# Business Acumen for Architects

An American Institute of Architects Approved-Provider program from Penn State Executive Programs, executive education provider within the Smeal College of Business

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# Program Overview

Business Acumen for Architects delivers an educational experience for integrating better business processes into the practice of architecture to create sustainable value for the individual, the firm, and the profession. Using the pillars of Change, Planning, People, and Finance, participants will hone strategic thinking, business understanding, personal leadership, and business operations and development skills to implement new and innovative ways to lead and compete.

## Who Should Attend

This program is designed for leaders and managers in architectural firms. You do not need to be a member of AIA to participate.

## Program Content

Our teams, our research, our tools and our techniques enable us to integrate appropriate topics and delivery styles that result in an experience that is applicable, relevant, and focused. Business Acumen for Architects is comprised of these components:

### Learn-Sharing Modules and B-Studio

Our series of Learn-Sharing Modules is tailored to the architectural profession. Subject-matter experts lead interactive discussion and innovative exercises in face-to-face sessions.

The Business Charrette Studio, or B-Studio, is familiar to all architects as designers. We modified this studio approach and applied business acumen to enable the participants to capture and exchange business information in a familiar environment.

### Continuous Performance Improvement

The business of architecture requires continuous performance to succeed. The Business Acumen for Architects program supports this premise by taking a relationship-based approach from pre-attendance through the studio experience to post-departure. The face-to-face sessions lay the basis of relationship and subject matter knowledge while subsequent sessions focus on specific areas through webinars, apps, and other modes of information sharing.

### Learn-Sharing Modules and B-Studio Details

The Learn-Sharing Modules and B-Studio will be delivered over two full days at the Penn State University Park campus and held in private, modern executive education facilities. *Note: Each module awards 1.5 Learning Units. Credit designation: LU/HSW*

### Module 1: Understanding the Business Environment

Provides a detailed discussion of the current/future business enviroment specific to the architecture industry. Various business models used within the industry will be considered highlighting the need to adapt to an evolving competitive environment.

### Module 2: People Factors

Focuses on understanding the many aspects of the people involved in the profession of architecture. Participants will discuss issues of cultural diversity, generations, stakeholders, society as a whole, skill sets, people as a resource, etc.

## Register for this Program

Reserve your place by phone or e-mail, and then complete your registration online at *www.smeal.psu.edu/psep.* Registrations are requested a minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the program.

Phone: 1-800-311-6364

E-mail: psep@psu.edu

### Module 3: Leadership, Culture, and Communications

The discussion will focus on these elements specific to the architecture profession and their unique qualities and characteristics.

### Module 4: Strategy and Innovation

Knowing what kind of strategy may be needed and how to implement will be discussed. Several strategic planning methods will be presented with related cases on implementation techniques. Innovation will also be discussed from a business perspective (not building innovations) taking into consideration critical-thinking and design-think methods.

### Module 5: Finance for Architects

Basic financial elements will be presented with a specific focus on the architectural business model (NOT project budget or schedule of values). Consideration of various financial models for the profession (i.e. billable hours, value-added, maximum cost/price, commission, etc.) will be examined with discussions around the future of financial models for architects.

### Module 6: Client-facing, Marketing, and Business Development

This module will discuss the relationship among these components and the architect at every level of a firm. The intent is to exhibit the key factors or enablers of a practice to identify, acquire, maintain, and sustain a regular workflow. The recognition and importance of an appropriate client-facing approach (i.e. relationship-based) will be discussed given a firm's profile to client mix.

### Business Charrette Studio (B-Studio)

The intention behind the B-Studio is to immerse the participants in business-related topics specific to the architecture profession and to expose each participant to new skills through learn-sharing techniques. The combination of learn-sharing (classroom) with B-Studio (hands-on) enables the participant to learn and apply their newly acquired knowledge immediately.

## Faculty Leaders

**Dr. Carlo J. Ninassi, AIA, Program Director,** Associate Professor of Practice - Smeal College of Business, Penn State. He is also a licensed architect. Dr. Ninassi provides creative and innovative strategic solutions to aid clients in assessing, formulating and implementing strategy, leadership and organizational capabilities to meet their strategic objectives and create competitive advantage. Please visit the web to review his vitae.

## Location

This two-day program will be conducted at the Penn State University Park campus in State College, Pennsylvania. Participants stay at the historic Nittany Lion Inn adjacent to our private, modern executive education facilities.

## Fees

The program fee of $3,500 includes all tuition, private room accommodations, meals, access to recreational facilities, and program materials. Transportation is not included.

We support team participation to maximize the impact of learning. Teams of three or more receive significant savings. Please call for details on all of our special participation options.

We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express.

## Customize Your Experience

Custom programs are available to accommodate a cohort of your staff at a location flexible to your requirement. Investing in the Business Acumen for Architects program is a strategic enabler for architectural firms. It builds and sustains value in two distinct ways:

- Firms will begin to close the business leadership gap, become more competitive, extend strategic sustainability and subsequently be able to pass on their firm's legacy
- The in-house development of young leaders builds the talent pipeline while preserving knowledge and securing expertise.

## Penn State Executive Programs

Open the doors to transformational learning experiences with Penn State. We work with organizations and leaders from around the world to help shape strategies and practices that fuel competitive advantage and business success. We link strategic understanding with powerful ideas about how decisions affect overall corporate performance.

**Each program in our diverse portfolio offers:**

- Learning experiences that pair practical action learning and coaching with new knowledge, tools, and perspectives;
- Exposure to leading faculty and practitioner executives with extensive experience working with business professionals;
- Deeper exploration of critical topic areas with examples of how organizations around the world are addressing challenges now;
- Focus on successfully applying concepts to meet the needs of your unique situation.

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