

Career Options for
Architects

EMPLOYMENT CHOICES IN THE MARKETPLACE 2003



Corporate Architects



“Practicing as a corporate architect involves work that reaches broader into the lifecycle of a building. There is much more contact with customer needs at the front end and property management performance at the back end.”

*Chuck First
Director, Major Capital Projects
Nationwide Insurance*

Organizations

Architects are employed by many business types. These organizations often have building assets that need to be managed to support the successful running of their operations. Corporations may be regional, national, or international in the territory they cover.

- Retail
- Office
- Manufacturing
- Medical
- Hospitality

Job Choices

Employment possibilities vary greatly by organization, exist under numerous job titles, and require any combination of duties. These positions can range from entry level planners to high level executive of corporate real estate. They may be housed at a central headquarters or remotely at a regional or field office.

- CAD Planner
- Project Specialist
- Office Services Manager
- Construction Coordinator
- CAFM Analyst
- Real Estate Director

Skills Needed

Job duties in a corporate setting use many of the skills learned in college. Depending on the position, they may also require additional knowledge often found in business courses. Some capabilities may only be acquired through hands on experience or training. Flexibility and the ability to learn are paramount in the corporate world given the high rate of change in the new economy.

- Building & Interior Design
- Customer Service
- Project Management
- Financial Analysis
- Communication
- Systems Infrastructure

Public Architects



“Pursuing employment in the public sector as a public architect places the architect in a non-traditional professional track. Public architects that work in government agencies find their roles very rewarding. This professional track puts the architect often into the dynamics of the legislative and community process related to public sector building department.”

*Michael Katzin, AIA
Projects Director, Fulton County Government*

Organizations

Public architects serve in varying capacities for government agencies, from the federal to the local levels. Most of the agencies recruit architects for positions associated with their capital projects planning, design, and construction programs. Positions may either be in-house or management of consultants.

- Civic Buildings
- Government Office
- Military Facilities
- Courts
- Research Facilities

Job Choices

There are a variety of opportunities for architects in the public sector. These choices include in-house program and construction managers, facility management, programming, urban/city planning, zoning/permitting specialists, and enforcement. The position ranges include department directors, project managers, and zoning/permitting and planning managers.

- Development Director
- Program Manager
- Construction Manager
- Facility Manager
- In-House Architect
- Zoning/Permit Reviewer

Skills Needed

Architects in the public sector need most of the same organization and problem solving skills as those architects in traditional roles. To reinforce these fundamental skills, additional abilities in budgeting and financial management are also important. Job-specific skills can only be acquired through on-the-job experience and selective continuing education. Also important are customer/client skills to interact with elected officials and the public.

- Organizational
- Communication
- Contract Management
- Budgeting
- Problem Solving
- Design & Construction

Facility Managers



“One of the joys of being involved in facility management is the knowledge you will be presented with new and exciting opportunities each day. Instead of specificity of knowledge (although also sometimes required), you are expected to have a working knowledge of every aspect of the work environment and the factors which impact that environment. Your efforts will not only often directly translate to the bottom line of the business, but also have a very real effect on the work life of every member of the organization.

*Rod Stevens
Manager Facility Information
Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc*

Organizations

FM architects are called upon by various businesses to integrate architecture, engineering, and the environmental sciences. These businesses understand the impact of facilities on their greatest strategic advantage—the creativity and productivity of their employees.

- Private corporations
- public corporations
- architecture firms
- consulting firms

Job Choices

Facility Management has only recently been identified as a field. Consequently, job titles and responsibilities vary widely depending upon the business’ understanding of what FM includes.

- Project Designer
- Strategic Facilities Planner
- Capital Project Coordinator
- Real Estate Manager
- Environmental Compliance Manager
- Building Operation Manager
- Facility Information Manager
- Asset Manager

Skills Needed

Architects are trained to gather, organize, and synthesize disparate information and provide creative solutions to problems based upon their analysis of that information. This method of thinking makes them a valuable team member for the diverse roles required by facility management (FM). An inquisitive mind, varied interests, a passion for lifetime learning, and the ability to embrace and lead change are essential.

- Strategic and Tactical Planning
- Building and Interior Design
- Project Management
- Technology Integration
- Communication
- Organization and Time Management
- Business & Financial Fundamentals
- Construction Methods

Other Options

Architects as WRITERS/CRITICS

“Architects as writers and/or critics serve on the staffs of professional journals, daily newspapers that carry architectural criticism, and weekly and monthly magazines that regularly report on developments in architecture . . . Positions range from entry level magazine writers/editors who cover professional news and write new product reports, to middle level and senior editors . . .”

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

SKILLS NEEDED

- Writing and Editorial Ability
- Objectivity
- National View
- Comprehensive Understanding of Profession

Architects as EDUCATORS

“Teaching future generations of architects about past, current, and emerging paradigms and movements in architecture is a very important and rewarding career choice . . . this path gives one a great deal of freedom in pursuing intellectual and research interests of one’s choice. Furthermore, global networking among fellow academicians, given current Internet resources, provides for instant access to colleagues around the world. Finally, control over one’s time is the ultimate benefit of a career in education.”

*Wolfgang Preisler, Professor of
Architecture, Univ. of Cincinnati*

SKILLS NEEDED

- Subject Expertise
- Communication
- Desire to Learn
- Organization
- Motivating Others

Architects as DEVELOPERS

“The architect can devise unusual buildings, but he will not be able to assess their practicability as real estate. By controlling both architecture and development, Portman has found new ways to give amenity and coherence to our everyday environment . . . Portman has created an unusual combination of organizations to deal with a wide range of professional commitments . . . including management companies.”

*From the book “Why John
Portman became an entrepreneur
as well as an architect.”*

SKILLS NEEDED

- Real Estate Processes
- Negotiation
- Business Management
- Development Regulations
- Entrepreneurial Spirit

Edited by Chuck First, AIA
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Contents by authors as identified