feedback
- What would you like to see happen?
- Opportunities or constraints?
- How do you currently use?
- What would be the idea result?

11:32 Planning for meetings
- Client might limit type of feedback from public

12:19 Opposing viewpoints
- See if there is a compromise

- "Usually we try and come up with responses on the fly but, if not, we'll just say, well, we'll look at that and consider the alternatives, you know."

13:25 Opinions matter
- "…it's mostly about letting people be heard and letting them feel that their opinions matter."
- Important because it's going to be used by the public
- Part of our responsibility

14:00 Size of projects

14:40 Client input before public's

15:06 Final feedback from client
- "…we'll hear things, but we don't formally request it because we really don't have time to keep up with it formally like that. But it's definitely very valuable when we do go back and look at what we've designed and what's been built for a couple of years and see what's worked and what hasn't…"

17:00 Successful project
- "… to me it's a little difficult to separate the success from a client standpoint vs. the success from a design standpoint and a user standpoint."
- "…in the municipal arena anyways, if the users are happy, then the client's ultimately happy unless there are some people at the service department that have to go out and do special things…"

18:35 Challenging designs can be successful if the remedy for the challenges works

19:10 The best way to work with clients
- "I think it depends on the client. You have to be flexible and ask a lot of questions and listen really well. Each client is going to be different based on who they are, what their needs are, but there's ultimately personality at work too, you have to be sensitive to, ok this person's strong personality, or passive, or whatever, looking for guidance in different ways. And I think it's somewhat determined on the specific site and your ability to work with people, to be able to listen and provide them with what they're after. And ultimately see that it's built right and that it lasts."

20:39 Why client needs are important
- "Ultimately, because we're a service industry and they're going to pay us, so we want to keep them happy so that we get paid. I mean that's first and foremost why we're doing it for clients vs. doing it just of the heck of it."

21:33 Why sit for interview

Interviewees: Principal
Date: December 29, 2006
Firm: D1
Size: 4-5 Employees
Project types: Wide range
Time: 1:06:51

0:00 Introduction

00:50 Acquire work
- Began by marketing ourselves
- Word-of-mouth

02:14 Proposals
- Detail scope of work after reviewing it with the client
- Set fees

04:40 Client knows
- "…they do know what they want to be done, but there may be some additional things added or even deleted..."
- Sometimes want more than budget allows

07:07 Conceptual design
- Proposal accepted
- Multiple concepts
- Review concepts with client
- Revise based on conversations

08:42 Explaining ideas
- Trash sketches
- Schematic plans

09:25 City meetings
- "…we'll throw in a lot of background information where we can guide a person through how we got to the design, especially like a city council or something where they don't know anything about how you arrived at the design, … we can guide them through the process again … if they know the whole process then it kind of reinforces our idea."
- Clients may more may not want to be involved in the meetings

11:30 Preferred contact types
- Face-to-face
- Email
- FedEx
- "For the most part, we'll sit down and unroll the drawings or whatever we have to do and the documents and go over issues or meet with them."

12:30 City approval process

14:15 Construction administration
- Shop drawings
- Site visits
- Answer questions from contractors
- Contact owner

16:51 Client Involvement
- "…we keep the client involved throughout the process …we need constant feedback…"

18:38 Feedback
- "Most cases than not and sometimes more than what the owner wants to give ya."

20:19 Getting upfront feedback
- Think through process
- Be logical
- Experience helps
- Know your client
- "So we knew their process, how they want to see it, all their inner workings … because we'd done projects for them before. …it becomes somewhat second nature, where you know what they want, and the client will come to you because they know that you know what they want."

22:43 Evaluation
- Yearly as a firm
- Sometimes do walkthroughs with client to protect him from shoddy construction

24:35 Most important factor
- Do it right
- Health, safety and welfare
- Aesthetics
- Giving the client what he expects

25:45 Effect of project size

28:00 Example of library
- Communication front-loaded in a smaller project
- More constant, consistent communication in a larger project

30:06 People with whom you might work on a project

33:00 City approvals

34:13 Public meetings
- Answer questions
- Understand what they want to see
- Help get the project votes
- May deal also with municipal facilities like fire or police

36:33 Types of public feedback
- Present plan
- Survey
- "So in terms of getting a public involved, I think it's important to, especially in a city project where you need to have that opinion, especially if they're going to be flipping the bill for it, they need to know. They've got to be happy with what they're getting. "
- Getting public feedback is a shared responsibility between designer and city
- Design charrettes with small groups and trash sketches; mostly high profile designs
- Get ideas and feedback
- "Then we would scoop all those ideas--try and incorporate it into the next round of design process so we come out with this plan that everybody has kind of feedback in and everybody can buy into because you know, hey, that was my idea about putting the playground up there, that kind of thing."

42:13 Most important part of client feedback
- Make sure people are comfortable
- Satisfy their needs and wants
- Helps process go smoother
- Can't satisfy everyone, but aim for higher end approval
- Get everyone involved
- "So you never know who's going to have the best idea whether it be the janitor or whether it be somebody else from the public, or the city or whatever. Because, like I said, the more eyes, I think, the better on a project. Just flush all the ideas you can get."

44:24 Wants vs. needs
- "…at the end of the day it's still got to fall underneath what they can afford and that's part of our judgment is to decipher all these needs and wants, come up with a plan that kind of makes sense incorporates as much as they can get underneath what the owner, or the client or the city or whatever can afford to pay."

47:00 Understanding client budget
- "They'll tell you want they want and we'll accommodate them as best we can."

49:41 Resolve conflicts upfront

52:20 Get information and opinions upfront so you don't have to redo work

54:00 Example large project

56:18 Example medium institutional project

57:31 Planning Projects

59:00 Best way to work with clients
- Work with those who you have a good rapport with
- "…we won't take on a job unless we know we can do it, or we work with people who know how to do it."
- Prevent headaches by being sure you like your client
- "… we've actually turned work down from people that we just didn't want to work with them. In terms of we knew that there was going to be a conflict and it just wasn't worth it."
- Ask around about clients

01:02:09 Ideal client
- "…give a clear feedback, give a clear up-front understanding of the project they want, both in terms of expectations and time and budget. Someone's that's understanding…"
- "You don't want somebody that's overbearing though, you know, someone that's saying, this is exactly what I want you're not going to do anything else that's no fun either."

01:03:10 Opinionated clients
- Present other options
- Their choice in the end because they are paying
- Try to show how alternatives work and save money
- "Yeah, I think it's a responsibility that anybody that's designing … either there's a better way to do it, or there's a more cost effective way of doing it. …those two have to play hand in hand though, you can't just say ok this is a cheaper way to go, but doesn't work as well. … You want to say, here's just as good or better way and it's going to save you money. And the owner or developer, I think they really appreciate that you are trying to work with them, work for them. I think that's our responsibility is to work for the client. Give them the best product, at the, I'm not going to say the best price, but the best product at the reasonable whatever his design needs or wants are."

01:06:00 best project
- Satisfies client needs and wants
- Buildable
- Affordable

01:06:22 Why sit for interview

Interviewees: President and Vice President
Date: January 5, 2007
Firm: D2
Size: 2-3 Employees
Project types: Wide range
Time: 51:04

00:00 Introduction

01:00 Acquiring work
- Referrals
- Requests for proposals
- Working with engineering or architectural firms
- Word-of-mouth

01:40 Proposals
- Work as design team
- "…meet with the clients, see the site, try to really get a grasp for what the project is all about."

02:07 Understanding project once hired
- Meetings to understand goals and objectives
- President: "Well, the first meeting you try to really make a connection I think, well even in the original presentation trying to get the job you're trying to make a connection with the client…"
- Summarizing scope, budget, schedule, lines of communication

03:26 Determine goals and objectives
- President: "Well, for the most part it's really lending an ear to your client and really listening to what their needs are and trying to help them focus it into what direction the project should take. Most times the client they have this wish list of things, but you know, sometimes they're just not sure how to turn that into the final project, so it I think it's really keeping communication open."

04:07 How make connection with client
- Making people feel comfortable with the team
- Communication and follow-through

05:00 Evolving needs
- Needs change as there is more design and discussion

05:36 Involvement
- Vice President: "I think a lot of times it depends on the client. Some clients are more hands on. They want to see more; they want to know

more. Some clients just say, well this is what I'm looking for. Go out, go back to your office, come up with some ideas, come back to me."

- Vice President: "Depends on size of the project how often clients are involved."

- President "And then you might have projects like playground projects or park projects where there's public meetings so you can get feedback from the public, other shareholders -- playground projects where we will have charrettes with the children actually in the school and then have subsequent meetings with an internal focus group in the school. So as [Vice President] mentioned, there's a lot of levels of involvement. And it's really determined pretty early in the project what those levels need to be.

- President: "We might recommend to them different the different levels that they can have in the interview process, but often it's done in the proposal stage where the client might specify that they want so many public meetings or … so much involvement just so that the design team can get an idea of how much time's involved in it. But certainly our recommendation to people is generally that the more we can understand the user, the end user of the site or the project, the better the project is going to work. So we do prefer to see involvement, but as he mentioned, sometimes you have a client who just wants it done. They want to basically rely on your expertise and they give you some basic goals and they want you to run with it."

08:16 Importance of high levels of involvement
- President: "The more you can understand the ways a project is going to be used or might be used in the future, or how it can be adapted, if you have an understanding of who's maintaining it, what kind of level of maintenance that they can do, if you understand more aspects of how it's going to be actually utilized and what the overall goals are not for just the current time being, but for the long run, I think that you have more success with a project, because it meets more long-range goals."

- President: "Now if you understood who those people were, what their likes and dislikes or things that they were passionate about, whether it was gardening or sports or things, if you knew little bits about them, you would be able to design something that meets what they'd like to see in their yard, or their project. If you don't understand anything about them, you put what *you'd* like to see and it doesn't always match."

09:39 Defining likes and dislikes
- Interviews
- Meet staff

- Focus group
- Vice President: "I think a lot of times you try and go into a project from the beginning by having a sort of gut feeling as to what you might want to do and what the client may want to do or may want to have done and try to talk about those things with the client and give them suggestions. …You just try to question the client and get feedback from the client on what their impressions are. You might give your impressions as well and see if you can start to develop some kind of agreement early on and then go back into the design stage…then go back to the client with those ideas and see if you're starting to get on the same page with how the design should be pursued."
- No standard questions
- Think about what questions you need to ask before meeting

11:56 Client feedback
- Verbal feedback through meetings
- Sketches between design team members

12:36 Design team meeting
- Example of large multi-state team

13:39 Discussion of public meetings
- Usually city projects
- City organized
- Include presentation of boards for comment
- Usually at the beginning or middle of the process
- Vice President: "…usually the intent of a public meeting is to get feedback from a client before the design is completed or as the design is ongoing, but generally it's towards the beginning or middle of the project. Sometimes you want to get a little bit of design thought into the project before you have a public meeting, but I've seen some that they're right at the beginning to get the public input automatically."

15:26 Charrettes with children on playground projects
- First had brainstorms with educators
- Half-hour drawing sessions with children of eight different age groups
- President: "[we]…basically had the room filled with idea boards and just let the kids draw what would be their ideal playground with no constraints. Whatever they would want to see. We heard questions from the kids: well can I do this? can I do that? whatever you want to see in your perfect playground. Basically we were there to just talk to them or answer questions and really let them have fun. And the idea boards were just something for kids that were a little unsure of what to put down or wanted some ideas or some pictures to remind them of what things look like. Those were there at the perimeters. … the school actually took all the idea boards and the drawings and put them up on display for a couple months."

- Incorporated many of the ideas into final design

17:29 Adult charrettes
- Adults tend to talk more than draw
- Focus on individual features
- Still got ideas

19:00 When you cannot reach end user group
- Rely on client
- Research
- Assumption
- President: "…it's always best to have access to them."

20:00 Explaining concept
- Multiple ideas
- Verbal explanation
- Reference other projects

22:00 Client visions
- Clients generally have a good idea
- President: "Sometimes they have trouble explaining them and they're really relying on you to come up with your vision to see if it matches their vision. …   and sometimes they have a real finite idea and they want you to figure it out."
- No fun when they already know what they want

23:06 Ideal client
- Pays on time
- Vice President: "…ideally I think you want a client who has kind of a broad scope of what they're looking for, allows you to explore different options, and you know, is just very open-minded to what could be done. You want freedom, but you don't want so much freedom that you're just kind of flailing away and not meeting the client's needs."
- President: "And I think somebody who's interested in a long-range goal too is really helpful because as we start to start to try integrate better design principles, integrate sustainability, integrate green design all of that, it takes someone seeing what the long-range picture is and some of those issues to help them understand how they're going to benefit. And some people are just really interested in the bottom line, what's it going to cost me today and some are interested in really making an impact over a long period of time. And I think for aesthetics as well as sustainability, I think those are really important."

25:00 Landscape architect responsibility to client and user
- Meet client's goals and objectives

- Meet client's budget
- Meet client's schedule
- Safety, health and welfare
- Construction durability

26:11 Later stages of design
- Some client feedback
- Some feedback more internal
- Provide construction observation
- Mediate initial construction meetings
- Help contractor understand project
- Keep client updated on construction
- Review construction invoices

29:41 End of involvement in project
- Construction documents
- Will help with later changes

30:22 Evaluation
- Continuous personal evaluation
- Return to site to see if the intended and actual uses match up
- Use information to improve subsequent designs
- When you have time

31:34 Client feedback
- Informally
- President: "…it's an important part to know how they feel about how they were treated…"
- Important to be sure client is happy

32:00 Effects of project size
- Vice President: "…I think that the larger the project the more involvement you're going to see -- just because there's more detail, more things to be agreed upon.
- President: "I think it's really true for commercial. And the other end of the spectrum is when you do something for a small residential you know, private home I think it's a lot of face-to-face communication, a lot of work directly with the client. …the smaller the commercial project the less you involve sort of the end user and the people in the staff."
- Residential is very informal
- Commercial and public more formal, more documentation, meetings, presentations

36:15 Conflicts amongst clients
- People usually are open to ideas

- Biggest boss or lead designer makes final decision

37:04   Sucessful projects
- Good communication
- Example of international project that went well

38:47 Sucessful project example- President
- Institutional
- Worked with staff and maintenance
- Focus group
- Good contractor

42:26 Sucessful project example- Vice President
- College
- Well educated core client group
- Specific goals with actual design freedom
- Good contractor

47:00 Why selected projects
- Feel best about
- Control over design process
- Well RoundedGood teams
- Fun design

47:36 Best way to work with clients
- Openly and honestly
- Face-to-face

48:00 Most important factor to consider on a project
- Vice President: "I don't know that there is one."

- President: "I think if you narrowed it down you'd probably have half a dozen or a dozen aspects of the project that are pretty much equally important. And it ranges from everything from aesthetics to safety to keeping your client happy to good environmental practice. I mean there is a lot I think that needs to be equally balanced. I don't think I could pin it to one thing, because they're all so important. If we had our office manager here, she'd probably say 'keeping the client happy' but that's not always. You have to balance that with the other aspects."

49:00 Balanced process
- Keep client happy
- Make money on the job
- President: "Occasionally you have a client who is suggesting or wants to do something that is NOT in their best interests, is not in the interests of

safety, or is just a bad design, and you have to make your voice heard and try to make them realize that they may be heading in a direction that they will regret later. So it's all equally important. And our name goes out with every project too. We want the projects to be something that we can be proud of too, but we also want it to be something that is a good, well-designed project."

50:06 Well-designed project
- President: "Something that twenty years later we can go back and say, 'that looks fantastic' and 'look at how many people are using it.' To me that's a successful project."

50:31 Why sit for interview

51:00 Closing conversation

Appendix D

Client interviews.

Client: A_0c
Interviewees: Private homeowners; husband and wife
Date: March 20, 2007
Firm: A
Project: New home
Time: 38:15

00:00 Introduction

01:00 Explain why hired landscape architect
- Complete new house
- Prevent from making mistakes that could be made if one does it oneself.
- Plan ahead to avoid changes, which saves money in the long run
- Had good experience hiring landscape architect for previous residence

02:07 Explain how the landscaping sold their old house
- Prospective buyers looking at the house next door saw landscaping and wanted their house, even though it was not on the market.

04:00 Discussed what they are looking for in a landscape architect
- Firm that can take care of all aspects of a project
- Firm that focuses on similar scale projects
- Mr.: "…a competent landscaped yard on completion."

06:09 Described primary landscape architect
- A_0c and owner of PG as well
- Mr.: " very nice young man." Mrs.: "very professional, very professional" Mr. : "very competent" Mrs.: "…very good on follow-up. I mean he's a good guy."

06:57 Described place in process
- House is not finished and design is not installed
- Met a few times
- Currently working on 2nd round of plans
- Mention the importance of follow-up
- Has completed some preliminary work

08:55 Discuss the importance of listening to the customer

- Mr.: "It's important, in my opinion, for a landscape architect to really listen to the customer, see what the customer wants because when it's all said and done, the customer lives there. The architect doesn't live there. It's also important to understand their past experience and projecting what the future will look like. If there was something in the old house that they didn't like, or in the previous place where they lived, you wouldn't want to replicate that again. Even though it would be the architect's choice, you wouldn't want to replicate it because that's just wasting time for people. … Dave has been pretty good about listening to what we wanted and what we suggested, but I'm sure as we go through the process we'll make some changes."

09:42 Explained how A_0 got their input

- Filled out list of questions
- Input meetings were very important

10:17 Described misunderstanding regarding streams

- Mr. and Mrs. did not want a water feature
- A water feature ended up being in the first design

13:21 First presentation

- Multi-color drawings
- Book of catalogue cuts
- Overlay sketches on photographs Mr.: "He then had, I thought, a real neat idea. He had what the house, what the land looks like now, and then an overlay of what it would look like when you were done so you could flip back and forth. I thought it was very sharp to do it that way."
- Made it easier to visualize

14:39 Explained work timeline

- Started out at the very beginning of property layout
- Driveway manipulations
- Staking design out

15:54 Different suggestions

- Mr.: "Yes he did present us options and we accepted some, and rejected others."

17:34 How A_0 has helped them to make decisions about their well.

18:38 Explained how he has helped with their driveway and worked with the architect

19:00 Feel that A_0 will use his technical skills to their advantages, but it's too early to say for sure
- Knowledge about plant types
- Example of garage heater, roof drain

21:25 Feel as though A_0 looks out for us

21:37 Vision for the property
- A_0 was able to represent what he had in mind clearly
- What the salesperson showed them did not correspond with their vision of their yard
- Did not like the idea of the water feature

23:49 Communication and reputation
- Communicate once a week via email or phone
- Good at follow-up; always gets back to you
- Mr.: "His client contact is very good"   Mrs.: "very good. He's professional. Our builder, you know, has a high regard for him, which is nice, and our architect, who really doesn't compliment too many people…"
- Mr.: (jokingly) "A doesn't have a good reputation because they're terrible." Mrs.: "No, they have a really great reputation."
- Communication so far has gone smoothly
- All communication with landscapers so far has been very smooth

26:08 Importance of specialization

27:00 Most important thing A_0 has done so far
- Helping us shape the driveway to focus on the house
- Added walls for accent in front of the house
- Siting of the well
- Prettiness is of the highest importance
- Mr.:"We want a landscape architect to enhance the property, not let the customer screw it up."
- Got value added from his advice

31:17 Recommendation
- Would recommend them to people who can afford them
- Hope they get what they pay for

31:45 Firm A fits their situation
- Seen their work with creeks
- Flexibility to work in stages
- Experience with larger projects
- Previous landscapers have done a nice job as well

33:28 Ask about interviewer's experience with A

34:40 Speak about other landscapers in the area

35:19 Emphasize the importance of having a full-service company
- Consistency
- Subcontractors are an inconvenience

36:00 Previous landscaping history
- Problems without plans
- Problems with plant replacement
- Problems with overall layout because it was not staged

37:38 Mr. explains about a landscape architect's job
- "He's like the sales guy in a business. He's selling you something, but he has to know what he's selling and he has to have the expertise not to sell you something that you don't need, don't want, and is not necessary. And he follows you through the process to its ultimate completion. Then you're a satisfied customer."

38:00 Closing conversation

00:00 Example of a good project by others

08:45 Ideal landscape architect
- "The more important part is … what are my real objectives? What am I really trying to accomplish? How do I find out what the owner's vision is first and then give the owner even more than they even realize they wanted or because they didn't know enough, but still give them what it is they anyway."
- "In other words there's two kinds of designers, or maybe at least two. There are designers who want to give the owner what the designer wants the owner to have, and there are designers who want to give the owner what the owner wants. And the more mature attitude is the second one because there are few architects and designers in the world, like Frank Gehry and Frank Lloyd Wright back in his day where when you hired them, they gave you what they wanted you to have."
- "To me, that's actually easier than the architect or landscape architect who comes and says, alright, my job is to understand what you want, to understand your budget, tell you if I think I can accomplish what you want within your budget and then to figure it out and make that happen."
- "…in the ideal world he [the designer] goes a step further and helps the owner realize that there's things there that the owner wants or should want or needs that they haven't even thought about…that they can still accomplish within the budget. And to be honest about the budget and to be effective within the budget…"

12:00 The importance of graphics
- People don't read plans well
- "And so it's really incumbent on designers and architects to find tools to really describe what it is that the owner, that the architect is proposing because that's what's going to validate if it's what the owner wants. And that's what's going to avoid that gigantic headache later when the owner says this isn't what I thought I was getting."

14:25 Introduction

15:00 What to look for in a designer
- "At the end of the day, I want a firm that already ideally understands who I am and what's important to me as a developer. So they're already

sensitive to those kind of considerations. I don't want an architect or a landscape architect that's going to come in and paint a picture of a vision that they're all excited about, but has nothing to do with what it is that my objectives are. And you know, we do a lot of work with B1 because they think like the owner and understand the owner's priorities probably as well as any firm.

16:34 Beginning discussions
- Understanding bigger picture
- Discussions about what we wanted the project to be
- Looking at pictures
- Iterative process
- Expectations
- Usage considerations
- Budget

20:05 Dialogue with designer
- Mostly us talking and them listening
- Ask questions to clarify
- Suggest other points of consideration

21:32 Understanding how owners think

22:10 Do not want
- "…require too much time and too much talking and too much money and too much holding the pencil."

22:50 Dialogue with the designer
- It's really important to understand what the owner's vision is first. Use a lot of examples, a lot of pictures
- 70% us 30% them because we're educated clients

23:41 Out of the box ideas vs. client vision
- "…B1 is pretty good at listening and drawing what they think you want, but they'll take a little bit of latitude and propose some out of the box thoughts that maybe weren't even discussed. The only area that you can get into frustrations is, and sometimes we'll even have this with B1, but not so much with [interviewee], is that they may say, yeah, I heard you, yeah I thought that was a good idea, but I had this other thought that I wanted to show you. And our reaction is, yeah, that's ok. I'm glad that you're thinking outside of the box, but I always want you to draw what I asked for. If you have an alternative, draw that too, but don't just come back to me with the alternative. If what I asked for wasn't good, still draw it and prove to me it's not good, and then say, but I had this other thought."

24:52 Keeping end user in mind
- From experience on projects of these types B1 tends to know what they'll need

26:12 Real Estate team
- They are the ones that really should know what should happen
- Should be involved in process
- "While architects and designers know a lot of stuff, they'll never know as much as the guy who lives with and operates that project."

27:55 Stereotype
- "…there's a mentality with real estate developers that designers can hurt you, hurt us, because they don't understand what it is that we really want and they design things that, you know, once it's done, that's not good, that's a problem, that cost me too much money. That designer had a big ego and wanted to come up with lots of ways to make a monument unto himself or herself. It cost me a lot of money and it wasn't worth it. It didn't have value for what I spent. … The designer is trying to make some big statement, isn't thinking so much about budget, isn't thinking about other considerations, but wants to create a project that just is wonderful and beautiful and unique and *groundbreaking* but over budget and doesn't accomplish all the objectives. So owners that have had experience with that tend to be very cautious about that kind of consultant."

29:20 Ending feedback
- B1 ask for feedback, not aggressive, but probably should be
- We have project assessment

31:04 Satisfaction
- Happy with outcome
- "…that kind of consultant that understands the owner, thinks like the owner, helps the owner, you know, tries to learn what the owner really wants and helps the owner to understand things they should want that they don't know about. That's going to be the most successful situation for you."

33:09 Recommendation
- Would recommended
- Specialized and know their type of project
- Return to them

34:03 Successful project
- Good return
- Sustainable
- Gives back to community

- Well-conceived
- Long term goals

34:38 Most helpful part of B1's service
- Interviewee is good communicator and easy to work with
- He makes you feel your project is important
- Accessible
- "…it always comes down to people. It always comes down to the ability to communicate, the ability to listen, the ability to be patient, and the ability to take criticism--sometimes from someone who is good at giving sometimes from someone who isn't you know."

36:12 Dialogue
- Solid the whole time
- Right there with them

Client: D2c
Interviewee: Private school facilities director
Date: March 22, 2007
Firm: D2
Project: School Playground
Time: 13:24

00:00 Introduction

00:38 Discussed involvement with hiring the landscape architecture firm
- Not involved because just hired

01:06 Described the landscape architect
- Worked with president of firm KS
- "…very detail-oriented and a perfectionist"

01:34 Project scope
- Second campus for expanded sports fields
- Not enough space at primary campus

02:47 Discussed input
- "On other projects that we've worked on, [with firm D2] it's more or less a shared dialogue of what the owner needs and then evaluating what type of things that she designed [and] if that would really fit our needs."

03:24 Hiring for new playground project
- "…she's [president of firm D2] currently working on our playground project here and we looked at several architects when we interviewed for that project. That was one of the projects that she did interview for, and the reason that she got the project was that she was able to creatively put together a project that had a sense of theme to it; …it wasn't just a playground sitting in the back. You know, she talked about it being a special place for girls. And we actually took the concept of a butterfly, where you had different stages of the caterpillar, and that's how she derived the thematic part of the project. And now we're in the process of implementation."

04:26 Discussed input for playground project
- "I think she and I work together and then periodically we meet with the Head of School, the Finance Director, and other people at the development office…every few months."
- "They did, very early on, sit with different aged girls and ask them to draw what, in their minds, they thought would be really neat to have in their playground. And then we took some of those ideas and put them into our final design project."

- Input was the school's initiative

06:00 Discussed communication challenges
- No trouble communicating to D2
- D2 helped when communicating with neighbors

06:35 Discussed finished projects
- Did their job

07:48 Feedback offered during punch list
- "…anything that we needed to discuss we would have discussed it there, …it's not like they would have made a specific call to me."

08:08 Discussed why D2 is a good landscape architecture firm to hire
- Would recommend them "…because of how professional they are. And the attention to detail I think a lot of times gets overlooked and I think they're really good at not letting the ball drop in any one portion of the job."
- The most important thing about D2 is that "…no matter what project comes up, as far as the scale, … designing a swale, to planting a tree, to doing a whole playground project, they're always as excited to work with us, regardless of the size of the project. It's not like they're ever too busy to like give us advice on something."
- Example of advice for the engineering class

10:11 Discussed how D2 addresses their needs
- "I think she asks questions, which I think is important because a lot of times, you can't just assume that the design professional really understands your needs. … It's kind of nice having someone looking out for you…"
- Looks for ways to save them money
- Needs have been met

11:46 Explains the importance of communication
- "I guess it's not so much having a landscape architect be attentive to your needs, but really being able to communicate with you…and continue to evolve. Because sometimes you hire people that are so eager to do whatever you want, but you hire them for their knowledge. And if they can't offer that knowledge-base, you're not really gaining anything."
- Important for the professional to make suggestions
- Help owner understand what questions to ask

13:00 Closing

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