

The Professional Practice of Landscape Architecture

*A Complete Guide to Starting and
Running Your Own Firm*

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VAN NOSTRAND REINHOLD

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Marketing

Marketing is a social and business management process that landscape architects use to obtain clients and projects. The need for a marketing program and careful attention to the firm's marketing process have become important to the survival and success of the landscape architecture office. A marketing program and sophisticated marketing materials will continue to be important not only for obtaining work but also for elevating the quality of projects that a firm will have an opportunity to work on. Landscape architecture firms that are effective at marketing will obtain and keep more clients and work on more interesting and high-profile projects.

Years ago, the marketing of professional services was hardly discussed in the conference rooms of landscape architecture offices. The firm obtained a client, provided quality service resulting in the successful completion of a project, and word of mouth was all that was necessary to obtain further work. Today the business environment of providing landscape architecture services is more complex and competitive. Providing quality services that result in successfully completed projects remains important, but other marketing procedures and techniques have become standard operating procedure in most landscape architecture offices.

The people, corporations, and governments that need professional landscape architecture services represent the firm's client market. The full range of professional planning and design needs represents the firm's market opportunities. If a landscape architecture firm provides professional services primarily in park planning and design, for example, its client market will center on those agencies, at all levels of gov-

ernment, that develop and manage parks. The types of parks to be developed represent market opportunities.

The landscape architecture firm that is able to differentiate itself from its competitors will be a market leader as long as the external market for the firm's services remains strong. Differentiation can be created in many ways. The firm can win design awards. It may employ one or more recognized leaders in a specialty area, such as visual resource analysis. It may have completed a significant number of projects in a specific market segment, such as waterfront design, becoming a leader by experience. Minority or disadvantaged classification has been a way for some firms to differentiate themselves from other firms. The fact that a firm can differentiate itself is important, and the firm needs to capitalize on the differentiation by proper marketing, promotion, and publicity.

Successful marketing also depends on managing the quality of the professional services delivered by the firm. Quality management is a direct responsibility of the firm's principals and staff who carry out the professional services of the office and interface with clients. The firm's marketing personnel are responsible for publicizing the quality of the firm's work and coaching staff to maintain the highest possible quality in the delivery of the firm's services. The marketing staff are advocates for attaining the highest possible quality of design in the firm's completed projects. In the long term, the market leaders will be the landscape architecture firms that nurture the reputation for high quality of service, as well as high quality of the designed and built environment or planned and preserved natural resources. Indeed, the fashionable no-

tion of total quality management (TQM) that pervades the corporate world in the United States is a concept that is very applicable to the professional services firm. In the TQM philosophy, everyone in the company is empowered to be responsible for the quality of the product or service. Nowhere is quality management by all members of a firm more important than in the professional landscape architecture office.

Without marketing and the development of clients and jobs, there will be no opportunities for talented design and technical staff to fulfill their potential. Marketing must be a central component of the business plan of today's landscape architecture firm. The keys to effective and productive marketing include the following:

- The firm has a written strategic business plan and a marketing plan that are prepared and updated annually.
- The firm is aware of its competitors and regularly analyzes their marketing maneuvers.
- The firm develops and utilizes the best possible marketing tools.
- The firm develops effective methods for producing proposals and carrying out interviews.
- The firm regularly identifies new market opportunities and evaluates market expansion possibilities.
- The firm nurtures its present clients.
- The firm manages its services and products for the highest possible quality.
- The firm strives for high design and technical excellence in its completed projects.
- The firm constantly tries to differentiate itself from its competitors.
- The firm designs and implements a public relations program.
- The firm accepts the need for marketing and integrates client development and client maintenance in all of its endeavors.
- The firm regularly obtains feedback from its clients about its delivery of services.

The Strategic Plan

To be effective at marketing, the owners and principals of the landscape architecture firm must develop

and continually update a strategic business plan. The business plan includes a marketing plan that identifies the firm's target markets. Without such a plan, the evolution of the firm is subject entirely to the forces of the market and the whims of the firm's top managers.

The Mission Statement

The mission statement, which is a part of the strategic business plan, is a declaration of the firm's competitive strategy. The mission statement describes the specific philosophy the owners of the firm wish to adopt in delivering the landscape architecture services. The firm's mission and the firm's efforts at strategic planning are shaped by three main factors:

1. The interests, education, and cultural background of the firm's founders, owners, and principals.
2. The internal environment of the firm, including physical, intellectual, technical, and financial resources of the owners, principals, and staff.
3. The external environment of the firm, including the regional geography and national economic trends.

Interests, Education, and Cultural Background

If a landscape architect is trained in Arizona, he or she is not as likely to head off to Massachusetts to begin professional practice as to stay in the Southwest or move to another desert region to practice. If a landscape architect receives an M.L.A. degree from a university program specializing in behavioral research and environmental psychology, he or she is less likely to go out and begin a private practice that focuses on design and preparing construction documents. A landscape architecture graduate who grew up in an inner-city area may have nurtured a strong desire to return to the city and dedicate his or her practice to improving the quality of the urban environment. The landscape architect with an M.L.A. degree and a Ph.D. in biological sciences will be more likely to become a college teacher or be part of a professional firm with a strategic plan focused on environmental assessment and research.

There is little doubt that the interests, education, and cultural background of each landscape architect

and of the firm's leaders play a central role in the mission of each landscape architecture firm. Expressing the interests and background is an important part of the firm's mission statement. Finding a good fit between the interests of the firm's owners and principals and the type of work the firm secures increases the firm's productivity. Disaster can occur if the fit can't be found.

The Internal Environment

The number of professional staff, their educational background, their interests, the equipment, the computer capability, work attitudes, financing capability, and all other elements of the internal makeup of the firm are key considerations of the firm's strategic plan. The internal environment is the part of the firm that the owners have the most control over. They have the greatest opportunity to manipulate and direct these internal elements in order to support the firm's objectives and market orientation.

The External Environment

There are two major parts to the external environment that influence the development of a landscape architecture firm's strategic planning. The first is the immediate operating environment, including the firm's competition, the client base, and the geographic region. A shift in the local economy because a factory stops production, for example, would depress the local housing market and impact the elasticity of the pricing of landscape architecture services, driving fees down. A number of spin-off firms that begin at the same time in a local landscape architecture market would also affect landscape architecture fees negatively because the new firms would be likely to compete by lowering fees to capture market share. Conversely, a local boom in industrial growth might impact the landscape architecture firm in other ways, such as a competitor's attempting to steal staff by offering higher wages. Whereas the external operating environment can be influenced to some degree by the actions of the owners of the landscape architecture firm, the more likely course of action is reactionary management. The better the firm's managers become at forecasting changes in the external operating environment, the greater the chances of counteracting the effects on the firm.

The second external influence is the remote or national environment, which the landscape architecture

office can do little or nothing to influence. The national environment includes influences such as the trends in the national economy; impacts of the international economic climate, such as the price of oil; and philosophies of the national political party in control of Congress and the executive branch of government. Is the national economy on the upswing, or is the country in a recession? Are social programs in vogue, or is the federal government tightening its belt and reducing social spending programs? Are there technological forces at work that may shape the practice of landscape architecture? The introduction of the personal computer into the everyday operations of the landscape architecture office in the early 1980s is an example of a national external force that has dramatically affected the practice of landscape architecture. The oil embargo of the mid-1970s and the concern for oil self-sufficiency caused a focus on mass transit, creating many design and environmental assessment opportunities for landscape architects. Remote external forces are always at work changing the political, social, economic, and technological environment and causing the possibility of change in the strategic plans of the landscape architecture office.

National disasters, unfortunate as they may be, are a type of external force that cannot be anticipated but often results in market opportunities for landscape architects. The eruption of Mount Saint Helens volcano in Oregon in 1980 is an example of an unpredictable natural occurrence that created numerous natural-resources analysis and design opportunities for landscape architects, including the design of a new access road and a new visitor center. The devastation of Hurricane Hugo brought the need to rebuild cities and towns along the southeastern coast of the United States.

Based on the background and interests of the firm's principals, analysis of the internal and external environments, and formulation of strategy, the owners of each architecture office will develop a mission statement for the firm—an ideological and competitive strategy. The firm's mission statement, as set down by the owners and the principals, will shape the firm's strategic posture. The mission statement should accomplish a number of important goals:

1. Specify the types of services to be provided by the landscape architecture office and the markets the firm seeks to serve.

2. Specify the immediate external environment in which the firm intends to operate.
3. Provide the motivational focus of the firm, fostering allegiance and camaraderie among the firm's employees.
4. Specify the technology that the firm will use to carry out its professional services.
5. Address the organizational parameters of the firm.
6. Spell out the management philosophy of the firm, as well as planning and design ideologies.
7. Differentiate the firm and reinforce its strengths.
8. Identify profitability and survival as a business priority of the firm. After all, the firm that does not prosper and survive will not be around to worry about it.

Strategic Business Planning

After the firm's founders have laid out the mission statement, they should develop a strategic business plan that defines the firm's target market. A target market for a landscape architecture firm could be all of the architects and engineers in a given geographical area; parks and recreation departments and agencies of local, state, and federal levels of government; multi-family housing developers; or conservation and environmental protection public agencies. A firm might target several markets, emphasizing versatility and attempting to be a jack-of-all-trades. In the latter case, the firm should address the process of strategic planning and make a conscious decision to have a generalist orientation.

Strategic business planning is the ongoing process of developing a niche for the landscape architecture firm in the changing marketplace. The aim of strategic planning is to constantly shape the firm's ability to provide landscape architecture services, to produce profits, and to maintain the firm as a viable entity in the external environment. Strategic planning is a relatively new concept in the corporate and industrial world, and even newer in the world of service professions. As the external environment continues to become more and more competitive, however, the need for strategic planning will continue to be more and more important.

Analyzing the external environment is the most important part of strategic business planning. The external environment is made up of the forces that are beyond control of the firm's managers but which constantly impact the nature and profitability of the firm's practice of landscape architecture. These political, economic, social, and technological factors present opportunities, as well as threats, to the firm's business health. Political factors include changes in the tax code that may affect the business structure of the firm; the taxing structure of local, state, and federal branches of government; the social orientation of the national party with the most power in the congressional and executive branches of government; and the current political attitudes toward conservation, urban renewal, highway development, and other government programs. Economic considerations include factors such as the availability of credit for expansion, the cost of credit as related to the prime interest rate, the rate of inflation, and the economic expansion of the national economy as measured by the gross domestic product. Social considerations involve the values, attitudes, and mores of potential clients in the firm's external environment. One of the most significant social impacts on the practice of landscape architecture has been the large number of women entering the workforce in general and the landscape architecture profession specifically. This social change has further impacted the professional practice of landscape architecture due to national and local programs that give preference to minority and women-owned firms. A shift in population is another social trend that may affect the regional practice of landscape architecture. After 1950, national shifts in population from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt created many landscape architecture opportunities in Texas, Arizona, and California. Technological change is another external force that is constantly at work shaping the practice of landscape architecture. Who can deny the impact that the computer and software applications have had on the profession?

The third and most manageable part of the strategic planning equation is analyzing and formulating the makeup of the internal environment. The process involves constantly assessing the firm's realistic ability to respond to the professional-practice opportunities that it encounters. One of the best ways to analyze the landscape architecture firm's internal environment is to carry out a regular review of the firm's strengths and

weaknesses. A number of categories should be analyzed:

1. Design capability and expertise represented in the firm's principals and staff
2. Technical capability and expertise represented in the firm's principals and staff
3. Technical and production resources of the firm
4. Marketing capability and expertise of the firm's principals and staff, and marketing resources
5. Financial resources of the firm
6. Business management abilities and support staff capabilities of the firm
7. Track record of completed projects
8. Desire to take on challenges and break new professional ground

The results of the internal analysis will identify if the firm has competitive advantages, meets only the basic competitive capabilities, or has competitive vulnerabilities. Obviously, the firm should maintain and strengthen its competitive advantages. The firm that has only basic competitive capabilities should at least maintain its competitiveness and also try to develop competitive advantages. The firm that diagnoses competitive vulnerabilities should attempt first to remedy the vulnerable aspects of its internal environment, then continue to move into the basic competitive level, and even work on developing competitive advantages.

The strategic planning process ends in action statements that drive the firm forward. These goals and objectives are the strategic plan itself and provide direction in a number of areas:

1. market and clients
2. revenue and profit
3. staff and personnel
4. resources
5. geography

The Marketing Plan

The Marketing Process

Managing the marketing process requires a number of tasks including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Analyzing marketing opportunities
2. Identifying and selecting target markets
3. Developing marketing strategies
4. Planning, implementing, and controlling marketing efforts

The first task facing owners, principals, and managers of a landscape architecture office is analyzing the short- and long-term opportunities for the firm to compete in the market or markets the firm has identified in its strategic plan. For example, a landscape architecture office may have a long-term goal to engage in master planning, site design, and landscape architecture for commercial projects, corporate facilities, and corporate headquarters. At the present, however, the firm will be able to enter the desired market only by serving as a subconsultant to architecture firms because the landscape architecture firm does not have direct experience as a prime consultant in the planning and design of large commercial facilities or corporate projects. If there is strong market demand for the subconsulting services, the landscape architecture firm can set a short-term goal of providing the best possible subconsulting services to nurture its architecture clients while trying to develop the ultimate client the firm wishes to serve—the commercial developer or corporate executive. Working as a subconsultant provides a good opportunity for the landscape architects to acquire experience and to hone in on the types of services desired by the prospective commercial and corporate clients. Working as a subconsultant gives the landscape architects the opportunity to identify key players such as planning and zoning officials, financiers, and real estate brokers. Moreover, working as a subconsultant provides the opportunity to become aware of what the firm's competitors, including the prime consultant, are doing. All of the education and experience gained by the landscape architects while serving in a subconsulting role provides market research for penetrating the desired market.

After subconsulting for a while, the landscape architects will have developed a track record of completed commercial and corporate projects. They will have identified several potential commercial or corporate clients whom the landscape architects could approach with the proposal that they serve as the prime consultant on a future project. The commercial and corporate clients are targeted by the landscape architects; the target market has been identified. The landscape architect's potential clients represent a segment

of the market that can be focused on in order to achieve the firm's long-term goal of master planning, site design, and landscape architecture for large commercial or corporate projects.

Next the firm develops a marketing strategy that consists of the time commitment and financial resources the firm will spend in developing the target market. The strategy may address the following questions:

- How will prospective clients be contacted?
- What marketing and promotional material will be most useful?
- Are the marketing and promotional materials already available, or will the landscape architecture firm have to develop new materials or expand presently available materials?
- What are the prospective client's previous projects? Could the landscape architects have improved on the previous projects?
- What is the prospective client's next project? What research must be carried out to become familiar with the new projects?
- What other contacts, such as real estate brokers or lenders, could the firm approach as helpful contacts for its landscape architects?
- Is the prospective client price or fee sensitive?
- How can a social relationship and a friendship be developed and nurtured with the prospective client?
- Which people in the landscape architecture firm are best suited for making contact with the prospective client in terms of personality, mutual interests, and available time?
- What financial resources are available or can be budgeted for developing the prospective client?
- What is the value of the landscape architect's services to the prospective client?

The marketing and client-development strategy will be set based on the firm's responses to the issues and questions about the prospective client and the market opportunity. Developing a written strategy, if only a memorandum of the main efforts to be made in marketing and client development, is the best way to culminate the marketing strategy efforts. The most important element of the written marketing strategy is a time line that identifies when key steps of the marketing effort should be completed and when the land-

scape architecture firm hopes the efforts will culminate in a contract.

Sometimes the marketing efforts do not produce the desired results, and it becomes evident to the firm's marketing manager or principal in charge of the marketing and client-development effort that a successful conclusion is unlikely. In such cases, the firm should cut its losses and return to the beginning of the marketing process, to analyzing its short- and long-term marketing opportunities.

Once implemented, the firm's marketing effort should be evaluated regularly. The firm should evaluate the success of its marketing efforts with the marketing budget and monitor the time line for achieving the market penetration.

The Marketing Plan

The culmination of the planning efforts is the written marketing plan, which might include the following main sections:

- I. *Executive Summary.* This is an abbreviated overview of the marketing plan.
- II. *The Marketing Environment.* This section presents relevant information about the size of the market in which the firm wants to capture market share. The commercial development market in the landscape architecture firm's region, for example, might be projected as \$100 million per year with an expected increase of 20 percent per year for five years. The total of project fees might be 8 percent, or \$8,000,000, the first year.

This section also discusses the competitive environment. Who are the landscape architecture firm's main competitors? What is the firm's strategy for competing (i.e., fees, better experience, snag-free approvals with local government officials)? What percentage of market share is held by each of the competitors? What is the quality of services provided by each competitor? Generally, what are the intentions and behaviors of the competitors? This section would present a summary of the internal and external environment factors that might impact the landscape architecture firm's marketing capabilities.

III. *Analysis of Issues: Opportunities and Threats.* Here the plan spells out the main opportunities and threats facing the landscape architecture firm.

A. *Opportunities*

1. The firm can penetrate the market and obtain 5 percent market share by securing one project with a specific client.
2. The client has indicated a strong interest in the landscape architecture firm because of the excellent services and award-winning landscape architecture on the client's two previous projects.
3. The architecture firm that served as the prime consultant on the client's last project has been criticized for taking too long to complete the planning and design phase of the last project.
4. The landscape architecture firm has a well-established working relationship with another architecture firm that is willing to serve as the landscape architecture firm's subconsultant if the client awards the prime contract to the landscape architecture firm for the next project.

B. *Threats.* The landscape architecture firm is likely to lose as a client the architecture firm it served as a subconsultant on previous projects for the developer. This architecture firm provided \$40,000 in revenue per year for the previous two years to the landscape architecture firm. The landscape architecture firm may impact its subconsulting relationship with other local architecture firms if it is viewed as taking away work that might otherwise be considered the market domain of architecture firms in general.

C. *Issues.* Is the prospective opportunity to serve the commercial developer a one-shot deal, or will it lead to fulfillment of the firm's strategic long-term goals and result in a strong market share?

IV. *Objectives.* Here the plan describes the financial and the marketing goals of the plan. The firm expects to achieve a 5 percent market share in the first year, and 10 percent overall.

If the project is successful, the firm will have gained a significant foothold in the commercial market related to the firm's long-term marketing goals.

V. *Marketing Strategy.* Here the plan outlines the strategies and action programs the firm will need to implement in order to secure the market and develop the client. What will be done? Who will do it? When will it be done? What it will cost?

VI. *Controls.* This section of the plan outlines the controls that will be used to monitor the progress of the plan. A key part of this section is the schedule or time line associated with the marketing plan. This section might also include a contingency plan to cut losses if adverse developments occur.

VII. *Potential Revenue and Profit.* The last section of the plan is a presentation of the potential revenue that can be achieved by successfully implementing the marketing plan. Revenue of \$400,000 in the first year is possible by completing one project for the prospective client. These fees will result in a \$24,000 profit for the firm. This section might include a five-year projection of revenue and projected profit-and-loss statements.

Marketing Tools and the Promotion Mix

A wide variety of marketing tools is available to the landscape architecture firm. Developing the tools and selecting the right mix of marketing tools for the firm in general and for a target market or client requires a great deal of time and attention by the firm's owners, managers, and principals. The tools that work for one target market or client may not work for another. The tools that worked for ten years may suddenly become outdated and have to be scrapped. The tools that the firm used for fifteen years may need to be revised when the firm changes ownership.

Selecting the right mix of marketing tools requires that a landscape architecture firm have a variety of tools as part of its marketing arsenal. If the firm's primary marketing tool is a general brochure, the firm

may have difficulty competing for a specific target market when the firm really needs a group of specific project cut sheets related to the target market. Selecting the right mix of marketing tools occurs at two levels—first for the firm in general and second as related to a specific target market, client, or project.

The mix of marketing tools may be based on the financial resources of the firm and on the personalities and philosophies of the principals and marketing staff who use the tools. Principals who believe that the quality of the services provided and the quality of the built project are the keys to securing future work may feel that word of mouth is the central component of the firm's promotional mix. They will subsequently select other marketing tools, such as newspaper, journal, and magazine coverage of the firm's work, that support word of mouth as the primary marketing method.

Word of Mouth

The marketing tool used by every landscape architecture firm is word of mouth. Word of mouth refers to the comments made by a former client to friends, acquaintances, and associates regarding the quality of services provided by the landscape architect and the satisfaction with the finished products. Obviously, the landscape architect wants the comments to be positive. The more that is said publicly by satisfied clients, the better the standing of the landscape architecture firm in the community. As potential clients hear more about the landscape architecture firm, the firm may be considered "hot" and have many prospective customers calling.

If negative word-of-mouth comments surface about a landscape architecture firm about a specific project, the firm should meet the criticism head on and be truthful about the issues involved when asked about them. The firm must identify the source of negative word-of-mouth comments and make every attempt to correct the situation and mitigate the negative publicity.

Brochures

The purpose of a brochure is to convey an overview of the landscape architecture firm's philosophy toward planning and design, to showcase the firm's most no-

table projects, and to spotlight the experience of the firm's owners and principals. The brochure paints a broad-brush picture of the firm. Brochures have become less popular in recent times because of their static nature in today's constantly changing business environment and the national landscape architecture market. Brochures tend to be expensive to produce, especially if they include photographs and if they are printed in color. Using high-quality paper, printing at an unusual size, and perfect binding also add substantially to the costs. The design of a high-quality brochure can cost several thousand dollars or more. If the firm can afford the cost of a brochure, it can be a very useful marketing tool. If well designed and printed in a high-quality fashion, the appearance of the brochure itself—in addition to its contents—will make a statement about the firm. The brochure is effective as a general follow-up to cold calling prospective clients.

Brochures can also be produced inexpensively with a reasonable degree of quality. Keeping the artwork or photographs to black and white and producing the layout in house on the firm's laser printer can substantially reduce costs. One type of inexpensive and useful brochure is a one-page flyer that folds to fit in the standard-size business envelope and also fits in the pocket of a sport coat or inside a briefcase or purse. Flyers can be used effectively in a direct-mail marketing campaign if the flyer is targeted to a specific market.

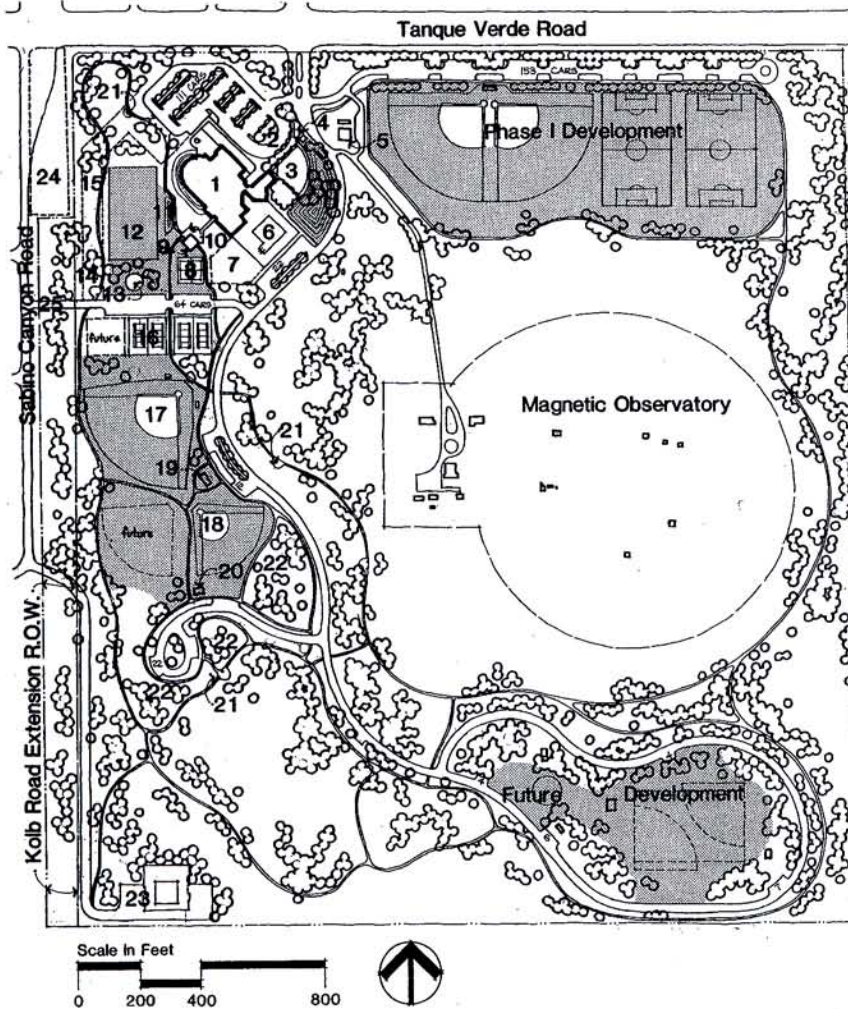
Cut Sheets

Firms today use individual project cut sheets instead of, or as a supplement to, the general office brochure. A project cut sheet is normally produced on 8½-by-11-inch paper so that production is inexpensive. The size is compatible with standard letter and envelope sizes. Any other size is not very practical.

Individual project cut sheets are extremely useful for target marketing because the specific types of projects a firm has completed that relate to the target market can be featured in the firm's marketing approach. For example, the firm could send a selection of cut sheets that illustrates the firm's school project experience with a letter of introduction to a school board that may have a number of projects available in the near future. Or the selection of school project cut

Morris K. Udall Regional Park Master Plan

Ace Landscape Architects developed a comprehensive master plan for the 172-acre Udall Regional Park in Tucson, Arizona. The project included coordinating the work of four subconsultants and working with several public agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, which operates the Magnetic and Seismological Observatory on the site. The Observatory required that metal objects, such as cars, could not be concentrated on the site because the concentration of metal would affect their instruments. Concentric circles were established where no cars were allowed in the inner circle of 1,200 feet diameter, up to four cars could be parked together in the next concentric circle, up to 8 cars in the next, and any number of cars could be concentrated in the perimeter circle. Up to 406 cars could be parked on the site. This criteria played a central role in the form of the masterplan. Preservation of native vegetation and wildlife habitat was another important planning criteria.



Ace
Landscape
Architects



FIGURE 8-1. Black-and-white cut sheets are easy to develop in house using page layout software and reductions of project-related graphics. Photocopying is economical.

sheets could be used to indicate the landscape architecture firm's experience in a response to a request for proposals from a school board.

Cut sheets allow flexibility in target market responses and allow the firm to appear as if it specializes in a particular type of project because the cut sheets can be slanted to the target market. Several different cut sheets can be made for the same project, each with a different slant to be used with a different target market. A housing project that the firm has worked on may have included professional services for environmental assessment, preparation of a master site plan including a large common recreation area, and design of site amenities, landscape, and irrigation systems. This project could be used to develop a cut sheet featuring (1) environmental assessment services, (2) site planning services, (3) housing services, (4) recreation planning and design services, and (5) landscape architecture and irrigation design services. By using different headlines, photographs, or graphics, the firm can produce at least five cut sheets for this project, each for a different target market. A broad selection of individual cut sheets bound in a preprinted folder has taken the place of a general office brochure for most firms today.

Cut sheets are very useful to send to other A/E firms when the landscape architecture firm is asked to participate as a subconsultant on a project team assembled in response to a request for proposals (RFP). The cut sheet method of promotional materials allows the landscape architecture firm to tailor the cut sheet selection, and therefore the firm's experience, to the requirements of the RFP.

Individual cut sheets can be produced in large quantities using offset printing techniques on high-quality paper stock. When the supply is used up, the cut sheet can be updated if desired and additional copies printed. One drawback of this method is that the office will need ample storage if it has a large supply of cut sheets.

Simpler and less costly approaches to the production and use of cut sheets also work. A single, original cut sheet can be prepared from color photographs or black-and-white graphics and kept in a filing cabinet with other original cut sheets. These originals can be duplicated by black-and-white or color photocopying methods when cut sheets are needed for mailings or responses to RFPs.

Using computer and laser printer technology (if the firm can afford the hardware and software) is an

other way to develop, store, and produce cut sheets. The firm can produce a cut sheet on in-house computers using desktop publishing software and scanners to scan either black-and-white or color photographs onto the cut sheet original, which is stored electronically. When copies are needed, they can be printed on black-and-white or color laser printers.

Standard Forms 255 and 254

If a landscape architecture firm intends to procure federal government projects, an essential part of the firm's marketing toolbox is the capability to respond with completed SF254 and SF255 forms. These forms are used not only by the federal government to screen firms but also by local and state levels of government.

The SF254 is updated once each year and the SF255 is completed specifically for each project. The SF255 is where the firm targets its experience to match the needs of the procuring agency. Proprietary software is available that automatically updates the SF254 and prepares SF255 forms electronically. Some firms also use page composition software to develop electronic files of the SF255 forms and then to prepare actual completed SF255 forms for various categories of potential government work, such as road beautification, military base work, housing, and environmental assessment. The prepared SF255 forms are pulled and put together as needed. They can be stored as hard copy and as electronic files. Having the ability to respond effectively with these standard forms is very important to public works marketing success.

One of the best ways to enhance the firm's SF255 submittals is by using the long form of section 8 of the SF255. The long form allows graphics and photographs of completed projects to be inserted on the full-page section 8 in addition to the verbal descriptions and other information requested on construction costs.

Direct-Mail Marketing

With the integration of computer technology and applications software in today's landscape architecture office, the typical firm is now capable of producing sophisticated direct-mail advertising featuring regular mailings in large quantities. Many people argue—and

8. Work by firm or joint-venture members which best illustrates current qualifications relevant to this project (list not more than 10 projects).

a. Project Name & Location	b. Nature of Firm's Responsibility	c. Project Owner's Name & Address	d. Completion Date (actual or estimated)	e. Estimated Cost (in thousands)	
				Entire Project	Work for which Firm was/is responsible
Tangerine Road Corridor Study and Environmental Assessment Pima County, Arizona	Visual & Natural Resource Inventory and Mitigation Concepts; Landscape & Irrigation Design Criteria	Arizona Dept. of Transportation 206 S. Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85007	1989	NA	45 (fee)

Ace Landscape Architects carried out a visual impact analysis and recommended mitigation concepts for the 13-mile Tangerine Road Corridor in Pima County, Arizona. Preliminary landscape and irrigation design guidelines were developed. Mitigation and landscape concepts focused on replacing the Sonoran Desert Palo Verde-Cacti-Mixed Scrub Biome to be removed for construction of the 8-lane divided highway. Design responses were developed for median and roadside landscaping, landscape buffers, erosion control, channeling views to the mountains and water-conserving irrigation.

8-LANE HIGHWAY, DIAMOND INTERCHANGE. VIEW TO THE EAST.

FIGURE 8-2. Example of an SF255 Section 8 long-form project description with black-and-white graphics.

indeed the marketing literature points out—that the payoff for direct-mail mass marketing is low, but direct mail does serve a useful purpose in the overall marketing efforts of a landscape architecture firm.

Direct-mail marketing has two good purposes:

1. General publicity of the firm (i.e., to keep the name of the firm in front of as many people in the broad market as possible).
2. Target marketing related to a specific request for proposals with the emphasis on a specific consulting opportunity for the firm.

In the first use of direct-mail marketing, the landscape architecture firm keeps its name and its accomplishments in front of the widest possible range of prospective clients. To be effective at general publicity by direct mail, the landscape architecture firm first must develop and maintain a database of its contacts

and potential clients—the firm’s market opportunities. With the ability to sort the database, the firm can be selective with the mailings, targeting a market and cutting costs. Effective use of mail-merge software also reduces costs.

After computer techniques and administrative methods are in place for quick and effective responses to direct-mail marketing opportunities, the firm should seize opportunities to publicize itself to a broad range of potential clients. Any noteworthy achievement, award received, personal recognition, or other differentiating event for the firm is a reason for a general direct-mail marketing effort. Some professional offices use a newsletter to publicize achievements and to keep in touch with the firm’s larger client base. Another very effective direct-mail campaign is the year-end greeting card. Some firms have also used a calendar as a year-end greeting that is mass mailed to the firm’s large mailing list. A calendar is a very effective

marketing tool, especially if well designed and visually appealing. When the prospective client hangs the calendar on the wall, the calendar will keep the name of the landscape architecture firm in front of the potential client and all of the people who visit the potential client's office for an entire year.

The second good use of direct-mail marketing is to target a selected group of potential prime-consulting firms in response to a specific request for proposals. In this approach, the landscape architecture firm should use its general marketing operations to track a wide range of RFPs for large-scale projects. When the landscape architecture firm receives an RFP for a large and complex project, such as an urban expressway or a mass transit system, a targeted mailing can be made to transportation planning firms and other large A/E firms in the landscape architecture office's database or other firms likely to submit a proposal as a prime consultant. The landscape architecture firm would attempt to be listed by several larger firms as a subconsultant for urban design, environmental assessment, and landscape architecture services. The targeted mailing might include a package of materials

such as descriptions of prior related project work, résumés of key staff, cut sheets, and other material that would assist the prime consultant in expediting the production of the proposal. By putting the needed response materials in the hands of the marketing staff of the larger firm, the landscape architecture firm has a better chance of being selected as a subconsultant on the team.

The shotgun response to an RFP can put the landscape architecture firm in the enviable position of being listed by a number of prime consultants, especially if the landscape architecture firm's prior project experience matches the services required for the proposed project particularly well. With effective follow-up calls and a little luck, the landscape architecture firm may find that it is listed with enough prime consultants that it has 100 percent coverage when the shortlist is announced. At this point, the landscape architecture firm is in a no-lose situation, assured of the opportunity to work on the project.

The shotgun effort is useful in a subconsulting market. A key to successful shotgun mailings is the follow-up phone call after the mailing has reached the prospective client to get a commitment from the larger A/E firm. In this direct-mail approach, the mailing comes first, and the call is second.

A rule of thumb with the direct-mail marketing approach is to give something useful to the firms receiving the mailed information. If one merely sends a letter asking the larger firm to consider using the landscape architecture firm as its subconsultant, the response from the prospective prime consultant is likely to be "Why should we?" If the landscape architecture firm's mailing package includes the materials necessary for the larger firm to use in responding to the RFP, and if the materials are eye-catching, the landscape architecture firm will increase its chances of being selected by the larger firm. Always provide something useful in the direct-mail approach.

Direct-Call Marketing

In the same way that direct-mail marketing can be effective, direct-call marketing is effective. Principals and marketing personnel in the firm keep phone numbers on file of the firms they team up with or provide subconsulting services to. As with direct-mail marketing, the principals or marketing staff of a landscape architecture firm make calls when they hear about a project where the firm is competitive. By using the phone, they can quickly cover much ground. Larger firms can be contacted before they are contacted by other landscape architecture firms. In this approach, the landscape architecture firm seeks a verbal commitment from another firm to team up with the landscape architecture firm. If it receives an affirmative response, the landscape architecture firm can follow up by mailing the necessary promotional materials. In this method, the call comes first, and the mailed materials follow.

Many principals and managers of landscape architecture firms keep a regular calls list at their desk. The list includes other professional firms and former and present clients that the principal or manager frequently works with on projects. Keeping in contact with these people is important. At any time during a conversation, a lead can be mentioned if the landscape architect is alert.

Cold Calls

Telephone solicitation is a technique used to introduce a landscape architecture firm to a prospective

client with whom no prior relationship exists. Cold calling usually starts with a list of potential clients—a target market—that the landscape architecture firm wishes to penetrate and establish market share. The list may be developed from any number of sources, such as the phone book or a listing of government or nonprofit agencies. Each prospective client is called with a goal of trying to establish common interests resulting in a follow-up call or meeting. The follow-up will be used to expand on the common interests and begin nurturing a relationship with the prospective client.

Cold calling is one of the most unnerving tasks that faces the marketing personnel of the landscape architecture firm (or almost any firm, for that matter). Perseverance is a helpful personality trait for the cold caller. Getting through to a person who has the authority to make decisions about hiring consultants can be difficult, and sometimes it is difficult to get through to anyone even interested in talking to the cold caller. In other cases, the cold caller is headed off by a receptionist or a secretary, who tells the cold caller to send materials in the mail and will not connect the caller to the prospective client (a brush-off). The landscape architect cannot be sure that the materials ever reach the appropriate decision maker, and if they do, the personal touch of presenting the materials is missing.

Another criticism of this method is the low rate of success often attributed to cold calls. Although the success rate is indeed low, the cold call has a definite place in the overall marketing scheme.

There are a number of techniques that can be used by the caller to make cold calling easier and more pleasant. The overall technique should focus on asking questions. By asking questions, the cold caller will uncover information about the prospective client's interests and will be able to keep asking further questions, seeking common interests. Given the opportunity, most people like to talk about their interests. Therefore, if the cold caller can uncover the interests in a few questions, the prospective client may do a lot of talking about his or her interests and feel good about the conversation. By breaking the conversational ice, the cold caller will often end up with an opportunity for a firsthand meeting and interview. The following list of techniques is useful as a guide for making easier and more effective cold calls:

1. Prepare a written outline in advance of cold calling. The outline should include a number of specific questions designed to identify some of the interests of the prospective client. The outline should also include some of the main points about the landscape architecture firm that the cold caller wants to emphasize. But remember, it's better to talk about the interests of the prospective client than to talk about the landscape architecture office and its achievements.
2. Take notes during the conversation and summarize the notes and the actions required for follow-up. Be sure to follow up promptly with any requests of information.
3. Humor is a very helpful element of cold calling. A joke or a funny anecdote can go a long way in keeping a cold call on the lighter side for both caller and the callee.
4. Be upbeat. Don't apologize for calling or act intimidated.
5. Take advantage of the opportunity to leave a specific message on an answering system if the person you're trying to reach is not available.
6. Set a clear goal or outcome desired from the cold call, such as the opportunity for a personal meeting or the opportunity to send some promotional material by mail with another follow-up call after the prospective client receives the material.
7. Try to keep the conversation reasonably brief.
8. Thank the prospective client for his or her time.
9. Make a regular effort at cold calls. The more calls you make, the better you'll be at making cold calls.

Video

A video production about the firm and its prior experience is another marketing tool used more and more by landscape architecture firms. An effective video technique is to produce a videocassette that features a specific project of the firm. Because video production is expensive, the project that is highlighted should be unique, award-winning, photogenic, and interesting.

The video should be professionally produced whenever funding is available.

Tickle Files

One of the oldest sales and marketing tools is the tickle file. Basically, a tickle file is a reminder system comprising two main elements: (1) a calendar in which the names of prospective clients or contacts are entered on future dates when they should be called in order to keep in touch and query about possible project opportunities and (2) an ongoing system of note keeping about each phone conversation held with the contact. These notes are very important because the prospective client or contact may be called (or tickled) only once every three to six months, and the landscape architect needs to remember what was discussed in previous conversations in order to resume the conversation, which may lead to a possible project. Because a large percentage of a landscape architecture firm's work often comes from repeat clients, a tickle file is a particularly useful method for keeping in touch with former clients when there has been a time lag from the previous project executed for the client.

Newspaper, Magazine, Radio, and TV Coverage

Reprints and photocopies of newspaper and magazine coverage make useful marketing tools. These articles impress a prospective client more than promotional literature written by members of the firm because the articles are written by an objective outsider. Prospective clients will normally be impressed by news articles about the landscape architecture firm's work. The more articles that are written about the firm's work, the better. News articles and general-interest pieces written about the firm or its designer make excellent background information when bound into proposals.

The marketing staff, principals, and project managers of the landscape architecture firm need to be aware of news opportunities when they arise and see that newspapers and magazine editors are made aware of newsworthy or interesting story opportunities about the firm. The best way to do this is by engaging the services of a public relations firm, which will write

press releases to be sent to the editors of local or other newspapers or magazines. The public relations firm will have a wide variety of newspaper and magazine contacts, and the public relations consultant will be able to press the right buttons, resulting in more articles about the landscape architecture firm hitting the news than if the landscape architecture firm tries to manage its own public relations. If the landscape architecture firm decides to manage its own public relations, it should have a principal and a staff person who take responsibility for the publicity and who regularly write press releases about the firm's work and attempt to get them in the news. Internal management of the landscape architecture firm's public relations can be successful, but it takes a lot of work and time. One question that the smaller firm must answer is whether the time taken by a principal to work on publicizing the firm would be better spent on generating billable time working on projects. The larger landscape architecture firm may have a marketing person or staff who also handle the public relations for the firm.

Radio and TV coverage of the firm's work can also be very useful in keeping the firm in the public eye. As with newspaper and magazine coverage, the firm or its public relations staff must be on the lookout for interesting, newsworthy opportunities. An opening of a new project, a major achievement of the firm's staff, and a significant award for one of the firm's principals are opportunities that may make excellent TV or radio coverage.

Cable TV provides opportunities for TV coverage. Cable TV shows developed and produced locally document human interest stories on a wide variety of topics. Landscape architecture firms working in the areas of ecology, water resource planning, landscape recovery programs, parks and playgrounds, and historic preservation, for example, have excellent material for cable TV stories about the firm's work.

Journal Articles

Like the newspaper or magazine article, the journal article is very useful as a background piece in a proposal or a letter of introduction. The big difference between the two is that newspaper and magazine articles are written by an outside author about the firm, its staff, or its work. Journal articles, on the other hand, are

usually written by an insider, a principal or member of the firm. Journal articles usually deal with a technical subject. They are particularly useful if they are written about a new idea, new type of design, or a new way of carrying out the design, planning, or analysis process.

Public Speaking

Giving a talk at a local historic society or a meeting of the AIA or presenting a paper at a conference on Xeriscape principles are examples of public-speaking opportunities available to principals and staff of a landscape architecture firm. Public speaking gets the landscape architect in front of the public, and the landscape architect is remembered as being knowledgeable in the topic area he or she speaks about. If enough speaking opportunities are carried out, the landscape architect may become recognized as an authority on the subject. Word-of-mouth references by audience members at speaking engagements is a client-development by-product of the speaking opportunities.

One of the best ways to find out about public speaking opportunities is by contacting the executive staff—elected or appointed leaders—of local professional or community organizations. These organizations are always looking for speakers and may welcome contact by a landscape architect wishing to speak at a meeting.

In order to be effective, the landscape architect must have the personality for public speaking and enjoy getting up in front of an audience. Having a number of prepared talks including slide presentations, illustration boards, flip charts, handouts, or other supporting materials is very useful. The landscape architect can use the prepared talk as is, or alter it slightly to slant it appropriately for the audience. The prepared talks can be used as a base for developing new presentations. Having several prepared talks ready to use gives the landscape architect the opportunity to make a commitment for a speaking engagement on short notice without the anxiety of having to put together a talk and supporting materials from scratch. Making a commitment to speak on short notice is a good way to endear the landscape architect to the leaders of a professional or community organization, and the resulting goodwill is a valuable public relations payoff.

Community Service

Landscape architecture marketing opportunities can be created by serving on commissions, boards, task forces, and other community service organizations. The local zoning board, the city or county design review committee, the local or regional planning commission, the mayor's task force for downtown redevelopment, nonprofit group fund-raising activities, urban forestry advisory boards, water quality advisory groups, and hundreds of other community service opportunities are available to the landscape architect. Most firms encourage their employees, from principals to entry-level designers, to be active in community service.

The main benefits of community service are

1. visibility and name presence for the landscape architecture firm
2. meeting people and making friends
3. fostering word-of-mouth marketing for the landscape architecture firm
4. personal and professional development of social and political skills
5. development of presentation and group dynamics skills
6. firsthand knowledge of the community's political and social dynamics
7. altruism

Sponsoring Community Events

Similar to contributing time through participating in community service, the landscape architecture firm can achieve visibility by contributing to community events through financial sponsorship and donating time or services. Sponsoring a golf tournament, a children's museum fund-raiser, or a tennis match are some of hundreds of sponsorship opportunities available to the landscape architect on a community-wide basis.

Because opportunities to sponsor local fund-raising events abound, the landscape architecture firm's principals and marketing staff may have many more requests for funding than the firm has funds available. Establishing and holding to an annual budget for community events is a good idea. Funds may be spent on a first-come-first-serve basis or on targeted community events that the firms sponsors on an annual basis.

Trade Shows and Conferences

Many landscape architects advocate trade show exhibits and conferences as an effective marketing tool. Obviously, the trade show or conference should be oriented to one of the firm's target markets. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), for example, holds annual state and national conferences open to landscape architecture exhibitors. Attending NRPA conferences as an exhibitor is an effective method of target marketing for the firm that specializes in parks and recreation planning.

The main criticism of trade show and conference exhibiting is the expense. Preparing the actual exhibit materials, building or purchasing an exhibit system, leasing the exhibit space, traveling to the trade show location, staffing the booth for several days to a week, and paying for the expenses and client entertainment while at the conference add up to a very expensive marketing vehicle. Nevertheless the expense may be worthwhile because trade shows and conferences can result in big marketing payoffs.

If the firm exhibits at trade show or conferences, the firm's marketing staff should pay careful attention to designing and preparing the actual exhibits and the exhibit booth. The firm should also select its most outgoing, people-oriented principals and marketing personnel to staff the booth. The exhibit staff must be comfortable meeting people and striking up a conversation. The work of staffing an exhibit booth can be physically and emotionally demanding. Effective selection of staff will result in a higher degree of success.

Print Advertising

The advertising medium used most by landscape architecture firms is the print medium. Trade journals; local promotional magazines and literature; real estate publications; newsletters published by architecture, engineering, and planning societies; and other print media that generally have a targeted audience represent good advertising opportunities. Other print advertising opportunities prevail but are often associated with some of the other marketing tools discussed in this section, such as advertising related to sponsoring a community event.

Like trade shows, advertising in print media can be an expensive marketing tool. The actual cost of the

ad is only one of many expenses including preparing the artwork, photography, copy writing, and using an advertising agent if the landscape architecture firm is not capable of putting the ad together itself.

Professional landscape architecture offices have not traditionally used TV and radio for advertising, although a few opportunities exist. One of the best TV and radio opportunities is advertising associated with supporting a public radio or TV station. Most public TV and public radio stations operate in part on funds raised through listener-supported broadcasts. Some public information broadcasts are related to the professional services of a landscape architecture firm, and the firm may choose to fund all or a part of the specific show. A five-minute daily broadcast of the events held weekly by a city parks and recreation department is a good example of the type of broadcast that a landscape architecture firm might sponsor. Public information broadcasts carry a byline for the sponsoring firm. If the ad is repeated daily, it will result in excellent radio or TV exposure for the firm.

There are many print medium advertising opportunities that do not take a major investment of funds but get the name of the landscape architecture firm into the public eye. Here are a few print advertising opportunities:

1. List the services that the firm provides on the firm's business cards, letterhead, and stationery. A client who receives a letter from the firm about landscape architecture services already under contract may also need environmental analysis services, and if the client sees these advertised on the firm's letterhead it might lead to another contract.

Ace Landscape Architects



Walt Rogers, ASLA, Principal

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FIGURE 8-3. Listing the services provided by the landscape architecture firm on the business calling card is an easy way to advertise the firm's capabilities.

2. Advertise tastefully on company cars or vehicles.
3. Insist on a job sign for all projects under construction listing the landscape architecture firm as the designer. A paragraph can be included in the firm's standard contractual terms and conditions that requires a job sign.
4. Always include a cover sheet on the firm's sets of construction documents with the firm's name in large letters and its logo. Request that other firms to which the landscape architecture firm serves as a subconsultant also include a cover.
5. Always advertise in the yellow pages.
6. Always insist that the name of the firm is listed in the literature of community service organizations supported by the firm.
7. Always insist that the name of the firm is used when news or trade journal articles are written about the firm's work.
8. Take advantage of trade publications that provide free listings. These publications list the providers of professional services and related industry companies by type of services or product and are often distributed free to a wide audience that may include a distribution list of as many as 20,000 to 30,000 copies.
9. Be sure that the firm is included in the lists of local firms by categories that are often published by local trade magazines and local business papers.
10. Include the landscape architecture firm's name and logo on all cut sheets and promotional literature. There is no telling when a copy of a cut sheet might be used unbeknownst to the landscape architecture firm. If the firm's name and logo are on the cut sheet, the firm will receive proper recognition.



FIGURE 8-4. A job sign is a great advertising opportunity at no or low cost. If the sign is on a busy street, thousands of potential clients may see it every day.

Slide Files and Photo Archives

Photographic records of the firm's constructed designs or exhibits from completed planning projects are used in developing cut sheets and presentation boards for use in interviews, for journal and magazine articles, for enhancing the office environment, and for a number of other promotional uses. Photographs are the necessary raw materials of the firm's promotional materials, and photo archives are a valuable resource.

Slide files and photo archives must be well managed. Project work should be photographed when the project is completed and updated every other year or so. The firm should delegate responsibility for photography to one or more staff members and should consider using a professional photographer if funds are available, especially for recording the firm's highest-profile projects.

A slide file and photo morgue need to be accessible, easy to use, and up to date. One of the simplest filing methods is to use plastic loose-leaf sleeves, which are designed to hold slides, photographs, and negatives, filed in loose-leaf binders and organized by types of projects and by project numbers. A light table is important for selecting and previewing slides and organizing slide shows. The slides in the slide show can be laid out on the light table in sequence, enabling the presenter to see an overview of the slide show. A

Handheld slide viewer is useful, and a slide projector in good working order is a necessity.

Photo archives, although important, can be replaced for the most part by a slide file in some offices. Color photocopies can be made from slides, and the quality of the color photocopy, although not as good as actual photographs, is acceptable for many uses. Using color copies from slides may reduce the number of duplicate photo archives required and allow the firm to designate the more expensive color photography for only the most high-profile projects.

Some firms use video records to provide a photographic record of the firm's projects. Undoubtedly, video records will be used more as time goes on. Video records will also be used with interactive computer technology as it becomes more widely used. The greatest drawback to using video for marketing and promotion is that video requires a VCR and CRT or video playback unit. This equipment is expensive and somewhat difficult to move around.

Display Boards

Photographic and photocopy records of the firm's work can be enlarged and mounted on display boards to be used for marketing. These are useful in interviews, at trade shows, and for displays in the office. One of the most common ways to display a project is to dry mount the photographic work on large pieces of foam-core boards. Having a number of key boards available in the office can be very useful when a call is received for an impromptu interview and no time is available to develop a presentation.

The Physical Environment of the Office

One marketing tool that is often overlooked is the physical environment of the office. An attractive, well-designed office environment can reflect the design talents of the firm's owners, principals, and design staff. Although subtle, the environment can definitely leave an impression with a prospective client. The office environment may even be intentionally designed and furnished to feel comfortable to representatives of the market segment targeted by the landscape architecture firm. If the firm's clients are primarily A/E firms doing public-sector work, the landscape architecture firm's

owners may intentionally keep the office environment tasteful but toned down and comfortable to the firm's clients. If the firm has primarily upscale corporate clients, the office environment may intentionally be representative of high design. Always consider the design and furnishing of the office environment as a part of the firm's marketing plan.

Answering the Telephone

Last but not least, all members of the firm should be trained to answer the phone in a pleasant and welcoming manner. Phone skills are exceptionally important for the receptionist or whoever answers the phone on a regular basis. The receptionist is the first point of contact with the landscape architecture firm, and the way that the receptionist answers the phone and directs the call can leave a big impression on the caller. The receptionist must always be cheerful, helpful, and knowledgeable about the firm's services and who does what in the office. The receptionist should be capable in dealing with the irate caller and the cold caller. This first point of contact with the firm should represent the corporate culture or personality of the firm itself. That first point of contact can be a continuing important detail in why a client continues to stay with a landscape architecture firm for project after project. If it is a pleasure every time a client calls the landscape architecture firm, that client is more likely to keep on calling.

The Marketing Payoff— The Proposal and the Interview

Successful marketing efforts of the landscape architecture firm result in the opportunities to submit statements of interest, statements of qualification, or proposals. Each of these—the statement of interest (SOI), the statement of qualifications (SOQ), and the proposal—is a different initial response to a prospective client.

A statement of interest (SOI) confirms the firm's interest in a project and is a response to a request for interest (RFI) issued by a public- or private-sector client. Submitting an SOI is a prerequisite to receiving

further information, such as a request for proposals (RFP). An SOI is usually a letter sent on the firm's letterhead. A statement of interest may include a very brief statement about the landscape architecture firm's previous experience or the background and experience of the firm's principals or key staff.

A statement of qualifications (SOQ) is a response to a request for qualifications (RFQ). The SOQ is a lengthier document than the SOI. The SOQ will include information about the firm's prior experience, staff capabilities, and resources.

A proposal, which responds to a request for proposals (RFP), may include the same information as an SOQ, but will also include a scope of work and scope of services to be provided by the landscape architecture firm. The scope of work and scope of services are likely to become part of the contract if the firm is selected to carry out the services. In general, effective marketing will result in more SOI, SOQ, and proposal opportunities.

The Statement of Interest and the Statement of Qualifications

The landscape architecture firm writes and assembles SOIs and SOQs in response to an RFI or RFQ. The RFI is used as an initial screening process. It describes the project and the services required in general terms so that the marketing staff or principal of the landscape architecture firm can decide if the firm has the prior related experience, track record, manpower, staff expertise, and other requirements necessary to carry out the project. After receiving the SOI from the landscape architecture firm, the agency that issued the RFI will send a package of information outlining the next step in the process—either submittal of an SOQ or a proposal.

The request for qualifications is a further screening device to determine which of the firms responding to the RFQ are most qualified to provide the solicited professional services. The RFQ may ask for information that will prequalify landscape architecture firms in terms of the firm's financial stability, availability of insurance, proximity of the firm's office to the project site, and other considerations. The agency or prospective client will evaluate all of the SOQs received and take one of several different actions, including the following:

1. Screen the firms to a shortlist of several firms invited to write competitive proposals.
2. Screen the firms to a shortlist of several firms invited for competitive interviews.
3. Rank the firms and select one for further discussion and negotiation of a scope of work and a contract.
4. Start the selection process over because the SOQs received did not provide an adequate pool of qualified firms.
5. Abandon the project.

The SOQ process normally requires a great deal of effort for a firm to be successful. The firm is competing with a wide variety of other firms and must write and put together an SOQ that is detailed and graphic. The process is expensive in terms of time and out-of-pocket costs.

Sometimes a public agency will use the RFQ format to prequalify a select list of landscape architecture firms capable of providing services for a specific type of project or a specific range of services. The agency will then draw upon the prequalified list of firms as specific project needs arise, selecting first one firm, then another, and revolving through the list of prequalified firms.

The Written Proposal

There are two general types of written proposals. The first responds to a request for proposals (RFP) where a private client or a public agency solicits proposals from any and all firms for a specific project. The RFP process usually results in a shortlist of firms to be interviewed for the project or direct selection of a firm. The selected firm goes on to negotiate a contract for professional services. The second type of RFP is received by a landscape architecture firm directly from a prospective private or public client without going through a competitive selection process. This direct selection process would be made by a prospective client that has done its homework and evaluated a number of different landscape architecture firms through means such as word of mouth and discussions with former clients.

A proposal written in response to an RFP must be carefully conceived and produced because the firm will be eliminated from the selection process if it is not

either awarded the contract based on its written proposal or short-listed for a personal interview. Writing proposals is expensive, and landscape architecture firms need to have a reasonable success rate. None of the firm's costs are reimbursed by the public agency or private company, and most landscape architecture firms cannot afford to continue submitting proposals unless they succeed at least some of the time.

Typically, the response to RFPs will include some of the same information provided in a response to an SOQ, including examples of prior related experience, expertise of the firm's key staff (résumés), and financial and insurance data. The RFP response also includes a written understanding of the project or problem, how the landscape architecture firm will approach the project, an employee-hours estimate, and a cost proposal.

Preparing a response to an RFI, RFQ, or RFP is an important capability required of landscape architecture firms because a large number of private projects and even more public works projects are obtained by engaging in the RFI, RFQ, and RFP process. Preparing standardized materials such as résumés, project lists, cut sheets, and lists of references, along with word processing for electronic cut and pasting, makes the response process easier and faster. The following general guidelines may be applied to the preparation of SOIs, SOQs, and proposals:

1. Always respond specifically to the questions asked in the RFI, RFQ, or RFP. Use the same headings. Address each of the specific items of information requested.
2. Always ask what specific criteria will be used in evaluating the SOQ or proposal. The evaluation criteria will usually be directly related to the information requested. If the evaluation criteria are available, always address each criterion.
3. Make phone calls or personal visits to the contact persons identified in the RFI, RFQ, or RFP. Before making contact, review the RFI, RFQ, or RFP and develop a list of questions to ask the contact person. The list of questions should be expanded by a brainstorming session in the landscape architecture office attended by key project staff, consultants, and other staff with experience in the specific type of project. Once the questions have been formulated, make contact with the contact per-

son. Take notes during the conversation. The phone calls or personal contact with the contact person will accomplish three things:

- A. Provide clarification about the project and alert the landscape architecture firm to nuances that are not covered in the written RFI, RFQ, or RFP.
 - B. Show interest in the project to the people who are on the selection committee.
 - C. Begin the process of getting to know the people who have made the request for services and become friendly with them.
4. Visit the site of the proposed project. Carry out research and a site analysis to the extent possible within the marketing budget set for the project. While visiting the site, take photographs that will be useful in the written response. The photographs will be evidence that the landscape architect has visited the site and will reinforce the landscape architecture firm's interest in the project with the selection committee.
 5. Set a time or dollar budget for the job-development effort needed to prepare an SOI, SOQ, or proposal for the prospective project. Set the budget prior to starting the response effort. Many firms use a 10 percent rule of thumb as a budget-setting guideline. In other words, job development should not exceed 10 percent of the anticipated professional fee. Set the budget and level of effort commensurate with the fee. If a project will have a fee of \$20,000, the job-development budget and level of effort will be small compared to a project that will have a fee of \$200,000. Be prepared to exceed the marketing budget if the chances of being selected appear to increase throughout the process of preparing the SOI, SOQ, or proposal.
 6. Always illustrate the SOI, SOQ, or proposal. The photographs taken during the initial site visit are excellent for illustrating the section of the response dealing with understanding of the project. Cut sheets or photographs of the landscape architecture firm's prior related experience can enhance the section of the response dealing with prior experience. Photographs of the firm's principals or key staff are effective for humanizing the résumés or descriptions of

- prior experience and expertise of the key staff who will be dedicated to the project.
7. Determine if there is a political agenda behind the scenes related to the RFI, RFQ, or RFP. Sometimes, even though the selection process is open to all firms, there is a political agenda that may make some firms unacceptable. If the firm appears to be unacceptable, don't spend the time, effort, and costs to go through the SOI, SOQ, or proposal process.
 8. Use the best typographic and illustrative methods available to the firm unless specifically required to respond in a certain way. Page layout software and laser printers are indispensable for effective proposal production.
 9. Consider how the landscape architecture firm's competitors may respond to the RFQ or RFP. Factor this consideration into the landscape architecture firm's response.
 10. Create a cover for the firm's response that will stand out from the other proposals. There may be a large number of proposals submitted, and the proposals that have covers that attract the reviewers may get reviewed first and remembered more by the selection committee members. In the competitive process, the landscape architecture firm should take advantage of every option to come out the winner.
 11. Always include a transmittal letter or cover letter that provides an opportunity for a brief recap of the most salient points of the SOQ or proposal.
 12. Minimize the use of lengthy statements of philosophy. Most prospective clients are more interested in what the landscape architect's experience is and what the landscape architect can do to solve the client's needs or problems.

The Interview

If the landscape architecture firm is successful in the SOQ or proposal process, the next step is usually an interview. In most cases, the interview is also a competitive process engaged in by the firms selected for the interview shortlist. The interview may also be noncompetitive. If the landscape architecture firm is fortunate to have been selected directly through the RFQ or RFP process, the personal interview is carried

out only to confirm the selection committee's decision. The selected firm enters directly into the negotiation phase with the client. When a direct selection is made, the interview and contract negotiation should be an upbeat process. The landscape architecture firm should do whatever is necessary to meet the administrative requests of the prospective client and keep the process on track, resulting in a signed contract.

The Competitive Interview

In the RFI, RFQ, and RFP process, a shortlist of firms is arrived at by a selection committee. The shortlisted landscape architecture firms will be invited for a competitive interview, which is the last phase of the selection process and the most stressful for the participating professionals. No matter how well prepared the firm's proposal is or how qualified the firm and its subconsultants may be, all can be lost if the personal interview is unsuccessful.

When the landscape architecture firm is notified that it has been short-listed, the firm must take this last part of the selection process very seriously. Time will be a limiting factor. There may be only a week or two from the time that the firm is notified of its selection to the shortlist and when it must appear at the interview. During the time that is available, the landscape architecture firm should rehash all of its efforts in the selection process in order to come up with its interview strategy. The following considerations are useful:

1. Touch base with the client's representative or key contact person and ask further detailed questions about the project based on further information gained by being short-listed for the interview.
2. Prepare an interview outline and assign personnel to specific speaking parts. Set time allotments for each speaker.
3. Discuss the pros and cons of who is best able to represent the firm in the interview. Choose the best speakers whose personalities are most closely aligned with the interview committee. Choose knowledgeable staff to participate. Many interview committees prefer to meet the firm's project manager at the interview.
4. Limit the number of representatives of the firm and its subconsultants who are allowed to attend the interview. Too many people can overwhelm the interview committee. The ex-

ception to this rule is when a number of specialized subconsultants are members of the team and it is important for them to be present to explain unique concepts or answer specialized questions.

5. Visual presentation materials are almost always a good idea. Slide shows, videos, photographs, copies of project cut sheets, overhead projector acetates, flip charts, illustration boards, models, and many other types of visual props are useful in interviews. The type of visual prop will depend on the makeup of the interview committee, the topic itself, the shape and size of the room, the comfort range of the selection committee, and the physical characteristics of the room. (Can it be darkened to show slides effectively?)
6. Check out the interview room beforehand, if possible. At a minimum, find out the physical characteristics, size, and shape of the room prior to the interview.
7. Rehearse the interview and go through as many dry runs as time permits. Practice makes perfect.
8. Always leave time to answer questions. If the members of the interview committee do not ask questions of the firm, the interview team should have a number of questions prepared to ask the interview committee in order to get them involved in a dialogue.
9. Involve the selection committee in conversation.
10. Always try to differentiate the firm from the other firms during the interview.
11. Always be honest. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know the answer to a question, and if you don't know, offer to find out and get back to the interview committee.
12. Don't criticize the competition.

new region. Does the firm provide a higher-quality service than landscape architecture firms in the region? Does the firm provide a unique service not yet offered in the region—landscape restoration and wetlands reconstruction, for example? Does the firm have a management system or production method that allows it to be significantly more competitive than firms existing in the region? Has the firm won widespread acclaim for its planning and design projects, including numerous national, state, and local awards? Does the firm employ a number of ambitious and talented staff who are looking for opportunities to advance their careers by developing a branch office? These are considerations for assessing whether the firm has opportunities to expand in the new geographic market.

Entering a new geographic market will be easier and less costly if the firm has a marketing edge on the firms already practicing landscape architecture in the region. Another important part of the decision to expand into the region is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing competition in the region. The capabilities and services provided by each existing firm should be tabulated, and a summary of strengths and weaknesses prepared for each firm. This process has a secondary benefit of identifying possible merger or acquisition candidates if the landscape architecture firm is considering this approach to establishing its new office. This process will also be useful in determining the economic size of the existing landscape architecture market.

If the landscape architecture firm determines that it has a marketable service and can fill a niche market or capture general market share in the new geographic region, the firm should assess the revenue potential. The firm should determine the size of the market, as well as what percentage of the existing market the firm will be able to capture.

A number of different methods and techniques can be used to assess the revenue potential of the new geographic market. The first decision, however, is whether to hire a professional business marketing analyst to carry out the market assessment or do it in house. The following techniques can be used if the firm decides to do the assessment in house.

Multiplier of Landscape Architecture Salaries

One way to assess the size of the landscape architecture market in any region is to identify the number of

Market Expansion— Entering New Markets

There are several ways for a landscape architecture firm to enter a new geographic market. One of the first considerations, however, is whether the landscape architecture firm has a service that is marketable in the

landscape architects practicing there, multiply by a salary and overhead factor, and convert to a yearly statistic. The number of registered landscape architects practicing in a city or region may be obtained from statistics available from the state board of technical registration, the yellow pages, or the local chapter of ASLA. If the region does not have licensure, professional registration, or an ASLA chapter, another option is to identify the number of registered architects or civil engineers practicing there. As a rule of thumb, there are ten architects and fifteen civil engineers practicing in every region for each landscape architect. Thus if the numbers of these related professions are available, the firm can estimate the potential number of landscape architects by using the numbers from the allied professionals. Next, the firm can determine the number of nonregistered landscape architects by assuming three nonregistrants for each registrant. Assuming that registrants would be in positions such as principals and project managers, and that nonregistrants would be in positions such as draftspersons and designers, an average pay rate can be set for each category. Average pay rates can be determined by using a number of different national publications of annual salary surveys, such as that published by Practice Management Associates, Ltd., of Newton, Massachusetts, or by using the firm's current pay rate categories. Last, an overhead and profit multiplier, such as 150 percent of the pay rate, should be established. To determine the size of the market, multiply the number of landscape architects in each category by the pay rate per hour, add the overhead and profit amount, and multiply by 2,080 hours per year to arrive at the annual amount. Totaling the amount will result in an approximation of the economic market size:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &(50 \text{ registrants} \times \$30 \text{ per hour}) \\
 &+ (50 \times \$45 \text{ per hour}) \times 2,080 = \$ 7,800,000 \\
 \\
 &(150 \text{ nonregistrants} \times \$14 \text{ per hour}) \\
 &+ (150 \times \$21 \text{ per hour}) \times 2,080 = \$10,920,000 \\
 \\
 \text{Total} & \qquad \qquad \qquad \$18,720,000
 \end{aligned}$$

The total market figure should be adjusted down because every hour of the yearly work week will not be available for producing revenue due to time spent in job development, overhead activities, vacations, and sick leave. Seventy percent of registrants' time and 85

percent of nonregistrants' time would be a more likely scenario of time available for producing revenue, resulting in an adjusted total market of \$14,742,000. The total market figure may be adjusted up or down based on the national or regional economy or other factors deemed relevant. If the local market has a higher-than-average number of practicing architects and engineers, the total market potential may be reduced because these professionals are likely to control a part of the market that would otherwise be available to landscape architecture firms. Economic adjustments are somewhat arbitrary, but it may be better to err on the conservative side. In the preceding example, the landscape architecture firm might apply a 20 percent reduction due to a large number of allied professionals working in the expansion market, resulting in an adjusted total market of \$11,793,600 for the expansion market.

Public Records Method

Virtually all cities, counties, and states make forecasts and projected budgets for public spending. These projections are often made five years in advance. Thus the city or county parks and recreation department will have a five-year projection of park development that will require planning and design efforts. The city or county transportation department will have a five-year budget projection of new roads and public works spending. Sometimes the projections will include categories for landscape architecture and environmental assessment associated with the transportation and public works improvements. Other times only total line item amounts will be available for the transportation and public works improvements. If only the total is available, a percentage of the cost, such as 5 percent, can be assumed for the landscape architectural work.

By researching the public records and budget projections, the landscape architecture firm can identify a total of public funds that will be spent in construction of public projects in the landscape architecture market. The total can be multiplied by a percentage such as 6 percent or 8 percent to determine the magnitude of fees that may be available (see table 8-1).

As a rule of thumb, the public works market in the expansion area can be estimated to be 50 percent of the private-sector market under normal economic conditions. Thus in the first year shown in table 8-1,

TABLE 8-1 Estimating Landscape Architecture Fees by Using Public Spending Forecasts

Public Agency	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
County transportation department	\$5.0 ^a	\$5.5	\$5.8	\$6.0
City engineering department	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.7
City housing authority	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
County parks department	10.0	12.0	15.0	18.0
City parks department	8.0	9.0	5.0	5.0
Other	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3
Total	27.0	31.4	31.5	35.5
Landscape architecture Fees @ 6%	1.62	1.88	1.89	2.13
Landscape Arch Fees @ 8%	2.16	2.51	2.52	2.84

^a Fees in millions of dollars.

the landscape architecture firm can assume a total market of \$4.32 million if 8 percent is used as the public-fee percentage likely and 50 percent is used as the public/private market split. Further adjustment can be based on local conditions. If the targeted expansion area is experiencing a boom in industrial growth and housing, the private-sector market may be estimated as being twice as large as the public-sector market, resulting in an estimated total market of \$6.48 million in fees.

Local or Regional Statistics on Niche Markets

There are many sources of information about niche markets. Housing is a good example. Local chapters of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) produce statistics on the number of houses built by category, such as single-family and multifamily. The landscape architecture firm can assess the size of the housing market by using the statistics available on housing starts and information from the firm's own archives.

Let's assume that housing information for the target city or region indicates that five thousand new homes will be constructed annually. This number can be multiplied by an average price per home of \$100,000, for example, to arrive at the total housing market of \$500 million. The actual average price per home is another statistic that is available from local and national sources. By studying the records of the firm's current housing market, the percentage of the

market that utilizes the services of a landscape architecture firm can be determined. Let's say that the firm estimates that 50 percent of the housing projects in the firm's current market use the services of a landscape architect for environmental assessment, site planning, and landscape design. The expansion market can be expected to represent a similar percentage, or \$250 million, of landscape architecture services. Of the total market, the landscape architecture firm estimates that 5 percent of the housing costs, or \$12.5 million, are for environmental assessment, site planning, and landscape design. If fees for the private sector work average 10 percent, the landscape architecture housing niche market is \$1.25 million.

Making an estimate of the market potential is an important element of deciding whether to expand into a new geographic area. The process should be carried out in the most defensible manner possible. Having a reasonably good estimate of the market potential is much better than blindly entering a market.

How to Get Established in the New Market

If the landscape architecture firm determines that it has a marketable service, has evaluated the revenue potential of the market, and has decided that it is feasible to capture enough market share so that future profits will pay back expansion costs, the firm must decide how it will establish its presence in the new geographic market and how it will compete with the existing firms in the market.

There are five basic ways to establish the firm's presence in the new geographic market and open an office:

1. Merger/acquisition with an existing firm
2. Hiring away a principal or key person from a firm in the existing market
3. Relocating a principal or key staff person from the firm to the new market
4. Shuttling a principal or key staff person to the new market
5. Associating with a local firm to secure a large project

Merger/Acquisition

Often a firm in the expansion market can benefit as much by a merger as the landscape architecture firm desiring to enter the new market. The greatest difficulty with this method of expansion is finding a candidate that is interested in merging and is compatible with the parent landscape architecture firm. Merger/acquisitions are time consuming if a willing partner is not readily found. Even if a willing partner is found, a merger/acquisition can take a year or more to work through and complete. Merger/acquisitions are not always successful. They require a considerable investment of management time. Regardless, merger/acquisition should always be considered as a means of expansion in the new geographic area.

Hiring Away

One of the best ways to speed up the expansion process and the local learning curve is by hiring away a locally successful principal or key staff person from another firm to serve as the principal in charge of the expansion office. The main downside is training the principal in the policies and practices of the landscape architecture firm. One other problem that can occasionally occur is that the new principal can use the opportunity to establish a private practice and then jump ship after the office is established. In most cases the new principal in charge of the expansion office will excel if empowered to develop the local market drawing on the expertise and marketing capability of the parent firm. When looking to hire away the talent for the new expansion office, the landscape architecture firm should look not only toward the private sector, but also to public employees who may be looking to move into the private market. Hiring an employee of

the local parks department, for example, can provide opportunities to obtain park work through the knowledge and contacts of the new hire.

Relocating a Principal or Key Staff Person

Developing an expansion office may be a timely opportunity for professional development and personal growth for one of the principals in the landscape architecture office or an ambitious associate or project manager. Starting a new office anywhere is a challenge that may provide a career opportunity for someone from the parent office. This is a good way to challenge and retain valuable staff if there is nowhere for them to move upward in the parent office.

Shuttling to the Expansion Location

Many firms have used this approach successfully to reduce some of the overhead costs associated with expansion offices. A principal is assigned the job of shuttling back and forth between the main office and the expansion office, staying perhaps two or three days a week in the expansion location to carry out job- and client-development tasks. Firms often use an executive suite type of office with a secretarial pool and an answering service in the expansion location, reducing the overhead costs until enough jobs have been developed to allow a fully staffed, permanent office location. This method of geographic expansion is economical and allows the landscape architecture firm to cut its losses and exit from the expansion attempt if it does not appear to be a profitable venture.

Associating with a Local Firm

Another way that some firms have initiated expansion into a new geographic area is by associating with a local firm to obtain one or more large contracts. This method usually works well when the landscape architecture firm has expertise or resources that can be instrumental for a smaller local firm to secure the large project. If there is to be a steady stream of similar projects, the landscape architecture firm can use the first project as a stepping stone to obtaining further work and ultimately to establishing the expansion office. This method can often result in an opportunity for merger/acquisition with the smaller local firm. Having developed work in the expansion location will also expedite expansion by the other means discussed, such as shuttling a principal back and forth.

The Marketing Staff

The size and makeup of the landscape architecture firm's marketing staff depends on the size of the firm, its financial resources, and the marketing attitude of the principals and owners of the firm, or how accepting they are of the need for a proactive marketing program. In one sense, the marketing staff is the entire

firm, all of its staff, no matter how large the firm. Making all of the firm's staff sensitive to marketing and market opportunities is goal number one of the firm's lead marketing personnel.

Notwithstanding the fact that all of the firm's staff play a role in marketing the firm's services, job development, and client maintenance, the greater the number of the firm's staff that is able to take on sole and specific functions of marketing, the more effective and

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| <p>I. Occupational classification: marketing production coordinator</p> <p>II. Organizational relationships</p> <p>A. Reports to: director of marketing</p> <p>B. Supervises: none</p> <p>C. Coordinates with</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and production staff 2. Secretarial and administrative staff 3. Project managers 4. Director of human resources 5. Business and finance director 6. Principal in charge of corporate planning and marketing 7. Principal in charge of production 8. Director of landscape architecture 9. Director of planning 10. Director of information systems 11. Public relations director <p>III. Primary duties: Produces proposals and marketing and advertising materials. Implements the firm's public relations program. Manages photo archives and slide file. Annually updates all SF254 and SF255 materials. Annually updates mailing lists and agency procurement data. Manages the data systems for marketing information and public relations.</p> <p>IV. Work performed</p> <p>A. Principal duties</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with principals and staff and generate final copies of proposals. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Produce proposals. b) Assist technical staff in gathering data for technical aspects of proposal production. c) Prepare graphics and insert materials for proposals. d) Write descriptions and promotional material for proposals. e) Coordinate production of proposals with technical staff. 2. Develop and carry out public relations plan in coordination with director of marketing, principals, and management staff. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Design and produce annual calendar. b) Design and produce at least twenty-four new project cut sheets each year. c) Update the firm's general brochure every two years. d) Identify national, regional, and local awards programs and submit for at least two national and four regional and local programs each year. |
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FIGURE 8-5. Job description for a marketing production coordinator.

3. Develop, maintain, and improve data input and retrieval systems for marketing and management information.
 - a) Develop and maintain an efficient workstation.
 - b) Create and maintain hard-copy and electronic master files of project descriptions, staff résumés, SF254, SF255, qualifications, firm history, and other information pertinent to proposals.
 - c) Update the firm's SF254 annually and mail to appropriate agencies and clients by February 1 of each year.
4. Train new employees about the firm's past project experience. Develop a project information packet that is included in the initial information given to new employees.
5. Assist principals in formulating an effective public relations program for effective firm participation in community service.
 - a) Identify community service opportunities.
 - b) Maintain contact with representatives of community service groups.
 - c) Develop and administer the annual budget for community service.
 - d) Publicize the firm's participation in community service events.
- B. Coordinating duties
 1. Coordinate with the marketing director.
 2. Remain in close contact with principals for public relations opportunities.
 3. Coordinate with administrative staff for filing space needs.
- C. Subsidiary duties
 1. Develop and maintain slide files.
 2. Update project information files.
 3. Create graphics and coordinate reproduction services for proposal submittals.
 4. Manage the firm's job-site sign program.
 5. Perform other related duties as requested.
 6. Coordinate with directors of marketing, landscape architecture, and planning to identify and select most promising projects for PR value.
 7. Support directors of marketing, landscape architecture, and planning, as well as principals and project managers in their individual marketing and public relations efforts.
 8. Assist in the development and updating of the firm's marketing program.
 9. Provide technical staff with support in their individual marketing and public relations efforts.
- V. Education, experience, and job requirements
 1. Good writing skills
 2. Macintosh computer skills
 3. Proficiency in page-layout, word-processing, spreadsheet, and database software applications
 4. Skills in management, planning, and coordinating work activities
 5. Sensitivity to interpersonal relations
 6. Photography skills
 7. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff and the general public
 8. Competent and current with technology applied to marketing and public relations such as print media, TV, and internet marketing
 9. Three years minimum experience in marketing and public relations
- VI. Measurement of performance
 1. Timely and accurate submittal of proposals
 2. Exceptional graphic design and visual quality of proposals, marketing, and public relations materials
 3. Harmony, happiness, and cooperation between co-workers

FIGURE 8-5. (Cont'd.)

successful the firm's marketing endeavors are likely to be. Most firms can not afford to delegate full-time staff responsibility or hire full-time marketing staff until the firm has reached a considerable size and revenues are large enough to support the overhead of full-time marketing efforts. Typically, a firm needs to have fifteen to twenty employees and have revenue of approximately \$750,000 before it can begin to think about full-time marketing staff. Until such time, marketing functions are handled by one or more principals working with assistance from the firm's planning and design staff and its secretarial staff. The principals are responsible for contacts; following up on leads; responding to RFIs, RFQs, and RFPs; and leading the firm in its interviews. Secretarial staff, aided by computers and page layout software, are normally indispensable in the production of proposals. The downside is taking principals away from revenue production.

If the economy (the external economic environment) is expanding or is particularly conducive to landscape architecture work, the firm will most likely be on a growth path and will eventually need full-time marketing staff. The first marketing person normally hired is a marketing coordinator responsible for producing proposals, coordinating the efforts of the technical staff who write the technical core of proposals, producing marketing materials, and managing the firm's public relations. Hiring a full-time marketing coordinator may coincide with one of the firm's principals devoting full time or nearly full-time to marketing. When this point is reached, the landscape architecture firm must be able to set an overhead rate high enough to generate revenue as much as \$40,000 in overhead costs just for salaries.

If the firm continues to grow, it might add a proposal production assistant, and a second and third principal might devote more time solely to marketing, job development, and client maintenance. At some point, the firm might consider a full-time marketing person at the principal level. Marketing support staff may be hired to manage photo archives and the production of marketing materials. Another option is hiring outside consulting firms to carry out some of the marketing functions, such as producing marketing materials.

The largest landscape architecture firms, which have multiple offices in several states and foreign countries, will not only have marketing staff in each individual office, but also have a corporate marketing department working out of the headquarters office.

The corporate marketing staff will study market trends and develop marketing strategies to tap the trends. They will meet with the top management of the firm and see that the firm's marketing direction is in line with firm's corporate goals. They will assist local offices with different marketing problems and in developing important clients. They will also develop cross-office marketing tools and make each office aware of the human resources available in the other offices. They may develop the firm's most high-profile marketing materials, such as a corporate brochure, video, or book describing the history and achievements of the firm.

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STUDY QUESTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Interview principals of landscape architecture firms in your area to find out how they obtain clients and contracts. Do they have a marketing plan? Do they follow it? What methods does the firm use to differentiate itself from other firms? What role does quality of services and completed design projects play in the marketing of the firm's professional services? Identify what the principals believe are the keys to marketing and obtaining clients and contracts. Discuss your findings in a paper.
2. Using this chapter and other references, write a paper that illustrates your understanding of the keys to successful marketing for a landscape architecture firm.
3. Divide your class into three-to-five-person teams. Each team is to function as a design office. Develop a strategic plan for your office.
4. Divide your class into three-to-five-person teams. Each team is to function as a design office. Develop a marketing plan for your office.

5. Divide your class into three-to-five-person teams. Each team is to function as a design office. Using projects you have completed in design studios or elsewhere, develop a series of project cut sheets for your work.
6. Develop an outline and techniques that you would use to make cold calls to prospective clients. Practice making cold calls to your classmates or to actual prospective clients so that you can fine-tune the outline and techniques.
7. Find a public-speaking opportunity in your community and carry out the speaking engagement.
8. Design a trade-show or conference booth for presenting the work of a landscape architecture firm. Present your design graphically. Consider building a model of the booth to a size of 10 feet by 20 feet.
9. Develop a slide and photo, video, or digital archive system for the work you have completed in school or in your practice of landscape architecture design.
10. Find an RFP advertising the need for professional landscape architecture service in your community. Obtain the RFP. Divide your class into three-to-five-person teams. Each team is to function as a design office. Each team is to develop a proposal in response to the specific guidelines of the RFP. Take the process to the point where each of the teams in the class is hypothetically shortlisted and prepare for an interview. Hold a mock interview.
11. Using this chapter and other references, try to determine the dollar size of the landscape architecture market in your region.