Forces of Change Will Impact Design and Construction Professions of the Future

By Frank Stasiowski

Technological advances and a global marketplace are impacting the practice of business in the design and construction-professions. To stay at the forefront of these developments, experts are looking at the future and formulating a strategy to deal with an ever-changing, volatile and new marketplace.

1. **Clients Will Demand Faster and Faster Service.** Because of technology such as fax and globally networked offices that operate 24-hours a day, clients now expect-and get-instant service. Prediction: In five years, clients will expect these same services to take half the time. Successful firms will plan now to meet these demands by utilizing the unused data. Prediction: By the year 2000, successful firms will develop an intelligent data-sort mechanism to select, enhance and harvest knowledge and wisdom from their data, giving them the competitive edge. Firms that neglect to invent a harvesting process will be hampered by their inability to predict client needs and market trends and will die under a mountain of data.

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Frank Stasiowski, president and chief executive officer of PSMJ Resources, Inc., Newton, Mass., explains, “No matter how well we manage our firms, powerful forces are working to shape, even kill, our profession unless we recognize and embrace each one of them, not as obstacles but as opportunities to excel.”

Stasiowski looks into the future and identifies the seven forces for the allied industries of design and construction for 1996 and beyond.

2. **Knowledge, Not Data Will Create Competitive Edge.** Today’s workforce produces a voluminous amount of data, yet the information locked in this data often goes untapped because we are buried in unsorted, latest in technology for communication and transmission of information, and by establishing a globally networked workforce that can turn projects and designs around through the use of the 24-hour workday worldwide.

3. **Firms Will Create Multiple Worker Categories.** In 1990, I predicted that a severe talent shortage would plague our profession by 1995. Such a shortage is here now. The result: more independent contractors, more partnering, more part-time workers, more overtime, more “at-home” workers, less retirement. Prediction: Top firms will create multiple worker categories that enable them to utilize new segments of workforce to cut costs while expanding professional staffing numbers in diversi-
6 Successful Consultants Will Become Facilitators. As the design and construction markets become saturated, the volume of annual projects has decreased for many firms. Prediction: Smart firms will transition from consultation to focus on the facilitation of client needs by offering a full range of services and project management. Firms will actively implement recommended strategies, ranging from...
refurbishment to building management, from privatization to financing of projects.

**Global Money Interaction.** World currency will become totally interdependent with less volatility and a shrinking number of currencies. Capital will drive all design and construction decisions. Prediction: The global marketplace will become more accessible even to small firms. International clients will be attracted to design and construction firms that have international capability, not necessarily international locations or a large staff.

“My one overall prediction for 1996—the only constant in the future of the design and construction industries—is ‘warp speed change,’” Stasiowski concludes. “Success will be predicated by the ability to quickly adapt to whatever the market demands, and firms that still practice as they did even as recently as 1990 will die.”

**About the Author**

PSMJ Resources, Inc. is an international provider of strategic planning, management and marketing information and services for the design and construction industries worldwide. Headquartered in Newton, Mass., the firm has offices in San Diego, Atlanta and Sydney, Australia. Founded by Frank Stasiowski, the firm has been providing professional development, training, published information and tradeshow production for 20 years.