

**An Ethnography of Three Michigan Architecture Firms: The Effect of Organizational Culture on  
Workplace Client Engagement**

by

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For my boyfriend, Madison.

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## **Abstract**

Design studies researchers often agree on the importance of the first stage of the design process and the prominence of the architect and client relationship within this stage. Yet little seems to be known about the early interactions of architect and client. There is also no agreement on which stage is the first in the design process. Some refer to the stages prior to design development as “pre-design”. But what is pre-design if design takes place whenever someone “makes plans about the future environment” (Cuff 1991, 61).

This dissertation poses the question: how is organizational culture manifested and what cultural factors affect firms through the client engagement process? This question defines culture as a pattern of basic assumptions that a group developed in coping with problems that have worked well enough to be valid and taught to others through socialization (Schein 1984). It also adopts the term “client engagement” from marketing, where customers are more prevalent than clients and customer engagement is defined as “psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat-purchase customers of a service brand” (Bowden 2009, 65).

Qualitative research methods with ethnographic and case study tactics were used to answer this primary research question. Over a total of nine months, the researcher conducted ethnographic observations at three large (over 50 employees) Michigan-based architecture firms that competed with each other for workplace clients. While at these firms, field notes were

taken, ten face-to-face interviews were conducted, a total of 1,112 documents, and 779 hours of audio recordings were collected. Audio recordings were made of meetings internal to the architecture firms as well as with employees of client companies and others in the building industry.

This fieldwork draws on literature from different fields: design studies for architects and facility management for clients. In addition to the psychological, there is also a technical process of client engagement. The technical process includes the names and descriptions of each stage that the architect and client encounter. Architects begin this process with strategic planning while clients begin with the formation of an idea that change needs to happen. The technical client engagement process ends with what architects call “programming”, a confusing term since it is also used by clients.

Documents collected from both clients and architects show that this process is primarily motivated by money, observations show that it is more commonly motivated by what organizational studies researchers call positive connections. These are connections that lead “to feelings of inclusion, a felt sense of being important to others, experienced mutual benefit, and shared emotions” (Baker and Dutton 2007, 10). Studies have shown that positive connections lead to greater comprehensions by listeners (Krauss and Fussell 1991), a decrease in interpersonal conflict (Williams 2011), healthy team functioning (Baker and Dutton 2007), cooperation (Cooper and Sosik 2011; Rogerson-Revell 2007), and increase business profits (Spreitzer and Cameron 2012). This dissertation suggests that such findings are also true for positive connections between architects and clients.

The contributions of this dissertation cover many fields; therefore, the primary limitations are a matter of depth. Future research could be conducted with smaller firms, more firms, other building typologies, or from the perspective of the client.



## Chapter 1 Introduction

Design studies researchers and architects in practice have often disagreed on which stage of the design process is the first. In 1991 design studies researcher Dana Cuff published her classic book, *Architecture: The Story of Practice*, that included diagrams with schematic design as the first stage. In 1999, design studies researcher Robert Hershberger defined programming as “the first, and perhaps the most important, stage in the architecture delivery process” (Hershberger 1999, 1). Hershberger noted that historically programming was not included because it was not initially part of the interaction between architect and client at all. In fact, “historically, programming appears to have fallen outside the normal architectural services” (Hershberger 1999, 6).

Other authors have pointed to a particular phase, such as design development, and mentioned that everything prior to this stage is “pre-design”. This raises the question, what is design? Dana Cuff describes how we could define this term,

“Temporarily suspend the common definition, and imagine instead that every individual with a voice in the design process is a kind of designer - the client, the engineer, the contractor, the inhabitants, the college president, the fundraiser, and so on. The architect-designer, among these individuals, has the added responsibilities of coordinating all contributions and giving them some spatial expression. Design, then, is taking place whenever any of these actors makes plans about the future environment” (Cuff 1991, 61).

If design is “taking place whenever anyone makes plans about the future environment,” design begins the moment plans are initiated within the client company and there is no such thing as “pre-design”. Some design studies researchers have briefly taken note of architectural marketing but never in relation to the design process (Pressman 1995; Cuff 1991).

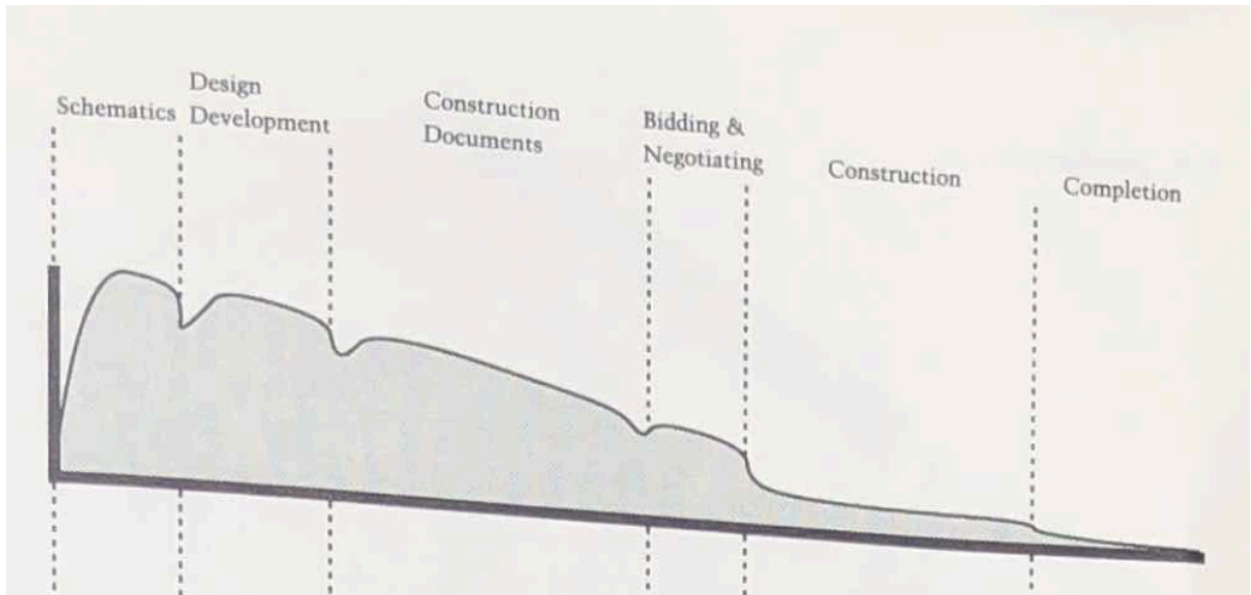
All of these design studies researchers, no matter what they have chosen to call the first stage agree that this first stage is the most important. This first stage is a time “in which serious mistakes can happen or insightful, formative decisions can be made” (Hershberger 1999, 2). Many also agree that the most important actors are the architect and client and this first stage is when the most interaction occurs between them, as seen in figure 1.<sup>1</sup> The AIA claimed that a strong architect-client relationship is “invaluable” to programming (Evans, Wheeler, and American Institute of Architects. 1969, 10) and one design studies researcher noted that the “ultimate role that an architect can play” of a “person sitting at [the client’s] right hand side that they trust implicitly, and is on their side of the table” (Berg n.d.). However, literature on how this relationship can be formed, and how architects can and do engage with their clients, is almost nonexistent. This dissertation is designed to explore client engagement through the theoretical lens of organizational culture as defined by organizational studies researcher Edgar Schein:

“the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein 1984, 4).

Specifically, this dissertation focuses on how organizational culture is manifested and motivates firms in the client engagement process.

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 comes from (Cuff 1991, 175).



*Figure 1: Relative levels of interaction between architects and clients throughout design and construction of a project*

### **1.1: What is client engagement?**

The concept of client engagement takes the form of two different processes in this dissertation: the technical and the psychological, or socio-psychological. The psychological process of client engagement comes from the field of marketing where the term customer engagement is more commonly used. Marketing researcher Jana Lay-Hwa Bowden defines customer engagement as “a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat- purchase customers of a service brand” (Bowden 2009, 65). The concept of engagement has been researched by many individuals in organizational studies who have each looked at different aspects of the term (W. A. Kahn 1990; Schaufeli et al. 2002; Hardaker and Fill 2005; Salanova, Agut, and Peiro 2005; Higgins 2006). Overall this term has been found to be “context-specific, giving rise to potential variations in the interpretation of the concept (Little & Little, 2006)” (Hollebeek 2010, 786). In other words,

customers engage with objects, products, and organizations in slightly different ways. This dissertation focuses on the ways in which “customers” engage with architecture firms.

Marketing researchers have also shown that this term embodies the concept of “voice” (Doorn et al. 2010), a term studied in management literature that refers to procedures “that allow people an opportunity to provide inputs to the decision maker” (Bies and Shapiro 1988, 676). These procedures have also been shown to be affected by positive relationships (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008), or one based on trust that is defined “in terms of positive connections that lead to feelings of inclusion, a felt sense of being important to others, experienced mutual benefit, and shared emotions” (Baker and Dutton 2007, 10). Since these relationships are interpersonal rather than psychological, this process can also be seen as a socio-psychological process. Despite the connections that marketing researchers have made between voice and customer engagement, those researching positive relationships have not yet made these connections. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of this researcher to address the gap.<sup>2</sup> The specific focus of this dissertation is on architects who primarily engage with clients, rather than consumers or customers, hence the term client engagement. Due to the size of the architecture firms and client companies observed, client engagement is a group level phenomenon in this dissertation.

Aside from the socio-psychological process of client engagement, there is also what this research calls the technical client engagement process. The term technical here is used simply to refer to the stages of the client engagement process that are being put together without much attached to them aside from names and descriptions. These stages begin with the start-up phase in which the idea of change enters the mind of the client and the marketing plan is formed in the

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this dissertation the term “this researcher” will be used to refer to the author, Jennifer Darby Morris.

architecture firm. The stages of this process will be laid out in Chapter Five. Literature on these technical steps of the client engagement process comes primarily from the field of design studies or professional practice. The two most commonly referred to stages that will be included in the technical client engagement process are marketing and programming. Programming has been defined by design studies researchers as a stage in which “the parameters of the project are defined - both quantitatively and qualitatively” (Architects 2013, 664) through an analytical “information processing process” (Palmer and American Institute of Architects. 1981, 1). As was noted in the introduction, programming was not always the responsibility of the architect. The debate over the responsibility for the task of programming continues to this day and will be a key piece of this dissertation.

A basic understanding of the two types of client engagement processes would not be complete without an understanding of how the term “client” is defined within this dissertation. The term “client” is a role that is defined in relation to the architect. The client is only such to the architect, within the client company this individual might be an owner, or chief executive officer. The fieldwork conducted for this dissertation was primarily focused on workplace or office design, therefore clients were those interested in pursuing these projects. Each of the three architecture firms that were observed had a different understanding of how to define a workplace client. For one of the firms a museum was a workplace project, while another of the three firms would not have defined it as such. For the most part workplace client companies were organized to incorporate facility management, or management with “ongoing responsibility for the delivery of services in support of the organization’s core business” (Atkin and Brooks 2015, 20). Within the context of the dissertation the facility manager, and facility management literature in general, will be referenced with regard to the client.

Within the context of the dissertation, the term “workplace client engagement” is employed as an overarching framework to explore the relationship between the technical and socio-psychological process and simultaneously avoid pitfalls entailed with embracing architectural terminology. It also creates a bridge between these three bodies of literature: organizational studies, facility management, and design studies.

## **1.2: Contributions, Methodology and Introduction to Case Studies**

Despite the decades since the 1990s, Andy Pressman’s words still ring true “there is much evidence that the architect-client relationship is understudied, under discussed, and underrated” (Pressman 1995, 221). The best to study such a relationship would be through ethnography and there have been relatively few architectural ethnographers. Judith Blau wrote in the 1970s about multinational corporate conglomerates (Blau 1984), Robert Gutman in the 1980s about values of practitioners (Gutman 1988), Dana Cuff in the 1990s about social negotiations between architects and clients (Cuff 1991), Albena Yaneva in the 2000s on social and material negotiations (Yaneva 2009), and most recently a historical ethnography on architectural practice by Aaron Cayer (Cayer 2018). Some of these researchers have been architects themselves, which anthropologists would typically refer to as “insiders”, while others have been sociologists or anthropologists, the “outsiders”. The research for this dissertation was an ethnography conducted by an outsider, trained as a cultural anthropologist. In addition to contributing to the few architectural ethnographies, the contributions that this research makes are primarily in tying together literature of several different fields: organizational studies, design studies and facility management.

To give a brief description of the firms, all three were competitors for workplace clients

and had headquarters located in Michigan. Each firm had multiple offices across the United States, including one location abroad, and all covered a variety of practice areas including cultural, housing, workplace, retail, healthcare, education, science and technology. Non-disclosure agreements were signed with each of the three case studies observed for this dissertation, and each firm was assigned a pseudonym that will be used throughout: Gilbert, Holler, and Raynor in the chronological order in which they were observed. However, the cultures of the three firms and stories of their clients have been preserved such that the actors will be able to recognize both themselves and their firms.

Of the three firms, Gilbert was situated in an office park and occupied one floor with a wide-open floor plan. The work was conducted by several hundred employees across six locations. Employees were separated by building typology and each group had their own marketing and business development staff that communicated infrequently with each other.

Holler was situated in a Michigan city, occupied several floors of a high-rise with a more complex floor plan broken up by many doors, walls, and elevator shafts. Work here was conducted by over a thousand employees in twelve locations and employees in these locations were divided by client and building type. Each office location had its own group of marketing and business development individuals that worked closely together in one general space. Both Gilbert and Holler had been around for over a century and did architectural, engineering, and landscape work.

Raynor was the smallest with just over 50 employees and the youngest of the firms. Like Gilbert it was situated in an office park and occupied one floor. Its floor plan was broken up by walls, doors and elevator shafts but not as many as at Holler. Employees at Raynor were grouped by job title with one marketing and business development group shared by both of its locations. The firm exclusively conducted architectural work and partnered with a small

minority-owned firm on some projects.

Fieldwork for this research was conducted from 2015 to 2016. The American Institute of Architects conducted a survey of architecture firms for these years and reported that the size of firms that Gilbert, Holler, and Raynor all belonged to, those over 50 employees, occupied only 5.1% of all architecture firms, however these firms staffed 47% of all architectural employees and produced 51.3% of all architectural billings (The American Institute of Architects 2016). This report also concluded that in 2015 21.5% of firms were very profitable (over 20%), 27.6% of firms were quite profitable (10-20%) and 41.2% were modestly profitable (under 10%). Only 9.7% of firms were reporting a loss. All of these numbers had improved from the last two reports in 2011 and 2013 respectively (The American Institute of Architects 2016).

Despite this resounding report, there was a financial crisis a few years prior that had affected each of the case studies. Individuals at Gilbert mentioned that they nearly went bankrupt during the recession and still had a bad reputation amongst several of its clients who were scared to work with them for fear of Gilbert shutting their doors. They had been pushed to take on any client possible to make a profit. Additionally, in an attempt to repair their reputation, Gilbert went through a large rebranding effort during the time they were being observed for this dissertation. Holler dealt with the financial crisis by taking on much larger clients than it had previously. During fieldwork at Holler, they seemed to be doing very well financially since they were turning down offers on client pursuits and actively searching for employees. It was unclear how the financial crisis had affected Raynor. This discussion is based on observations and comments from the firm employees rather than financial information, which was not obtained as part of this research.



### **1.3: Research Questions**

This research is “an attempt to make sense of [the data] after the fact” (Liebow 1967, 12). The data collected was analyzed to answer the overarching research question for this dissertation: How is organizational culture manifested and what cultural factors affect firms through the client engagement process? An understanding of the context within which this question is situated today must first be established through a brief historical account and review of the literature. Once established, the primary research question can be divided into three parts. Part one is the manifestations of organizational culture in the client engagement process, addressing the following subquestions:

1. How is the organizational culture of these three firms manifested in their visible artifacts and organizational structure?
2. How is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process?

Parts two and three address the two types of client engagement that were mentioned earlier in this chapter. Part two addresses the technical client engagement process with the following research subquestion:

3. What cultural factors affect firms through the different stages of the client engagement process?

Part three addresses the ways in which architects could and are currently interacting with their clients with the following subquestion:

4. How can organizational culture enable architects to create positive connections with their clients?

### **1.4: Chapter Overview**

Overall, the dissertation comprises eight chapters that can be divided into three parts.

Part One, The Background. After this introductory chapter, Chapters Two and Three situate the reader with the background context necessary to follow the Data Analysis chapters in Part Two. Chapter Two establishes the historical context for the client engagement process, which includes a brief history of programming, advertising and marketing while at the same time outlining the history of the professional practice of architecture. Chapter Three briefly reviews the literature that has been written on the professional culture of architects as well as that on client engagement from the fields of design studies, facility management and organizational studies. A broader understanding of the overall assumptions and beliefs of architects and their professional culture provides the background context necessary to understand the culture of the three individual architectural firms observed.

Part Two, The Data Analysis, Chapters Four through Seven. Chapter Four provides an introduction to the data collected through a description of the methodology and research design. Chapter Five gives a brief overview of the organizational culture of each of the three case studies as manifested in the firms' visible artifacts and organizational structure. Chapter Six provides an in-depth description of each of the different stages of the client engagement process beginning with the start-up phase and ending with architectural programming. Throughout this chapter examples of each of these stages of the client engagement process are provided from the three different firms. These examples begin to portray both the cultural factors that affect firms through each phase of the process and the way in which their organizational cultures are manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process. Chapter Seven tells the story of six mini-cases, two examples of client engagement from each of the three architecture firms. Each of these stories is followed by a brief analysis section detailing the ways in which the organizational culture of each firm manifested and the

ways in which these cultures affected the architects' ability to create positive connections with their clients.

Part Three, The Conclusions, Chapter Eight. Chapter Eight summarizes the findings of the research and generalizes them into broader conclusions. Architects and clients need to understand the overall client engagement process as a whole and how each stage motivates and affects the next, to create a better programming document. Additionally, an understanding of how a firm's organizational culture affects this process, and how architects can create positive connections with clients (and vice versa) will enable architects to have more control over the process and its outcomes. Theoretical and practical implications of the research in fields of organizational studies, design studies, facility management, and marketing are included as well as limitations and future work. Overall, the dissertation provides a broad view of how architectural culture affects workplace client engagement

## **Chapter 2 Historical Client Engagement Process and Professional Culture of Architects**

As explained in the previous chapter, the first stage of the client engagement process is often labeled as “programming” but it is unclear whose responsibility it is to define the needs of the building. This chapter shines light on the state of these discussions within the context of architecture in the United States by pinpointing a few details that occurred in the history of the client engagement process as background for the Data Chapters to follow. These details begin with design competitions that architects participated in for work and the growth of architectural education. As this story unfolds, professional architectural culture is perpetually being formed “in the sense that there is constantly some kind of learning going on about how to relate to the environment and to manage internal affairs” (Schein 1984, 10). Architecture evolved from a trade to a profession and then created its own schools, journals, organizations, and codes each in turn cementing the beliefs of the industry around the ways in which clients and architects should engage. This section ends with a brief tale of architectural curriculum in the United States, which will be discussed again briefly in Chapter Three. Along with this story, the client engagement process grows from architects paid solely for designs to those supervising construction through to competitions complete with interviews.

The earliest of these competitions was open to anyone who wished to respond, be they architects or otherwise. To pursue these projects, architects needed simply to pay attention to newspapers and other forms of media. Slowly other forms of competition were embraced, and architects needed to find other ways to engage with clients. One early way for architects to engage was through advertising, a field that had been around since America was founded

(Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990). The ways in which architects interacted with advertising set them up for how they interacted with marketing once the field was founded and available to services, rather than just goods, in the early 1970s. Therefore, the second section begins with a brief description of the field of advertising around when architects began to express interest. The section then will go into depth about how the professional organization of architects' beliefs of advertising developed from condemnation to discrete advertising towards a slow acceptance of certain forms of advertising so long as they were "in the best interest of the profession" (Cummings 1955, 14).

The third section tells of three concepts in the 1950s that had a profound effect on the way the workplace client engagement process looks today: the adoption of the term "programming", the birth of the field of facility management, and the acceptance of marketing in the services industry at large. This chapter will give some historical context for the client engagement process, which will be outlined in Chapter Six, and the professional culture of architects in the United States, which impacts the organizational cultures of the three firms as outlined in Chapter Five.

## **2.1: Founding of American Architecture, Competitions and American Architectural Education**

Not even a decade after the founding of the United States of America, in 1784, Columbia University began attempts to establish a course in architecture (Bedford 1981). It wasn't until nearly a century later that anything would come of it. The year 1789 marks the earliest recorded American architecture competition – the Philadelphia Library Company's new building. The Library Company placed an advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* that

included meager instructions “specifying only the length, width, and number of stories of the building and stating that present funds prohibited any kind of turret or cupola” (Landau 1989, 54). Architects who had not already submitted designs were to do so and the Library Company would select an architecture firm in two weeks who would get a premium for the design but not “engage the winner to supervise construction” since this was the task of a master mechanic.

These early competitions, such as the President’s House and Capitol in 1792, were often conducted improperly by modern standards and occasionally were not answered by any “men who could, by any stretch of the imagination, be characterized as architects” (Landau 1989, 55). Yet these competitions did help to “raise the business of architecture from a building trade to an artistic and scientific profession” (Norton 1977, 3). As the number of architects and the need for large buildings grew increasingly, the prevalence of competitions also grew in the early 1830s. In 1835 an English journal published an article giving recommendations for how competitions should be set up.

It wasn’t until several decades later that the number of architects, and their culture had grown to a place of being able to respond in kind to these European recommendations. In 1854, Richard Morris Hunt was the first American to graduate from the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Europe’s most well-known and oldest architecture school located in Paris. This began the tradition of Americans traveling to Paris for architecture school. The number of Americans attending the Ecole was not large in the beginning. Therefore, the general state of affairs of architecture in the United States remained abysmal. Architect A.D.F. Hamlin described the years around the Civil War,

“our architecture was floundering in the lowest depths of tastelessness and artistic poverty. There were few educated architects; the popular standards were almost grotesquely inartistic, and really fine architecture was nearly as impossible to execute as unlikely to be appreciated” (Hamlin 1908, 241).

This situation was accompanied by an expansion of the country’s population, a need for a large

number of buildings, and a great number of advances in material fabrication (De Long 1981) to encourage the growth of professional architectural training in the United States. In 1857 the American Institute of Architects (AIA) was founded, discussions began about a code of ethics, and the board of Trustees at Columbia University finally reached out to seek advice from Hunt about their school of architecture. Hunt declined and suggested one of his students instead, William Robert Ware.

In 1861 the Civil War broke out and during it competitions halted as did any progress on architectural education and discussion over a code of ethics for the AIA (Landau 1989). Once the War was over, Ware traveled to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and adopted a lot of its techniques into the first American school of architecture established at MIT in 1868. During these years competitions “came thick” (Landau 1989, 61) and the AIA published its first thoughts on competitions as a response to the New York City Board of Commissioners who asked for their “opinion as to means by which the best plans for [the New Post-office] might be obtained”. Two of the items outlined in the AIA’s response still hold true for request documents today including 1) asking the client for a particular deadline, and 2) “that the author of the adopted plan should be retained as the architect of the building, and receive the customary compensation for his services” (Upjohn et al. 1867). These opinions were reiterated in 1870 with the AIA’s first schedule of terms. Unfortunately, it wasn’t until decades later that this schedule had much effect as “too many architects remained outside the organization and the profession itself was still too weak to command the respect necessary for compliance” (Landau 1989, 61). By the end of the 1800s new architectural organizations had formed such as the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects in New York. These organizations began publishing their own competition codes, which also were not effective.

Competitions of the 1700s and 1800s were primarily for “civic buildings such as state

capitols (e.g., Ohio, New York, Connecticut, Nebraska) and memorials (Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Grant's Tomb), large institutional buildings (the Smithsonian Institution and the Milwaukee and New York City Public Libraries)" (Landau 1989, 53). However, the late 1800s also brought some of the earliest American workplace competitions for "the large commercial buildings that began rising in New York City in the 1870s and elsewhere in the 1880s" including the New York Produce Exchange in 1880 that had instructions adhering to the AIA's "and stated that before the final circular was issued, each architect was to be interviewed and his suggestions taken into account" (Landau 1989, 63).

In 1881, Ware established Columbia University's first course in architecture in the School of Mines, which later became the school of engineering. In describing the Ecole and its principles, Hamlin noted:

"Originality and innovation belong to the designer's maturity; the discipline most needed by the student is in the fundamentals of architectural conception and expression [...] In the daily criticism of the fellow-students as well as the occasional criticisms of the patron, it is primarily the artistic considerations that are emphasized" (Hamlin 1908, 243).

The Ecole was unique in its emphasis on the artistic, unlike the German school of architecture that focused on the scientific and the English that was mainly practical. Ware's second chance to create a school of architecture, when architecture broke from the school of Mines at Columbia, embraced all three aspects. Ware wrote "The problem before us in this country is to devise a course of study so carefully adjusted that the practical, scientific, and artistic studies may receive equal consideration" (Ware 1881, 61). Once Ware resigned from Columbia University in 1903, his successors "reorganized the school so that it emulated more closely the methods of the Ecole [...] Ware's school-run design studios were eliminated in favor of an atelier system based upon



that in Paris. Design was given greater prominence in the curriculum” (De Long 1981, 18).<sup>3</sup>

Architectural education has oscillated between these two positions ever since. In 1904, Alfred Hamlin, who had studied under Ware, introduced revisions at Columbia based on the premise that “the aim of a school of architecture must be to best train students for professional practice” (Bedford and Strauss 1981, 42). Both Ware and Hamlin insisted that the architecture curriculum be integrated with courses in liberal arts. In 1906 the School’s standards of admissions changed to require “two years of college or scientific school work or the equivalent, including languages, ancient and medieval history, and allied subjects” (Bedford 1981, 44). By 1911 there were “rumblings of discontent” about the “need to broaden work in design” (Bedford and Strauss 1981, 46). A committee of students in 1923 made suggestions focusing on the need to strengthen instruction in design (Strauss 1981, 97). Professor of the History of Architecture, Joseph Hudnut was appointed Acting Dean in 1934. Under Hudnut “design courses were to be more realistic and down-to-earth than the highly idealized and occasionally far-fetched design problems” that came with the artistic focus of the Ecole des Beaux Arts (Bletter 1981, 110). In 1936, under Leopold Arnaud, education was subdivided into four categories with design as the core “and the other three elements were meant to reinforce design”: construction, history and theory, and drawing (Boas 1981, 140).

## **2.2: Advertising**

As these changes were being made in architectural education, the state of the client engagement process also was being affected, beginning with advertising. By the time the AIA

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<sup>3</sup> Ateliers are also called “studios” and will be described in depth in the next chapter.

was founded, newspaper advertisements were already popular and about half of them were used to advertise drugs (Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990). Figure 2 shows one such advertisement for Peruna, a drug distributed by the Army and introduced to the general public after the civil war (Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990, 26). It contained about 19 percent alcohol and, along with most medicines at the time, also contained “anything from innocuous roots and herbs to laudanum, cocaine and opium” (Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990, 28). Advertisements claimed the drugs cured all kinds of diseases. Peruna was even said to improve one’s “sense of well-being” and aches of all kinds. This was just one example of the increasingly outrageous claims that drug companies made in the late 1800s to the point when they

“forced legitimate advertisers to recognize that the omnipresent proprietary advertising was “giving advertising a bad name.” People knew that a bottle of brown liquid could not simultaneously cure cancer, alleviate blindness, and straighten curvature of the spine. If the medicine ads were lies, how true were the clothing and real estate ads? This led to the national advertising industry beginning to police its own members for truth in advertising, and the business community beginning to police its local advertising via Better Business Bureaus” (Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990, 29).

Unfortunately, this early dishonesty had a profound impact on how advertising was viewed by members of professional societies. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) became one such society in 1909 when they published the first Code of Ethics which noted that “advertising tends to lower the standard of the profession, and is therefore condemned” (“AIA Code of Ethics” 1909, 274).



*Figure 2: Advertisement for Peruna*

World War I and the Depression brought tremendous pressure and economic challenges. Architects were forced to unite and adopt a universal language to reach the corporate culture of many of their clients. They could no longer rely solely on reputation and were forced to embrace self-promotion and advertising, despite the professional discomfort that still loomed. At the AIA board meeting in January 1917 a member asked for more information about the board's attitude on advertising. Subsequently, the board conducted a survey of other professional societies, which found that the American Medical Association [AMA], American Society of Civil Engineers [ASCE], American Bar Association [ABA], and American Institute of Consulting Engineers [AICE] also viewed advertising as unprofessional.

Based on these findings the AIA decided to keep the bans in its official code of ethics. Within a matter of years many of these professional societies diverged from their initial stance on advertising in very different ways. Doctors and lawyers managed to convince the public that

their services were indispensable and created legislative monopolies. The building industry embraced advertising in the early 20s. The AAE (American Association of Engineers) wrote that “the backbone of all successful public information work is well-handled advertising space in magazines and newspapers” (National conference on public information. and American association of engineers. 1922, 47) and the ASCE (American Society of Civil Engineers) allowed engineers to engage in advertising as long as it kept to the “lines of work in which he has had experience, and [the] responsible positions which he has held (Shanken 2010, 408).

Despite the initial interest in comparing themselves to others in the building industry, architects ignored other professions’ embrace of advertising and stuck with their initial decision. In 1927, the AIA put out its own policy condoning the use of promotional materials published by the building industry. This strict policy put architects at a disadvantage compared to others in the building industry that embraced advertising and the modern consumer culture. Some in the building industry used the AIA’s policy in their favor and advertised that they could do the same work of architects without the high price. This, coupled with the harsh economic times of the Depression and World War I, left architects in desperate need of work.

By the early 1930s, the AIA President claimed that architects had “lost as much as 90 percent of their building opportunities because of the Depression” (Shanken 2009, 4). Architects in practice were forced to abandon the “old model of the artist-architect” and adopt a managerial and organizational model that allowed them to “imagine themselves as managers of the building trades and as consultants in taste who handled the swelling literature of the building industry” (Shanken 2010, 410).

The government also helped relieve some of this economic strain by hiring many architects into new agencies created in the New Deal, like the Public Works Administration and the Resettlement Administration (Shanken 2009, 44). Architects did not face the economic

challenges of this time period alone. The advertising industry was also facing challenges. President Roosevelt, advised by a group of individuals who despised the advertising industry, took office in 1933. He considered banning ads completely until 1941 when he decided instead to embrace advertising “as a way of avoiding some of the propaganda debacles of World War I” (Shanken 2009, 99).

A shift in the approach architects took to advertising began in the early 1940s when Richmond H. Shreve, an architect who represented East Coast business elite and had already amassed a long list of large corporate clients, became the new president of the AIA. When presented in 1941 with several advertisements in violation of the AIA policy, Shreve amended the code to allow for the advertisements and in the next year he “continued to relax the rules on advertising, rewording AIA policy to condemn “inclusion of photographs of architects in advertisements of building products,” without forbidding it” (Shanken 2010, 421).

Publications of the late 1940s reflect the controversy between advertising and architecture, explaining that architects don’t advertise but can do many things to self-promote. In his 1947 publication entitled *\*Architectural Practice\**, Cowgill explained that “newspapers and magazines often give the most credit for newsworthy buildings to contractors and the producers of materials and equipment”. But there are other ways to advertise in more discrete ways and gain attention: “advertising in the guise of public education” on the radio, posting “a small sign at the construction site, informing the public of the identity of the architect of the building”, and the “sending of circulars through the mail” (Cowgill and Small 1947, 6–7). Cowgill also mentioned self-promotion through networking with an in-depth description of the importance of the salesman’s personality and how he must not be “superficial” or “niggardly” but instead “generous” and expressive. This is important because “an architect’s best advertisements are his successful buildings and his best salesmen are his satisfied former

clients”.<sup>4</sup>

Instead of focusing on advertising in the strict sense of the word, an architect should instead focus on having a good reputation and positive, welcoming personality to everyone they encounter, since everyone could either be a client or refer a client to them. Cowgill believed that “when an architectural firm has built up a reputation, clients will come to it, and the more reserved the attitude toward prospective clients the better” (Cowgill and Small 1947, 3). Cowgill was not the only architect who embraced these more discrete forms of advertising. Another form of discrete reputation-based advertising rose around this same time period: “the rise of awards program, beginning with *Progressive Architecture*’s first program of 1947-49. By the mid-1950s, the awards programs of the *Journal of the AIA* and of *Architectural Records* were annual events, as were manufacturers’ “juried” awards” (Lipstadt 1989a, 89).

Despite this rise in discrete advertising, formal codes and standards, the AIA ignored these methods and continued to explicitly prohibit formal advertising. After the eighty-sixth convention of the AIA in 1954, the Standards of Professional Practice in Architecture reflected and even expanded upon similar changes to that which Cowgill outlined in his book. Architects could participate publicly on the radio or TV “if the program is in the best interest of the profession” and could “speak to public service, community and educational groups to better explain the profession but not to advertise his own professional availability” (Cummings 1955, 14).<sup>5</sup> These and other changes of the 1950s “opened the way for both the gigantic, businesslike architectural firms that emerged in the postwar decades” (Shanken 2010, 427) similar to some of the case studies of this dissertation.

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<sup>4</sup> Women started becoming architects in the early 1900s but they were, and still are, a minority group within the profession itself.

<sup>5</sup> Women started becoming architects in the early 1900s but they were, and still are, a minority group within the profession.

## 2.3: Program, Facility Management and Marketing

In the 1950s there were three important changes that impacted the field of client engagement. The first of these changes was how the term “program”, defined in the previous chapter, was intended by architects and clients. The change began several decades earlier when the National Advisory Council on School Buildings under the Office of Education was formed “at the request of State superintendent and commissioners of education” (Barrows 1937). This council included one architect on the council and a group of advisory architects nominated by each regional director of AIA. The Council’s first duty of business was to conduct a study on “The Functional Planning of School Buildings” because by the turn of the century, schools were “factory-like, dark and dank” and “had grown so disorganized in program and plan that reformers renewed their calls for wholesome environments for the nation's youth” (Weisser 2006, 200). This is a second early usage for the term “program”, which up until now has been used to refer to the document that architects respond to in a competition. This functional planning study was attempting to create a program document for the entirety of a particular building typology. It is possible that the term was also being used as a verb during this time period, however it was definitely used as a noun in architecture journals in 1949 (“Programme | Program, V.” n.d.).<sup>6</sup>

The gerund “programming” was not used until 1959. At the time the owners of the architecture firm Caudill Rowlett Scott (CRS) published an article that stated “programming initiates the problem-solving approach because actually it is finding out what the problem is. In essence, architectural analysis (we think this is a better term) is the prelude to good design” r.

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<sup>6</sup> This was the earliest this researcher was able to trace the usage of the term.

By the 1960s, the term “programming” was being used widely by many architectural firms other than CRS. In 1964, Louis Rossetti, owner of the Detroit based firm Rossetti, published an article on programming in which he outlined programming that had recently been done with some clients. He noted something that researchers have been noting ever since, “programming, if it is to be tailored to the best interests of clients, is an area in which there are few fully qualified practitioners” (Rossetti 1964, 39). Horowitz noted similar findings in studies of science building programs conducted with the National Science Foundation that he published on in 1967. These studies found that such programs “are often of poor quality or are absent all together”.

Around the same time as the word programming became widely employed by architects, the field of facility management emerged in workplace design. In the late 1950s the design concept known as *Burolandschaft*, or office landscaping, was developed and the design of the office environment shifted towards more open floor plans. In 1964 Herman Miller’s Action Office “further transformed the office into an infinitely flexible space, crossed with interchangeable nodes” (Hookway 2000, 62). These office plans and furniture were “ahead of office design” and “ahead of the thinking of the average office manager” (Wiggins 2014, 1). At the same time Universities were exploring “new teaching and learning methods for science laboratory courses”. These discussions between Herman Miller and faculty of Michigan State University led to a research experiment to “demonstrate that a more responsive facility management service could pay off, both in improved educational proficiency and in more intense usage of expensive building space” (Propst et al. 1976, 18). This study concluded that

“facilities are an important economic ingredient in organizational life; use them to exert a significant positive influence on the work process” and people should “enable facility management to develop as a dynamic responsibility. Give its executors authority. View it as a continuing function worthy of talent and attention, one that is directly tied to basic program development” (Propst et al. 1976, 18).

A few years after these findings were published, Herman Miller hosted a conference in



Ann Arbor, Michigan under the same title, “Facility Influence on Productivity”. At this conference George Graves of Texas Eastern Transmission Corp., Charles Hitch of Manufacturer’s Bank in Detroit and David Armstrong of Michigan State University came together to voice “a need for an organization comprised of facility professionals from private industry”. This led to the first meeting of the National Facility Management Association in October of 1980, which soon changed its name to the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) a year later (“Brief History of IFMA,” n.d.).

The final change that impacted client engagement began outside the field of architecture in 1953 when the field of marketing began to pay more attention to services (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993). About a decade later, a 1969 dissertation was the first to ask the question of whether goods and services were different in terms of marketing (Johnson 1969). As this debate continued to rage in marketing, there were several lawsuits against the architectural industry over fee schedules and the Sherman anti-trust Act. These cases caused the AIA to abandon their prohibitions on advertising and instead write about and organize around marketing. In 1971 architectural researcher Weld Coxe described advertising, promotion, public relations, merchandising, propaganda and publicity as a 20th century “science of new techniques” to deal with “the growing awareness that perhaps the most difficult challenge of this age is how one person can capture the attention of another long enough to expose him to an idea” (Coxe 1971, 4). The first organization of marketing in architecture, the Society of Marketing Professionals, was founded in 1973 in recognition of “the need to sharpen skills, pool resources, and work together to build their businesses” (“About the Society” n.d.).

AIA codes slowly started incorporating more forms of advertising. In 1977 this code added telephone directory display advertising to the original list of prohibitions and prohibited “exaggerated, misleading, deceptive or false statements or claims about their professional

qualifications”. At the same time it noted that “Members may participate in an architectural design competition only when sufficient information concerning the project and the client has been provided to make possible an adequate design solution” (American Institute of Architects 1977). This language was reflected again in the 1979 code. In the Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct since then the only prohibition against advertising reads “Members shall not intentionally or recklessly mislead existing or prospective clients about the results that can be achieved through the use of the Members' services, nor shall the Members state that they can achieve results by means that violate applicable law or this Code” (American Institute of Architects 2018).

## **2.4: Conclusion**

To this day, the concept of whose job it is to define the needs of the building is still in dispute. AIA documents leave programming in the hands of the client. The 1987 version of AIA document B141, entitled “The Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Architect with Standard Form of Architect’s Services” mentions that the architect is required only “to provide a preliminary evaluation of the Owner's program” (American Institute of Architects 1987). While the 1997 version lists programming as one of the services that an architect should provide “only if specifically designated” (American Institute of Architects 1997). Still many clients produce a program documents and even use the term programming. Therefore, each architect and client must work out which approach is appropriate for their project individually. There are some architecture firms that include programming as part of their normal fee, for example Kieran Timberlake, and some clients that never employ architects for any aspect of programming. This dispute between architect and client programming is at the heart of the client engagement process and will therefore continue to be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Open competitions of the past were seen by sponsors as a “good value” and “intimately tied” to architecture, different from the normal architecture selection process that allowed a chance to solve unique “challenging problems” (Lipstadt 1989a, 83). In the 1970s, competitions limited to architects within a specific geographic area were still fairly frequent; and invited competitions were on the rise (Lipstadt 1989b, 102). These are still common today.<sup>7</sup> However, also in the 1970s, open competitions “of sufficient newsworthiness to be reported in the press” were on the decline, and it was believed by many that they had disappeared entirely. Such open competitions themselves are no longer common, but they had a great impact on the process of client engagement today. Clients still give particular deadlines for request documents, shortlist and conduct interviews.<sup>8</sup> Today, unlike the historical competitions of the late 1700s, most architects are engaged to supervise construction after pursuit. Finally, the improper conduct of early open competitions that led to “violently opposed views on the propriety and utility of competitions are still heard, and these differences are quite unlikely ever to be resolved” (Lipstadt 1989b, 109).

In organizational studies, advertising has now been embraced as a part of the larger field of marketing. Despite the early history of only marketing goods, the distinction between marketing goods and services has not been discussed since 1986 (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993). In architecture, the door has been opened to advertising, though the AIA still publishes warnings about its proper usage. In 2002 the AIA came out with the Antitrust Compliance Statement and Procedures that warned the profession to “be careful that all advertising, announcements, and other communications that might affect competition are accurate, and are in no way deceptive or

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<sup>7</sup> There was at least one open competition limited to architects within a specific geographic area and several invited competitions, one of which will be detailed in Chapter Seven.

<sup>8</sup> There was not a workplace open competition during this research.

misleading” (American Institute of Architects 2002, 8). It is also still rare to find architecture firms advertising on TV or in newspapers. On the other hand, discrete forms of marketing such as those outlined by Cowgill are repeated to this day by architectural researchers such as Weld Coxe in 1986, who noted one form of marketing was unplanned that “relies almost entirely on reputation” (Coxe et al. 1986, 57).

Throughout this history not only did the stages of the client engagement process, that will be seen in depth in Chapter Six, grow, but architectural culture also grew and became established. Organizations such as the AIA still have profound impact on the industry of architects, growing from one small organization with few people to the many chapters that exist in each state today. Architectural education programs exist in both forms similar to that of the Beaux Arts ateliers such as the University of Michigan’s, as well as more business-oriented programs such as Lawrence Technological University, and other more anthropological-oriented forms such as Archeworks in Chicago. Through this history architects became more entrenched in their beliefs and assumptions, both cultural artifacts, that will affect the client engagement process in later chapters.

### **Chapter 3 Literature Review**

This chapter gives a review of the literature pertaining to the two separate aspects of the primary research question: how is organizational culture manifested and what cultural factors affect firms through the client engagement process. The first section begins with an explanation of roles that individuals take on throughout the design process. These roles are informed by the beliefs and expectations that individuals have who hold these roles. Though clients are also informed by their beliefs and expectations, this chapter will focus primarily on the beliefs, expectations, and socialization process that informs these roles within the professional culture of architecture. As explained by former organizational studies professor Edgar Schein,

“Because culture serves the function of stabilizing the external and internal environment for an organization, it must be taught to new members. It would not serve its function if every generation of new members could introduce new perceptions, language, thinking patterns, and rules of interaction. For culture to serve its function, it must be perceived as correct and valid, and if it is perceived that way, it automatically follows that it must be taught to newcomers” (Schein 1984, 10).

The second section is a review of the literature on client engagement broken into the two types of processes mentioned in the introduction: the psychological and the technical processes. Literature throughout this chapter comes from three primary fields: design studies, organizational studies and facility management. Design studies and facility management literature broadly represent the architect and the client, respectively. There have been a few design studies researchers to briefly mention the psychological process of client engagement. Design studies researcher Andy Pressman noted “the most important element is the trust and confidence of the individual client representatives. This is a rare condition and one that we will always be looking

for and trying to inspire.” (Pressman 1995, 140). Architect David Koren’s 2005 book has a section on the “value of relationships” that gives some tips on building relationships, including starting early, being a human being, listen, use your opportunities wisely, connect, be generous, be consistent, don’t screw up and if you do screw up, fix it (Koren 2005, 10). In the field of design studies, however, research has not been done separately on how to build trust and confidence.

This research has instead been conducted within the organizational literature in the field of positive organizational scholarship, defined as a field of study that “focuses on positively deviant organizational performance, or successful performance that dramatically exceeds the norm in a positive direction” (Spreitzer and Cameron 2012, 85). This literature draws on the concept of a positive relationship or one based on trust that is defined “in terms of positive connections that lead to feelings of inclusion, a felt sense of being important to others, experienced mutual benefit, and shared emotions” (Baker and Dutton 2007, 10).

There are many benefits of positive relationships within an organization including generating healthy team functioning, helping individuals reach their goals (Baker and Dutton 2007), facilitating cooperation (Cooper and Sosik 2011; Rogerson-Revell 2007), building social and personal resources (Baker and Dutton 2007; Fredrickson 2003), helping employees grow and develop, and increasing business profits (Spreitzer and Cameron 2012). Though the benefits of positive relationships have primarily been researched within organizations rather than from organizations to clients, there was one organizational studies researcher who briefly mentioned such affects stating that having a “career with a heart [...] could translate into going above and beyond expected efforts in working with a client” (Kopelman et al. 2012, 164). The literature that includes both positive organizational scholarship and design studies is extremely limited. This research looks to fill both the gap in literature that exists between design studies and

organizational studies as well as that which exists between positive organizational scholarship and clients.

### **3.1: Professional Culture**

#### **3.1.1: Roles**

There has been much literature written on roles in general, primarily in the fields of psychology and organizational studies but also by design studies researcher David Canter (Canter 1984) and Dana Cuff (Cuff 1991). This section will begin with a discussion of roles, using Gilbert as an example, before explaining the research that has been done in design studies and organizational studies. This research will have implications for how architects create positive connections with their clients and situates the conversation for the culture of professional practice that follows and informs the roles individuals take on throughout the design process.

University of Michigan professors of the Institute of Social Research, Robert Kahn and Daniel Katz, wrote extensively on role theory. In their books, they define roles as “standardized patterns of behavior required of all persons playing a part in a given functional relationship, regardless of personal wishes or interpersonal obligations irrelevant to the functional relationship” (Katz and Kahn 1978, 43). As an example, at Gilbert the landscape architect or healthcare studio principal would each be individual roles no matter which individual is hired to occupy them. Each individual role “comes with its own expectations, or the ideas held by others in the organization to define that role and the behaviors expected of that individual (Katz and Kahn 1978, 190). These expectations and behaviors are taught through the process of

socialization.

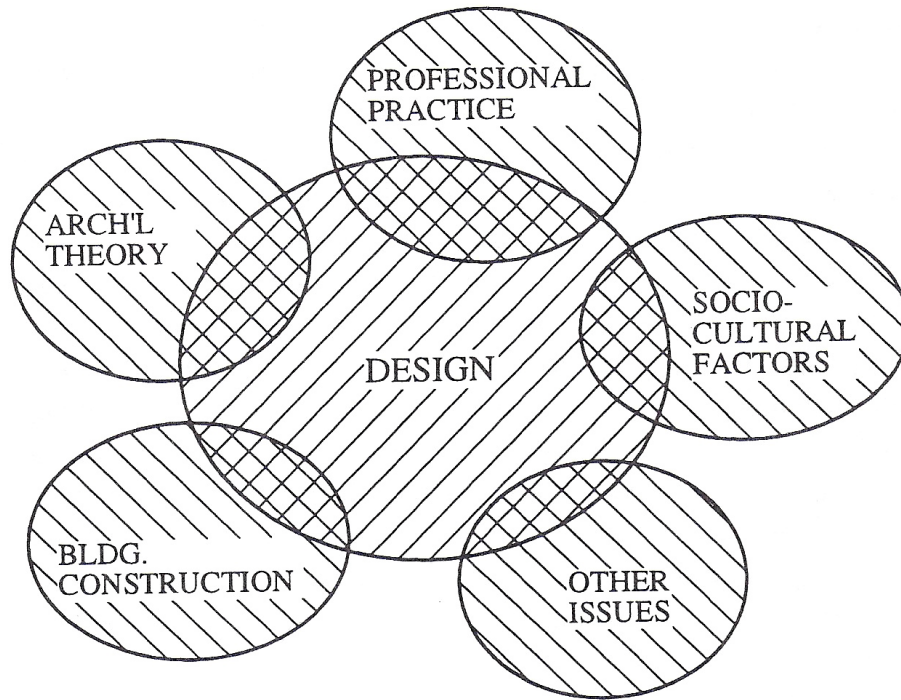
### **3.1.1.1: Socialization**

Socialization has been defined in organizational studies as “the process of being made a member of a group, learning the ropes, and being taught how one must communicate and interact to get things done” (Pascale 1985, 27). This process begins at school. The current model of architectural education was passed down through the generations, with only a few changes made along the way, from the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Design studies researchers to this day still discuss a model of education very similar to that of Leopold Arnaut’s model from the 1930s mentioned in the previous chapter. In this model, design is the predominant value, and anything else, whether it is taught in another course, mentioned in a lecture, or discussed, is peripheral (Groat and Ahrentzen 2001, 239). In fact, “almost 70% of an architectural curriculum takes place in or is related to the ‘studio’” (Koch et al. 2002, 6). Despite earlier models of architectural education that were vastly different, today “design studio courses are more important than other architecture or liberal arts courses” (Koch et al. 2002, 6). This education model has been referred to as the design-as-centerpoint model by design researchers Linda Groat and Sherry Ahrentzen, seen in figure 3 below.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Figure 3 from (Groat and Ahrentzen 2001, 239).





*Figure 3: The design-as-centerpoint model of architectural education*

Within this model, education is based around ateliers, or studios.<sup>10</sup> Studio is a term that describes both a type of place and a course in the architectural curriculum. The studio as a place is a large open space where each student is assigned their own workspace complete with a drawing desk.<sup>11</sup> The space itself is often messy yet creative, “Study models, sketches, diagrams, and computer drawings abound at various levels of completion, and students create their own personal space within the confines of the studio by whatever means available” (Pressman 2006, 17). Students of the same studio class all have their workspaces in the same location. This proximity is important in the formation of culture as “Proximity contributes to group formation” (Shaw 1971, 88). Architects believe that this time is important because “students must devote

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<sup>10</sup> This term was also used in all of the case studies.

<sup>11</sup> Singular “they” and “their” will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to people whose gender is unknown to reduce gender bias. “They has been in consistent use as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s” (“Singular ‘They’ | Merriam-Webster” n.d.).

themselves to studio in order to belong to the architecture community.” It is only through spending the majority of time sitting at a studio desk that one can “learn about complex social and cultural issues” around architecture (Koch et al. 2002, 6).

Within this space, studio is a series of design seminars that meet for 16-20 hours a week with one faculty member serving 12-14 students. During this class, students work as individual designers who orchestrate “every aspect of a project” (Pressman 1993, 159). Though the present model of education largely reflects that of the Ecole, these studio courses reflect the variety of values taught throughout Europe. Each studio differs slightly in content based on the issues that a particular leading faculty member “considers most significant” (Cuff 1991, 65). Some faculty, like the German school of days past, value very practical design problems, such as asking students to “design an international airport that takes into account the increasing mobility of populations.” However, other faculty focus on much more esoteric design problems, common in the Ecole, on which the students might be asked to “Do ... well, something relating to dependence and dominance, twinning, monster cities, [...] complex cinematic dreamscapes, artificial intelligence, cybernetics” (Monaghan 2001, A34). Aside from these differences, the general structure of the studio remains the same (Cuff 1991, 63). It is essential for students to do well in this class because architects believe that “It is impossible to be a successful architect unless you excel in the design studio” (Koch et al. 2002, 6).

Studio class time is split into desk crits and small group reviews that involve criticism by peers, architecture faculty and guests.<sup>12</sup> During desk crits, the faculty member leading the studio visits each student’s studio space to talk to them individually, often communicating through drawing. Twice a term, students are subject to more formal criticism in the form of a review or

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<sup>12</sup> Criticism is often shortened to the phrase “crit”.

jury. During these reviews,

“students present their completed design work one-by-one in front of a group of faculty, visiting professionals, their classmates, and interested passersby. Faculty and critics publicly critique each project spontaneously and students are asked to defend their work” (Anthony 1991, 3).

Due to the audience that these reviews bring, “some junior design faculty are more concerned about how their senior colleagues, rather than the students, will respond to their jury comments” (Anthony 1991, 4).

The process of socialization continues when architects leave school,

“perhaps more dramatically, when the graduate enters an organization on his first job. It happens again when he switches within the organization from one department to another, or from one rank level to another. It occurs all over again if he leaves” an organization (Schein 1984, 54).

Throughout this entire process of architectural socialization, an individual is exposed to and gradually learns the culture of architecture and the organizations one works for. Therefore, to understand how this culture affects client engagement, “it is imperative to delve into the underlying assumptions, which are typically unconscious but which actually determine how group members perceive, think, and feel” (Schein 1984, 4). **The following sections will delve into exactly this, exploring the languages, ways of thinking and expertise of architects.**

### **3.1.1.2: Languages**

During the socialization process the student of architecture learns the languages of architecture that set that individual apart from his or her clients. There are many different types of languages that affect the individual’s perspective. The first is the individual’s own native language(s). Though there has been some research conducted on architecture of other countries (Coxe and Hayden 1993), studies have yet to be conducted on the effects of, for example

architects and clients speaking different native languages within the United States.

The second type of language is the language of a given profession. As with many other professions, architecture has its own technical verbal language (“Word Wars” n.d.; Borson 2010; Stelling and Bucher 1973). As will be seen throughout this dissertation, architectural language uses some arcane terms, assigns new definitions to some laymen’s terms, and has multiple definitions for some terms.

The third type of language is a visual language used by architects and designers. Architects speak using visuals, including floor plans, sections, elevations, construction drawings, etc. Different types of drawings, models, and other visual materials are made during different points in the client engagement and design processes. There are also numerous different ways to draw including highlighting particular aspects of the drawing, and freehand or using digital technology. These visuals are a communication device, often used by architects that are sometimes difficult to understand by laypeople or even other architects.

Studies of the differences between designers and nondesigners have found that through design education, one’s aesthetic values increasingly differ from non-designers who, studies have shown, often value visual continuity (Groat 1994, 157) over uniqueness. In other words, architects are “taught what to like” (M. A. Wilson 1996, 40). Wilson’s study of 150 British architectural students from two architecture schools showed that what people are taught to like is primarily reflected in architectural style. As she notes in her conclusion, “for architectural students, the underlying structure of architectural preference is based on architectural style” (M. A. Wilson 1996, 40).

### **3.1.1.3: Way of Thinking**

Designers become so adept at speaking this visual language that they often silently

communicate with each other and themselves through drawing (Anthony 1991; Pressman 1993; Cuff 1991) or design thinking, which has been described “as the holding of an internal conversation” (Lawson and Dorst 2009, 90). Each time designers interact in this language they are engaging in forms of experiments. These experiments often take place outside of real-world situations, allowing those involved to test different ideas through design conversations, which “are not clear win-lose situations or decisive settings” (Cuff 1991, 191). Instead they are reflective conversations. As Schön explains, in these conversations the architect

“shapes the situation, in accordance with his initial appreciation of it, the situation “talks back,” and he responds to the situation’s back-talk. In a good process of design, this conversation with the situation is reflective. In answer to the situation’s back-talk, the designer reflects-in-action on the construction of the problem, the strategies of action, or the model of the phenomena, which have been implicit in his moves” (Schön 1995, 79).

This description of reflective conversations portrays some of the creative thinking that designers do, which is different from nondesigners. One study conducted by Linda Groat using a sorting task, concluded that

“the architecture students almost always employ sorting criteria that are either based on issues about physical form or on design criteria common to studio practice such as construction materials, site conditions, etc; whereas the ‘clients’ typically use criteria about function, imagined use, social associations and the like” (Groat In Press: Accepted for inclusion, 11).

Though it is possible that Groat is correct and there are correlations between the ways in which nondesigners and clients think, there has only been one such study conducted. This was a study of approximately 100 adults in Los Angeles and Columbus respectively, and 65 architects in Columbus, showed that “architects misjudged public values”. Participants were asked to rate six styles of homes in terms of desirability. The researchers concluded that these results could potentially mean that “architects may have learned and accurately guessed stylistic preference of clients but inaccurately assumed those preferences to apply to the public” (Nasar 1989, 255).

#### **3.1.1.4: Expertise**

Part of these distinctions between public or nondesigners and clients have to do with the amount of expertise a given individual has. None of these three groups of individuals (public, nondesigners or clients) tend to have as much expertise about design as architects. For this reason, it is easy for architects to assume clients have no expertise or dismiss the expertise clients do have. One potential reason that some architectural researchers have discussed is that clients' knowledge is often less obvious than that of architects (Carmona 2010). It could also be attributed to an assumption that is learned through architectural education in design reviews that serve to teach "students that their work should be able to stand the test of harsh professional criticism, doled out by those with greater experience," in other words more experienced architects. It therefore offers a certain idealized model of professional behavior in which "full-fledged architects hold positions that can be challenged only by other full-fledged architects" (Cuff 1991, 126).

In practice, however, the three groups (nondesigners, public and clients) often have different levels of expertise than each other. The workplace clients observed for this dissertation had often been through the architecture process several times and would therefore have more knowledge about it than a broader public audience. These distinctions in expertise were shown in one empirical study conducted by Smulders and Dorst in which two architectural meetings in the early stages of design were analyzed for the utterances of the actors. The researchers were focused on "co-evolution that takes place in the interaction between designer and client" and on "the explication of implicit knowledge" (Smulders, Lousberg, and Dorst 2008, 357). Their analysis concluded that

“the client has factual knowledge of the design problem whereas the architect only has perceptive knowledge about the problem based on what has been made explicit until that moment. Regarding the solution it is the other way around, the architect has the factual knowledge since he designed it and the client has a perception of the solution since she only relies on the explicit drawings. The client misses all the implicit design considerations and not chosen alternatives that are implicitly held by the architect” (Smulders, Lousberg, and Dorst 2008, 357)<sup>13</sup>

In other words, clients are experts when it comes to the local site, culture, users, local language, and problem they are facing that is causing them to seek out an architect. Architects, on the other hand, are experts in how to solve the problem through design.

Occasionally, as with many of the clients observed in the fieldwork for this dissertation, it is possible that the clients have more understanding of design or an equal understanding of design than the architects. It is possible to have a client who has worked extensively with numerous architects, and an architect who just graduated from school and does not have very much experience in practice yet. With this understanding, expertise is looked at more like a continuum. In 1980, philosopher Hubert Dreyfus and his brother Stuart Dreyfus, who was a professor of Industrial Engineering and Operations, came up with a five-stage model of skill acquisition that was later adopted and developed by Kees Dorst and Isabelle Reymen into the seven stages of the development of design expertise (Dorst and Reymen 2004; Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1980). The seven stages they identified were: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert, master, and visionary. At the lowest level of expertise, a novice “will consider the objective features of a situation, as they are given by the experts, and will follow strict rules to deal with the problem.” On the other end, the visionary “strives to extend the domain in which he/she works” (Dorst and Reymen 2004, 3). Dorst and Reymen acknowledge that there

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<sup>13</sup> The genders assigned by this author to architect and client are seemingly arbitrarily assigned and do not reflect the reality in practice.

could be alternative models of expertise development (Dorst and Reymen 2004), therefore these distinctions do not matter as much as the general idea that every individual comes to a design situation, or architectural project, with a different level of expertise on each topic at hand.

### **3.2: Client Engagement**

With a general understanding of the beliefs, assumptions and cultural facets that individuals may hold in their roles as architects and clients, this chapter now moves to addressing the second part of the primary research question: client engagement. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, literature about client engagement covers the two processes: technical and psychological, beginning with the later.

The psychological process ties together literature from design studies with that of positive organizational scholarship. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, positive organizational scholarship focuses on the positive connections of individuals within the organization rather than from that organization to its clients. However, a brief overview of this literature will show the possible affects that engaging with others in the same organization could potentially also have on engaging with clients. The design studies literature in this section speaks to the roles that architects take on throughout the design process and the ways thinking evolves from one view to a new one (reframing) as this design process continues. The relationship between these two bodies of literature is where the engagement of architects and clients begins to be shown. Overall the section on the psychological process is broken up into four distinct parts: organizational roles; positive connections and voice; created roles; and framing and perspective-taking. The literature on roles is important to client engagement because “Unless people know what their role is, the importance of their role, and what is



expected of them, they will not know what to communicate, when to communicate, or to whom to communicate” (Lunenburg 2010, 5).

The chapter then moves on to review the literature on the technical client engagement process. This literature is primarily from design studies and facility management, reviewing the technical process from two perspectives: marketing and programming. The literature connecting these two stages is extremely limited, as is the literature connecting facility management and design studies research.

### **3.2.1: Psychological Process of Client Engagement**

#### **3.2.1.1: Organizational Roles**

In addition to being informed by socialization, beliefs and culture, roles are also informed by the relationships between individuals who occupy those roles. In reality the individuals that occupy the roles of Gilbert’s landscape architect and associate landscape architect are friends who talk over beer every now and then. Gilbert does not have internal expectations that these two will be friends, their role as friends exists outside of their roles within the organization. Though the friendship was not an expectation of the role within the organization, it is likely that prior to the landscape architect hiring the associate, they met in person and could tell that they would get along with each other. This is an example of how “the organizational role stipulates behaviors that imply only a ‘psychological slice’ of the person, yet people are not recruited to organizations on this basis” (Katz and Kahn 1978, 46).

Each individual’s role within the organization

“is directly associated with a relatively small number of others, usually the occupants of

offices adjacent to his in the work-flow structure or in the hierarchy of authority. They constitute his role set and usually include his immediate supervisor (and perhaps his supervisor's immediate superior), his subordinates, and certain members of his own or other departments with whom he must work closely" (R. L. Kahn et al. 1964, 14).

Gilbert's landscape architect and associate landscape architect are in the same role set. At Gilbert these two roles are considered part of the workplace studio, which is comprised of only six individuals. Therefore, this entire studio comprises a role set. Studios will not, however, always be considered a role set. In some cases, as at Raynor and Holler, studios are much larger than a role set.

### **3.2.1.2: Roles, Positive Connections, and Voice**

As can be understood from Katz and Kahn, the individual, or self, is more than the individual's professional identities. The individual that occupies Gilbert's role of landscape architect is also a son, a husband, a father, and a man. Occasionally when leaving work for the day, this man would mention something pertaining to one of his other roles, such as having dinner with his children. If over time Gilbert's landscape architect was able to establish a "close intimate work relationship" with Gilbert's workplace studio leader, who is the superior. Then studies have shown that this type of relationship can "affect employees' attachment, motivations, and behavior toward the organization, as well as group-level behaviors" (Kark 2011, 433). Providing a role model for a "close and caring relationship" "is likely to affect the ways in which the team members interact among themselves, leading to the enhancement of the relational capital of the group" (Kark 2011, 433).

Other studies have shown the affect that simply paying attention to the landscape architect's comments about his children can have. By paying attention, the principal creates trust with the landscape architect, identifies roles that may allow the principal to "tap into the full

range of the employees' talents" and helps the principal understand how their role relates to that of the landscape architect to "establish boundaries" (S. D. Friedman, Christensen, and DeGroot 1998). Other organizational studies have researched the types of boundaries that can be established, including "identities, roles, and mutual expectations" (Kopelman et al. 2012, 167). If these boundaries are negotiated mindfully then they are "characterized by positive regard" (Kopelman et al. 2012, 167). If the principal pays attention when the landscape architect discusses things outside their role and if the two work together to establish the boundaries of their roles of principal and landscape architect then these individuals can establish positive regard, trust, and mutual understanding, which are all markers of high-quality connections (Dutton 2003a).

The high-quality connections that the individual, occupying a given role, has been able to create with their manager also have implications for whether or not that individual can engage in voice or silence. Tangirala and Ramanujam collected survey data from 850 nurses in a large Midwestern hospital and found that "employees were less silent when they identified with their workgroup, felt attached to their profession, and perceived a high level of procedural justice" (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008, 59). In other words, employees were less silent when they had high-quality connections. However, there are many forms of silence so it is possible for an individual "to remain silent about some issues (e.g., suggestions for improving workflow) and not others (e.g., illegal activities in the workplace) and might withhold information from some people (e.g., senior managers) but not others (e.g., coworkers)" (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008, 41).

Organizational studies theories on voice and silence used to pose the two as opposites, but this theory is no longer held (S. Williams and Perlow 2003; Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003; Scott 1993). Instead, there are many forms of voice and silence. One study presented a

conceptual framework of silence and voice with three motivations for voice and silence: acquiescence, defense and prosocial motives, seen in figure 4 (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003, 1363). There are also many studies on different reasons for silence including fear of repercussions (Kish-Gephart et al. 2009; Ryan and Oestreich 1991; Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin 2003; Morrison and Milliken 2000), lack of diversity in employees (Bowen and Blackmon 2003), employee treatment (Cortina and Magley 2003; Creed 2003), unethical practices (Morrison and Milliken 2003), normative and social pressures (Morrison and Milliken 2003), organizational functioning and performance (Ashford, Sutcliffe, and Christianson 2009), and corporate scandal (Miceli, Near, and Dworkin 2008).

<p style="text-align: center;">Type of Behaviour →</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓ Employee Motive</p>	<p><b>EMPLOYEE SILENCE:</b> Intentionally withholding work-related ideas, information, and opinions</p>	<p><b>EMPLOYEE VOICE:</b> Intentionally expressing work-related ideas, information, and opinions</p>
<p><b>Disengaged Behaviour</b> Based on Resignation Feeling unable to make a difference</p>	<p><b>ACQUIESCENT SILENCE</b></p> <p>Examples: Withholding ideas based on resignation Keeping opinions to self due to low self-efficacy to make a difference</p>	<p><b>ACQUIESCENT VOICE</b></p> <p>Examples: Expressing supportive ideas based on resignation Agreeing with the group due to low self-efficacy to make a difference</p>
<p><b>Self-Protective Behaviour</b> Based on Fear Feeling afraid and personally at risk</p>	<p><b>DEFENSIVE SILENCE</b></p> <p>Examples: Withholding information on problems based on fear Omitting facts to protect the self</p>	<p><b>DEFENSIVE VOICE</b></p> <p>Examples: Expressing ideas that shift attention elsewhere based on fear Proposing ideas that focus on others to protect the self</p>
<p><b>Other-Oriented Behaviour</b> Based on Cooperation Feeling cooperative and altruistic</p>	<p><b>PROSOCIAL SILENCE</b></p> <p>Examples: Withholding confidential information based on cooperation Protecting proprietary knowledge to benefit the organization</p>	<p><b>PROSOCIAL VOICE</b></p> <p>Examples: Expressing solutions to problems based on cooperation Suggesting constructive ideas for change to benefit the organization</p>

*Figure 4: Examples of specific types of silence and specific types of voice*

### 3.2.1.3: Created Roles

One specific type of role discussed by Jane Dutton and colleagues is the created role. Created roles are “the informal, unofficial roles that emerge during the organizing process, last as long as the process demands them, and fade away as the process winds down” (Dutton 2005, 80). Dutton et al. likened these roles to ones observed in high reliability organizations (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 1999) and US naval flight operations (Rochlin 1989). In design studies literature terms like “created role” are not used, however, there have been several studies done on what appear to be such roles.

The created roles for architects were discussed in design studies articles by three authors. Bec Paton and Kees Dorst conducted an empirical study involving semi-structured pre-research interviews on three expert designers and one account manager asking “what they perceived their role to be during briefing, as well as what they thought their clients perceived their role to be, in order to understand designers’ expectations for briefing with clients” (Paton and Dorst 2011, 576). Four categories emerged from analyzing these roles: technician, facilitator, expert / artist, and collaborator.

Linda Groat wrote in several articles about the four roles of architects and the individual’s needs that are addressed by each mode (Groat 2000, 1993). Groat’s writings differ from Paton and Dorst in a few ways. Groat acknowledges these four as models of practice, naming each of the four with “architect-as-[X]” while Paton and Dorst refer to them as modes and were describing results of designers rather than architects.<sup>14</sup> Groat uses the term cultivator while Paton and Dorst use collaborator. Other authors have mentioned different roles than these four, such as the trusted advisor (Berg n.d.), and it is possible that still others exist or that these might overlap since these are unofficial roles. A brief summary of such roles will give insight to

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<sup>14</sup> For the sake of convenience this dissertation has chosen to use Groat’s terminology of architect-as-X though these roles could be attributed to others within the architecture firm as well.

the created roles that architects may be occupying when engaging with clients.

Architect-as-artist is driven by the idea of the artist as an individual with their own “inner vision and personal originality” (Groat 1993, 4). As art is a subjective expression derived in creative isolation, this role tends to exclude societal issues and concerns as irrelevant and to see the individual as separate from the rest of society. There is therefore little face-to-face interaction with the client and the architect-as-artist role “has tended to emphasize inspirational form making and a persuasive orientation to client needs” (Groat 2000, 51). The architect-as-artist is understood by some as the primary role used in architectural education (Groat 1993). Unlike the architect-as-artist, the architect-as-technician’s role is primarily as a leader of a team of consultants, users, clients and other participants embedded in real-world situations with “a linear sequence of design, and an outcome in the form of predictable design services” (Groat 1993, 5). In Paton and Dorst’s study, this was seen by most designers as the least favored role where “the designer is given a solidly defined brief and is expected to carry this out, only questioning to clarify particular aspects” (Paton and Dorst 2011, 578).

The third role, architect-as-facilitator, is very similar to the second, only differing in that these individuals have more ability to change the design through their connection with the client as “the designer advises on specialist aspects relating to making the solution space workable” (Paton and Dorst 2011, 578). In general, Groat describes this role as one in which the “architect becomes simply the device by which a client’s or community group’s building needs become realized” (Groat 1993, 5). This role is often used by researchers and activists employing advocacy and participatory design strategies (Bell 2004; Cary and Public Architecture (Firm) 2010; Bell and Wakeford 2008), an idea that began in the late sixties and seventies. Finally, the fourth role discussed in Groat and Paton and Dorst’s articles is called the architect-as-cultivator or collaborator. This role is defined as one engaged in community life and motivated by

“personal and interpersonal” understanding that recognizes “socio-physical culture” (Groat 2000). Paton and Dorst found that the examples of projects in this category “were the most diverse” and included exchanges between client and designer “described as being highly iterative, transparent, and playful (Paton and Dorst 2011, 579).

The term “client” is itself a role defined through its place in the architect’s role set. The individual is only a “client” to the architect. Within the client’s own company this individual occupies a different role, be that owner, president, chief executive officer, facility manager, or something else entirely. For this reason, the term “client” is not nearly as old as the term “owner”. Vitruvius’ treatise referred to the “owners” with regards to incorporating their preferences into the construction of the building. One design studies researcher identified three roles that the owner can assume (Bryson and Yetmen 2010). As with the roles of the architect that were just identified, the roles of the client can also be seen as created and are subjective by nature.

In Bryson and Yetmen’s book entitled *The Owner’s Dilemma* they describe the potential roles of the owner and the different responsibilities that each role holds. The first role of owner is owner as client who “buys the services required to build the needed structure” (Bryson and Yetmen 2010, 72). In exchange, the owner as client expects excellent customer service conducted professionally in a way that is open to processes and ideas from all involved. The owner as service provider “is responsible for providing support for the project team to ensure successful delivery of the building” including adequate pay, mutual understanding, accurate and timely information, and available time. The final role the owner can assume is owner as team member. This individual “must become a full and equal member of the team and, furthermore, emphasize that all team members hold equal status” (Bryson and Yetmen 2010, 74). This involves the creation and compliance of team rules, respecting team member’s needs,

responsibility for project problems and resolving such issues quickly as a team.

#### **3.2.1.4: Framing and Perspective-Taking**

American philosopher, sociologist and psychologist George Herbert Mead wrote about two distinct concepts that have implications for client engagement in organizational studies and design studies literature. The first was the concept of a “conversation of gestures” that can be seen in the following example:

“The act of each dog becomes the stimulus to the other dog for his response. There is a relationship between these two; and as the act is responded to by the other dog, it, in turn, undergoes change. The very fact that the dog is ready to attack another becomes a stimulus to the other dog to change his own position or his own attitude. He has no sooner done this than the change of attitude in the second dog in turn causes the first dog to change his attitude. We have here a conversation of gestures” (Mead 1934, 42–43).

This conversation of gestures was parallel to that of Gregory Bateson’s notion of framing with one key difference, Bateson saw framing as a “form of meta-communication” that “appears over and above the conversation of gestures” (Hulst and Yanow 2016, 94). This notion of a frame was taken up in policy analysis and social psychology, leading to social movement with Erving Goffman and “independently of Goffman’s work and at about the same time, Donald Schön” (Hulst and Yanow 2016, 95) who brought the term into design studies literature.

As political science researchers Merlijn van Hulst and Dvora Yanow explain in their book on framing, Donald Schön also used the term “reframing” to refer to a frame shift that might happen “if actors were willing and able to reflect on their frames” (Hulst and Yanow 2016, 96). An example of such a shift would be if an architect encounters a situation problematic (Schön 1995). Around the time of Schön’s writings, engineering design scholars David Jansson and Steven Smith wrote about design fixation as one potential “barrier to conceptual design”, which



they defined as “a blind, and sometimes counterproductive, adherence to a limited set of ideas in the design process” and can give the feeling of “being ‘stuck-in-a-rut” (Jansson and Smith 1991, 4). About a decade later, Paton and Dorst pointed to design fixation as one of several barriers to reframing that they found in their study which asked designers for “examples where they had negotiated to change a client-given brief, in order to make the project more successful” in other words examples of reframing. Paton and Dorst also found two other barriers to reframing, including “a problem-solving mental model of design; and, resistance to journey” and three enablers to reframing: “the use of metaphor and analogy; contextual engagement through research; and, conjecture, where reframing was assisted by co-exploring the abstracted conjectured view of the situation” (Paton and Dorst 2011, 585).

The second concept that George Herbert Mead wrote about was perspective-taking or “taking the perspective of the other - assessing the background knowledge, plans, attitudes, beliefs, outlooks, and so on, of one's fellow interlocutors” (Fussell and Krauss 1992, 378). In organizational studies two primary researchers Robert Krauss and Susan Fussell have shown that “the mechanics by which people assess one another's perspective and the ways in which these assessments are realized in communication are poorly understood” (Krauss and Fussell 1991, 22). They have therefore written many articles on perspective-taking. One article included three experiments on the ability to identify images and names of public figures and everyday things, which showed “that people can estimate others' knowledge with quite good accuracy” (Fussell and Krauss 1992, 388). Another article demonstrated “that speakers can and do take others' knowledge into account when they create a message” (Krauss and Fussell 1991, 22). The affects that perspective-taking has on client engagement will be explored throughout Chapter Seven.

### **3.2.2: Technical Client Engagement Process**

The literature summarized in this section comes from two primary areas: marketing and programming. Marketing has been discussed in professional practice literature as well as in guidebooks by architectural organizations such as the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA). There have been many researchers who have written about programming. Design studies researchers tend to write about architectural programming, in other words having the architect define the needs of the building. There are relatively few design studies researchers that write about functional programming, having the client define the needs of the building. Instead, it is the facility management literature that speaks about functional programming. When facility management researchers mention architectural programming, it is often warning against hiring an architect to determine the needs of the building, and vice versa. The literature written connecting marketing to programming is extremely limited and tends to focus on client relations throughout the design process with only brief mention of marketing.

#### **3.2.2.1: Marketing**

For an architect, the beginning of the client engagement process primarily involves marketing, advertising, and business development. These topics have been discussed to a great extent by organizational studies researchers. Chapter Two mentioned the history of some of this research, ending in the discussion of services and goods that has not been debated since 1986. Instead literature has focused on specific

“marketing problems of service businesses. These topics include managing quality given the heterogeneity of the service experience, designing and controlling intangible processes, managing supply and demand in capacity constrained services, and organizational issues resulting from the overlap in marketing and operations functions” (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner

1993, 74).

More recently, Amy Ostrom and others conducted an “international and interdisciplinary research effort to identify research priorities that have the potential to advance the service field” (Ostrom et al. 2015).

As with the marketing services literature, some of the marketing design studies literature was outlined in Chapter Two. The rest falls into three primary categories. The first is the type of literature that could be associated with the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) such as the importance of, and how to articles as well as guidebooks. Much of this “how to” literature can be found in the Journal of SMPS such as how to market professional design services (G. L. Jones 1983), how clients look for you online (Friesen 2013), how to conduct client research (R. Friedman 2012), how to achieve success (Grandowski 2015), increase firm’s visibility (Montgomery 2014), create proposal content with impact (Zipf 2013), retain clients (R. Friedman 2013), conduct client research (R. Friedman 2012), prepare for an interview Q&A (Kienle and Kienle 2012), define small, medium, and large firms (H. Wilson 2012), and listen to clients (Maister 1993). Also in the Journal of SMPS are titles on the lessons from best managed firms (J. Kolleeny and Linn 2001; *Architectural Record* 2001) and importance of specific topics such as client recommendations (LaFetra 2015), proposal managers (Taub 2015), client feedback (R. Friedman 2012; Suydam 2013), service providers (Schrag 2013), a CRM (Gonnella and Kelly 2012) and why mistakes in proposals don’t matter and what does (Handal 2015).

There are also books published by various design studies’ authors that fit along a similar vein such as a book of example literature on marketing for architects and designers (Linton, Clary, and Rost 2005), a guide to writing for design professionals that includes writing proposals, letters, brochures, portfolios, reports, presentations and job applications (Kliment 1998), marketing and communications for architects (Haupt and Kupitza 2002), and marketing

handbook produced by the SMPS (Society for Marketing Professional Services 2000).

The second category would be that of professional practice literature. There is a range of this material including frequent editions of both the AIA's Handbook, and their Student Handbook of Professional Practice (American Institute of Architects. 2009, 2009; Architects 2017). The Student Handbook is often used by the University of Michigan in the one required course on professional practice, which covers a wide variety of topics including practice management, ethics, leadership, client role, legal responsibilities, leadership, and project management. Professional practice literature also includes materials on managing a design services firm (Coxe 1980; Maister 1993; Park 2011), types of firms (Coxe et al. 1986; Maister 2004), marketing a design services firm (Coxe 1971), and success strategies for design professionals (Coxe 1987). There is also a unique article comparing architectural practices in France and Spain (Coxe and Hayden 1993). Thus far none of these books or articles have employed ethnographic practices, nor have they linked marketing to programming or to organizational studies literature.

The third group of texts is conducted by design studies researchers and is more academic in nature than the other two categories but does not focus on marketing. Dana Cuff's methodology is very similar to that conducted in this research but Cuff's literature on marketing is extremely limited. In her book *Architecture: The Story of Practice*, Cuff briefly mentions the effects of corrosive connections on architects, "A problematic project can foster a bad reputation, law suits, and long-term headaches." She also mentioned the marketing techniques the firms she observed use including word of mouth, referrals, clients with continuous building programs, coming within a certain percentage of the preestablished budget, publication in a prestigious journal, and an award from a professional society (Cuff 1991, 104–5). Aside from these brief descriptions of marketing and business development, Cuff primarily focused on the client

engagement process once the client had been hired and not prior to then.

Andy Pressman has a mix of texts both handbooks and 101 guides as well as texts on relevant topics such as *The Fountainheadache: the politics of architect-client relations* and *Curing the Fountainheadache*, both of which focus primarily on the design process at large with only brief mentions of marketing (Pressman 1993, 1997, 2001, 1995; Pressman and Pressman 2006; Pressman 2012, 2008). There are also several individuals who write about the state of architectural practice at large (Gutman et al. 2010; Gutman 1988; Fisher 2010; Boyer and Mitgang 1996) but with little focus on marketing.

### **3.2.2.2: Programming**

Aside from marketing and professional practice, the other aspect of the client engagement process that has been discussed in depth in design studies literature is programming, or briefing. The latter is used predominantly in Europe. The most common topic of discussion amongst architectural researchers on programming is methodology. In other words, how should programming be conducted by architects (Preiser 1978; Hershberger 1999; Rossetti 1964; Evans, Wheeler, and American Institute of Architects. 1969; Moleski 1978; Sanoff 1992, 1976; Peña and Parshall 2012; Robinson and Weeks 1983; Bakker 2016; Palmer and American Institute of Architects. 1981; Binkley and Parker 1978; Ryd 2004; Parsloe 1990). In addition to methods, design studies research has been done on aspects of what is programming (Hershberger 1999; Duerk 1993; Evans, Wheeler, and American Institute of Architects. 1969; Sanoff 1992; Palmer and American Institute of Architects. 1981), and when should it be conducted (Ryd 2004;

Hershberger 1999; Duerk 1993; Sanoff 1976; Cherry 1999; Paton and Dorst 2011).<sup>15</sup>

Many of these design studies researchers only discuss programming as conducted by architects (Hershberger 1999; Duerk 1993; Sanoff 1992; Palmer and American Institute of Architects. 1981; Ryd 2004; Sanoff 1976; Paton and Dorst 2011). There are a few design studies researchers who acknowledge programming as conducted by the client. Of these researchers, Robert Kumlin is the first to give the two phases names: functional and facility programming. A functional program was defined as one in which

“The basic requirements for a facility, usually prepared by the client to secure funds or provide information for a strategic plan. It precedes the facility program and is often the basis upon which it is built. Usually contains basic quantitative parameters such as population, function, and project cost” (Kumlin 1995, 235).

Kumlin also identified several different types of programming documents including the master plan program, facility schematic design program and the detailed fit out program. The master plan program is one done on the macro scale to determine “the feasibility of a project, to analyze a site for a potential use or to determine the gross characteristics and patterns of growth of a large or complex project with many buildings or component parts.” The facility schematic design program is the most common and is “required by the architect/engineer to begin design of a project.” It has been called by many different names including facility program, building program (Kumlin 1995, 26), and architectural program (Evans, Wheeler, and American Institute of Architects. 1969; Cherry 1999). Finally, the detailed fit out program generally comes at “the completion of the preliminary or schematic design of the project and addresses the finer details of what goes into the building.” It also goes by other names depending on building typology, in workplace design it is often referred to as the “tenant fit out program or furniture, fixtures, and

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<sup>15</sup> The definitions of program and programming were given in the previous chapter.

equipment (FFE) program” (Kumlin 1995, 27).

This idea of programming as conducted by the client is also embraced by facility management researchers who, similar to the design studies researchers, discuss how programming should be conducted (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014; Atkin and Brooks 2015; Blyth and Worthington 2010), the distinction between programming and other terms like planning and forecasting (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014), and critical issues in programming (Blyth and Worthington 2010). Unlike the design studies researchers, most facility management researchers acknowledge that some architects conduct programming.<sup>16</sup> This acknowledgement is commonly in the form of a warning against the involvement of architects. Within the client’s organization, a program is used by “top management” to “judge the effectiveness of the facility manager” and therefore “cannot be assigned to an inexperienced architectural programmer” (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 218). Others add that the expectations of those already involved in programming internal to the client company are complex enough “without including specific specialist requirements or the broader interests of customers and the local community” (Blyth and Worthington 2010, 5).

Overall, no matter whose responsibility it is to conduct programming, its importance has been stated by facility management and design studies researchers alike (Parsloe 1990; Salisbury 1990; Palmer and American Institute of Architects. 1981; Rossetti 1964; Blyth and Worthington 2010; Kumlin 1995). Yet there is no agreement about why buildings continue to be built on poorly designed programs. One facility management researcher acknowledges that facility managers are “reluctant” to embrace programming for several possible reasons: “lack of

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<sup>16</sup> It is my opinion that most architectural researchers do not recognize the programming that clients do specifically because it is before they are involved in the process. Facility managers are already involved and continue to be involved in the project when architects do their programming.

familiarity with the programming process, a view of programming as a luxury or an unneeded design cost, impatience to get to a design solution, time pressure to complete the project” (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 220). Others are less objective in their reasons. One facility management researcher noted

“A criticism of construction has been that clients lose control because briefing is often perceived as a one-stop event with only one solution promoted by a construction industry with an attitude that “knows best.” In this scenario not enough time is spent in the beginning identifying the issues surrounding the project; it seems easier to hand over the problem to someone who has a ready-to-fit solution. This can be made worse by adopting contractual routes which, in effect, deny clients and users much of a say in what goes on” (Blyth and Worthington 2010, 5)

Another design studies researcher mentioned the “ignorance on the part of the client as to the effort involved” and denied the idea that clients value the program since clients are “not willing to consider it as a separate and billable service” (Kumlin 1995, ix). The researcher ended this thought with the idea that these client attitudes towards programming are “not likely to change until the design professionals educate their clients on the value of a comprehensive program” (Kumlin 1995, x).

Whether or not such education is indeed necessary, it is doubtful that any such education will occur without an understanding and acknowledgement of more design studies researchers that both architects and clients conduct programming. An understanding of the overall client engagement process will also bring light to more stages than just architectural marketing and programming. Thus far design studies literature that includes both marketing and programming is lacking. In fact, some architectural researchers have ignored the client engagement process entirely to define architectural programming as “the first working contact with the client” (Kumlin 1995, 11). This dissertation seeks to fill these gaps in the literature.



### 3.3: Conclusion

The literature from the first section of this chapter and the development of professional culture of architects through the historical account of Chapter Two give a full picture of the ways in which architectural assumptions, beliefs and ideas have been ingrained throughout the field of architecture. Returning to the words of organizational studies professor Edgar Schein, an organization “cannot survive if it cannot manage itself as a group” (Schein 1984, 10) in other words it cannot survive without a culture such as that reflected in the first part of this chapter. Each group must find its own solutions to similar cultural issues and

“Because the nature of that solution will reflect the biases of the founders and current leaders, the prior experiences of group members, and the actual events experienced, it is likely that each organizational culture will be unique, even though the underlying issues around which the culture is formed will be common” (Schein 1984, 10).

Therefore, the rest of this dissertation will be dedicated to the ways organizational culture of the three different architecture firms is manifested and what cultural factors affect firms through the client engagement process. This client engagement process is more than a story of marketing or programming that is currently told in the literature. Instead it is a process that joins these two bodies of literature. Without an understanding that programming is conducted by both architects and clients, who both have flaws in their methodology, the needs of a building will continue to be neglected. Similarly, architects in practice have something to learn from a more in depth understanding of how to create positive engagements with their clients rather than chalking project losses up to “chemistry” (American Institute of Architects. 2009, 134). The field of design studies can benefit from the contributions from organizational studies, and vice versa, as was seen in the last section of this chapter.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

### 4.1: Overall Research Design

Qualitative research approaches are typically associated with three aspects that are key to this study of how organizational culture is manifested and what cultural factors affect firms through the client engagement process. As with many qualitative research studies, the question itself is focused on culture. It is also aimed at understanding context, process, and meaning. Finally, these issues are examined in the natural setting of architecture firms, or the “site where participants experience the issue or problem under study” (Creswell 1994, 175). The researcher acts as key instrument for collecting, interpreting, and describing a holistic account of the data “as the respondents themselves understand it” (Groat and Wang 2013, 219). The approach that this qualitative research takes is both ethnographic and case study in nature. Ethnographic studies are common for research of the fields of organizational studies and cultural studies, which are embraced in the literature of this dissertation as well as that of anthropology, which is the background of the researcher. The three architecture firms were the case studies and this strategy was employed since it is “preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (Yin 2009, 11), such as with organizational cultures. The conclusions drawn in this dissertation seek a balance between being presented as samples with “intrinsic values and uniqueness that each case can offer on its own terms” (Groat and Wang 2013, 430) and generalizing these samples to theories through “analytic generalization” (Yin 2009, 15).

As with many qualitative researchers, this study embraced multiple data collection tactics. The most prominent of these was complete observer-researcher who “observes without participating” (Creswell 1994, 179) at three architecture firms that engaged in workplace design. In addition to observations, documents of the client engagement process were collected and in-depth face-to-face interviews of architects were conducted at the three firms. These tactics were not employed in any specific order as the sequence of information acquisition is unpredictable. They are also not presented in any specific order in the following three data chapters. As figure 5 shows below, Chapter Five uses ethnographic observations and documents collected on each firm’s organizational culture to answer the research sub-question how is the organizational culture of these three firms manifested in their visible artifacts and organizational structure. Chapter Six primarily relies on documents collected from each of the three firms to answer the research sub-question what cultural factors affect firms through the different stages of the client engagement process. The third research sub-question, how is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions, and individual roles throughout the client engagement process is answered by both Chapters Six and Chapters Seven. Chapter Seven primarily uses ethnographic observations of the client engagement process to also answer the research sub-question how can organizational culture enable architects to create positive connections with their clients? Though each of these chapters primarily relies on one data collection tactic, they also pull data from other tactics in attempt to answer the research sub-questions thoroughly.

Research Sub-Question	Chapter Five	Chapter Six	Chapter Seven
1. How is the organizational culture of these three firms manifested in their visible artifacts and organizational structure?	Ethnographic Observations and Analyzing Documents of Firm Culture		
2. What cultural factors affect firms through the different stages of the client engagement process?		Analyzing Documents of Client Engagement Process	
3. How is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process?			Ethnographic Observations of Client Engagement Process
4. How can organizational culture enable architects to create positive connections with their clients?			

Figure 5: Chart of which chapter answers which research sub-question using what methodology

This chapter is organized chronologically with the pilot studies presented first followed by access to the firms and concluding with an overview of the data collected through these three tactics.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.2: Pilot Studies

Two pilot studies were conducted prior to the three primary case studies. Though the research presented in this dissertation does not rely on the data collected at these pilot studies, they did inform the research methodology that was established for this dissertation. Therefore, this section will give a brief overview of what was learned.

For research purposes, a pilot study is distinct from a case study. For both the first and

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<sup>17</sup> Instead of presenting the tactics in order of chapters that they address, they are presented in order of the dissertation's overall reliance on the tactic, beginning from the one that was employed the least.

second pilot studies, fifteen workdays were spent with each firm, observing for approximately 5-6 hours a day. Whereas for each case study observations were conducted for at least 8 hours a day for a minimum of three months (over 65 workdays) were spent with each firm. A total of two months was spent with pilot studies and ten months with case studies. The pilot studies led to several lessons that ultimately influenced both the framing of the research questions and the types of firms observed for this dissertation.

The first lesson was the importance of location when it comes to the project and the client. The challenge of observing a firm's engagement with clients all over the world encouraged the researcher to find case studies with clients that were located in the same general geographic area as the architecture firm. Similarly, the challenge of observing a small branch that worked on projects in other parts of the country encouraged the researcher to seek firm case studies that were main branches or headquarters of the firm.

The second lesson was with regard to project type. The first pilot study focused on the entertainment industry, while the second focused on higher education. Neither of these project types was ideal for this research. In the case of industries like higher education, hotels, or extremely large corporations, the client tends to have an architect on staff at the client company. Occasionally the client company will also hire an architecture firm. In this case observing such industries would mean observing relationships between or among architects rather than a relationship between an architect and a client. At the other end of the scale, residential housing generally involves small project teams where a researcher's presence would have a strong impact rather than the minimal impact generally deemed ideal in ethnographic studies. At the time this researcher believed that local corporate clients might be large enough that a researcher's presence might not have as much of an impact, and these clients might not have as much exposure to the design process as clients of other project typologies. Some of these initial

thoughts led to the post facto sociological interpretations in this dissertation that are common in qualitative research (Merton 1957, 93–95).

The third lesson was the importance of assimilation into the firm. It was easier to assimilate as an employee of the firm, though without compensation. Every firm has pre-set ways of dealing with new employees and employees who are leaving a firm. Assimilation techniques can include walking new employees around the firm and introducing them, making sure they are explicitly invited to social hours and parties that the firm may have, and having a “going away” party for individuals who are leaving the company. Being included in such cultural rituals would ease the presence of the researcher at the firm. These cultural traditions also included an office space at the firms. Though time was mostly spent in meetings and not sitting at a desk, having a personal desk allowed people in the surrounding area to grow accustomed to the author’s presence faster than they might otherwise have done.

### **4.3: Gaining Access to the Research Settings**

The lessons learned from these pilot studies were very influential for the selection of the case studies and the conduct of the fieldwork in general. Though full accounts of gaining access to firms are relatively rare, or are relegated to footnotes (Feldman, Bell, and Berger 2003), being explicit about this process adds to the overall understanding of each firm’s organizational culture that is at the heart of this dissertation as well as the understanding of the research design and methods. Therefore, a full story, this time in first person, has been included to describe the encounters with each of these firms. As a first-person account it will shine light on this researcher’s own assumptions and biases, which will help situate the reader in relation to the background of the researcher, which is an often-important feature in ethnographic accounts. As

with most ethnographic research this account will also portray one of the key limitations to observation, namely that the “researcher may be seen as intrusive” (Creswell 1994, 179).

#### **4.3.1: Accessing Architecture Firms**

With my academic background in anthropology and limited exposure in the field of architecture, the number of architects I knew was limited, aside from the pilot studies I had conducted. There was one architecture firm in Illinois that I had observed for my master’s thesis and several throughout the country that I knew through conferences, but none in Michigan. Fortunately, my interest in the practice of architecture had drawn the attention of one of my peers who was transferring out of the position of the Taubman School of Architecture’s representative for AIA Huron Valley and at the end of 2013 I decided to take on this position. The pilot studies outlined in the last section were conducted at the end of 2014 for my dissertation proposal. I tried to cold call and email many individuals to no avail. Many of these individuals were designers or architects at the firms rather than people in prominent positions at the firms such as a president or chief executive officer.

My first emails were rather lengthy. If there were too many details about the dissertation project, it was easy for people to make assumptions and reject the proposal altogether. If the initial email were brief, concerns could be addressed easier in a later face-to-face meeting. Despite refining these emails, I did have an encounter with a firm that surprised me. One individual was a partner at a firm of approximately 100 employees. As with many other firms, the initial email mentioned that the research was “on relationships between architects and clients”. Yet the response I received shocked me. This individual responded:

“Client – Architect relationships are very important aspects of how we thrive and survive,

as such it will be difficult for my Partners to consider allowing an outsider to observe and gather information about those relationships. The best analogy I can offer is that it is akin to discussing your sex life with an outside researcher....some firms may be willing to do that, I fear that ours may not.”

I had never thought that observing client-architect relationships was in any way akin to discussing your sex life with an outside researcher. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) was set up to protect vulnerable respondent populations and they had hardly batted an eye when I submitted my research request. Yet, reflecting back on this individual’s comment the one thing that was accurate about my research was that my presence, as that of many ethnographers, would likely affect the firms I was observing. This individual’s comment also highlights my position and the disadvantages I had as an outsider. I had not been socialized into the culture of architecture, I was not able to converse in architectural language, and therefore I was never welcomed as a non-researcher (D. J. Jones 1970), nor able to self-identify as an informant (Serber 1971)

In addition to attempting to reach out to those in prominent positions at the firms, and putting as few words in the body of my email as possible so I could explain the process more in depth in person, I ended up finding individuals who knew the prominent people at the firms and using their names in the emails. These three tactics gained me entry to the firms I observed. When I did have meet with architects it was extremely common for them to ask me what hypothesis I was attempting to prove. Each time I attempted to explain that qualitative research “does not start out with a hypothesis or generalization as the beginning point of research. Rather, it may produce a generalization or even a hypothesis by studying details” (Cranz 2016, xiii). Overall, the need to be persistent with the firms, have multiple meetings, and handle rejections respectfully was necessary during this early stage of the dissertation process.



#### 4.3.1.1 Accessing Holler

One of the AIA Huron Valley board members was able to facilitate my initial contact with owners at several of the nearby firms, including Holler. The name “Holler” is not the name of the firm I observed, it is a pseudonym I later assigned to this firm to preserve its anonymity to the best of my ability. The other two firms, Gilbert and Raynor, are also pseudonyms. I reached out to Holler initially in October of 2014 with the following email:

Dear [Holler’s CEO],

My name is Darby Morris and I am a third year doctoral student at the University of Michigan. My research is on relationships between architects and clients and I am now in the process of trying to find firms that I could do my fieldwork with.

I am also the University’s TCAUP (Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning) representative for the local AIA branch, which [board member’s name] has served on. I have worked with [board member] for a year now and he has generously connected me with you. There are a lot of different aspects of my research that I hope to be able to explain to you further in person. My schedule is very flexible and I will more than likely be able to meet whenever you are available.

Thank you very much in advance and I look forward to meeting you!

About a week later I met with Holler’s CEO and discussed my research as well as the possibility of observing a different office than the Michigan one because I initially believed my research would be conducted in the Chicago area. In our meeting the CEO asked for a one-page write-up of my research along with the benefits to their firm that I gladly supplied (found in Appendix A). Several weeks later I met with the head of the Chicago office.

Several months later I presented my proposal to observe the firms and found out that my research would be in Michigan instead of elsewhere. In October of 2015 I reached out to Holler’s CEO once again to set up another meeting and it took several weeks for us to meet. At this time, I had not yet received permission to observe Holler, but I had obtained permission to

observe Gilbert, so I started my fieldwork at Gilbert and met with Holler's CEO once the time came. At this meeting Holler's CEO understood that I wanted to also observe their client companies so I was asked to submit a letter that Holler could send to the client companies I would engage with during my time at the firm about my work (Appendix B). With this letter my proposal, to observe Holler was approved by Holler's Office Director and on that day, I began work at Gilbert I received permission to start with Holler in March of 2016.

#### **4.3.1.2: Accessing and Fieldwork with Gilbert**

Just after presenting my proposal I met someone who worked for the University of Michigan as an architect. This individual spoke highly of the Michigan-based firm they used to work with, Gilbert, and in mid-September 2015, I decided to reach out to them with the following email:

[President of Gilbert],

My name is Darby Morris and I am a PhD student at the University of Michigan. I am interested in working with [Gilbert] for my doctoral studies on architect-client relations. I got your contact information from [architect's name] who I believe used to work with you. [Architect] and I met through our church as we both attend the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Ann Arbor. I was hoping to be able to set up a meeting with you to discuss my research and the possibility of us working together.

Thank you very much in advance and I look forward to speaking with you further!

At our meeting I mentioned that I was interested in observing workplace design. I followed up after our meeting but was informed that he would email me when the time came. Unlike Holler I was not asked to submit any documents to the firm. A month later the president of Gilbert contacted me notifying me that they had spoken with the principal and associate principal of the workplace studio and they had agreed to meet with me. The principal was

extremely excited about my working with their studio and quickly agreed. After the meeting the principal emailed me with a potential letter to one of the workplace clients I would be observing (seen in Appendix C). I edited the letter and sent it back and they sent it to their client.

We had decided it would be best for me to begin on a Monday since that was the day of the firm's weekly workplace studio meeting and weekly firm principals' meeting. Introducing myself at both of these meetings would make my presence known to the majority of those whom I would encounter throughout the firm and each principal could inform their respective studio. I would be conducting observations each day during business hours. I had learned from my pilot studies the importance of having both my own desk and access to computer files, both of these were granted at Gilbert.<sup>18</sup> I also signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with Gilbert prior to starting at the firm (Appendix D). I observed Gilbert from the beginning of November through the end of February of 2016. I was not told of any issues that the staff had about my observation until close to the end of my time at Gilbert, when I was informed that the workplace business developer and marketing staff member had been feeling like my observations were a bit intrusive and that they did not understand what I was looking for. I did my best to address the issue and continue working.

#### **4.3.1.3: Fieldwork with Holler**

The first day of March 2016, a week prior to my start at Holler, the Office Director emailed to ask me to sign two Holler documents. The first was an NDA, this time written by Holler (Appendix E). The second was a Designated Office Space Occupancy Agreement

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<sup>18</sup> It is unclear if I was given access to administrative files such as accounting but I was not looking for or interested in such files.

(Appendix F). I wrote back to receive clarifications about this second document as it expressly stated “Morris consents to [Holler’s] right to access, review, replay, copy, disclose, delete and/or dispose of the contents of all communications (including parcels) of Morris on [Holler’s] premises in accordance with this Agreement.” This wording concerned me as I needed to keep documents and recordings I collected to conduct comparative analyses in relation to what I had collected from Gilbert to write the dissertation. They assured me that it wouldn’t be a concern. My first day at Holler it was agreed that to keep my materials legally separate from Holler’s I was not to be given access to the computer files or email and would instead use my own laptop. The desk I was given was in a corner near the Office Director, Director of Operations and one of the two Business Developers.

I had much more communication with Holler prior to conducting my fieldwork but the only large group meeting that I had on my first day was with individuals that I did not work with very much. Other than this group my first day meetings were one-on-one with the Office Director and one of the Business Development staff who became my Key Informant at Holler. These meetings came to symbolize my everyday fieldwork at Holler much more than with either of the other firms. This was the only firm where I had a Key Informant since I was primarily interested in client engagement and our desks were so close to each other. For at least two thirds of my time at Holler I had at least one meeting almost every single day with this individual, whether it was one-on-one, internal or external meetings, or networking lunches.<sup>19</sup> There were relatively more concerns about my perceived intrusion at Holler since I had not introduced myself to the majority of individuals I observed on my first day at the firm. I had three one-on-one lunches with employees in attempt to explain my research, I also was asked to give two

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<sup>19</sup> Internal and external meetings will be described in depth in Chapter Five.

presentations to different groups at the firm. I observed from early March through mid-June of 2016.

#### **4.3.1.4: Accessing and Fieldwork with Raynor**

Access to Raynor was the easiest of all three firms. I knew that I wanted to work with this particular firm because I had already worked with two Michigan competitors in the field of office design and this firm was often mentioned by both Gilbert and Holler. I reached out to the president of the AIA Huron Valley. After several emails this individual wrote back with the phone number of one of the principals whom I called and met. From prior interactions with individuals who were not the heads of the firm I was a little concerned that I would not gain access to the firm as I was meeting with a principal and not the president. However, after our meeting at the beginning of May of 2016 I emailed the principal with my CV, the letter to the Client Company that I had sent Holler, and an Explanation of my Research (Appendix G). A month later I met with the principal and one of Raynor's two managing partners to discuss my project. They agreed to have me observe, I sent them the NDA (Appendix D), and we met one more time in mid-July, the week prior to my starting fieldwork with them.

After my experiences at Holler I realized the extreme importance of introducing myself to as many people as I could as early as possible so I made sure to request this at Raynor. We agreed that my start date would be a Monday since that was the day all of the design and marketing staff met, so I could introduce myself to everyone at the same time. I was given a desk next to the marketing staff but, as with Holler, I was not given access to the computer files. I observed Raynor from mid-July through mid-October 2016. After my experience with Holler, I was concerned that I was walking on eggshells at Raynor. There were certain personalities who were more difficult for me to interact with than others but I was never informed of any issues of

perceived intrusion.

#### **4.4: Data Collection**

This first-person account of access to each of the three firms will inform the next chapter on organizational culture at each of the three firms. At each of the three firms, data was collected using the following three tactics.

##### **4.4.1: Open-Ended Interviews**

Ten open-ended interviews were conducted while at the case studies. This included three exit interviews that were primarily informal discussions about next steps and their thoughts on the researcher's involvement at the firm. Holler did not seem to have as many day-to-day office project meetings to observe. As a consequence, more time at this firm was allocated to interviewing. The CEO was interviewed about the firm's culture and process, four designers were interviewed about the activities that the firm conducted in different steps of the design process, and two employees were interviewed who taught designers about aspects of their work. In addition, at each firm the researcher sought out individual employees for informal lunches or coffee to reinforce their comfort level with the researcher's presence at the firms.

##### **4.4.2: Review of Materials**

In general, architecture firms produce a variety of materials or "paper trail". Several of these materials helped to inform the discussion of the organizational culture of each firm in Chapter Five. These documents came primarily from the firm's management and marketing files

including written information on the architecture firm's website, news accounts of a project, memos, briefs, reports, and / or flyers. Documents were also collected on the client engagement process that helps to inform the discussion in Chapters Six and Seven. There are two documents that have been renamed by the researcher to refer to a group of documents rather than a single type. The first of these is the request document. This is a term that refers to a written invitation to respond to a project, such documents include requests for proposals (RFP), requests for fee proposals, requests for qualifications (RFQ), request for quotation, requests for proposal and qualifications, requests for information (RFI), indefinite delivery indefinite quantities (IDIQ), and requests for expressions of interest.<sup>20</sup> A response document is used to refer to proposals, qualification proposals, fee proposals, and any other document that would be submitted as a response to a request document.

There were one hundred and seventy-one total request documents and one hundred and thirty-one total response documents. In total this research involved the collection of 1,073 documents including request documents, question and answers with clients prior to submitting responses to request documents, interview presentation documents, meeting agendas, client letters, programming documents, site documents, architect notes, management and marketing files. The number of documents collected at each firm varied based on the computer access available at that firm. Gilbert allowed full access to their computer files, to copy as necessary. As can be seen in figure 6 below, more documents were collected at this firm than the other two, at a total of 344 documents. Neither Holler nor Raynor gave access to their computer files. 544 documents were collected from Holler, though a vast majority of these were images for one

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<sup>20</sup> A request for qualifications is "a document describing a project in enough detail so that potential providers of services or products can determine if they wish to compete. Bidding owners typically issue RFQs as part of a two-stage process in which RFQ is followed by the issuance of an RFP" (American Institute of Architects. 2009, 691).

project's programming process, totaling 185 images. Holler also had the most meeting agendas of all three firms and was the only firm with marketing training documents. Training documents were not collected from Gilbert or Raynor and many of the meetings at these two firms were too informal for an agenda.



	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Request Documents</b>	57	33	81
<b>Question / Answer Documents</b>	2	5	0
<b>Response Documents</b>	73	33	25
<b>Go / No-go Used for Client</b>	2	0	0
<b>Interview Presentation Document</b>	69	4	12
<b>Approach Document</b>	2	0	0
<b>Meeting agenda</b>	18	61	26
<b>Letter of interest</b>	4	0	0
<b>Letter of Agreement</b>	3	0	0
<b>Services Letter</b>	4	0	0
<b>Project Scope Letter</b>	2	0	0
<b>Contract</b>	3	1	2
<b>Building Assessment Agreement</b>	2	0	0
<b>Programming List</b>	7	9	2
<b>Programming Documents</b>	4	46	6
<b>Programming Images</b>	0	276	0
<b>Vision Package</b>	1	4	1
<b>Conceptual Design Package</b>	2	2	1
<b>Project Presentation</b>	44	8	4
<b>Site Document</b>	10	11	14
<b>Project Performance Review</b>	3	0	0
<b>Management Files</b>	13	8	1
<b>Marketing Files</b>	5	9	8
<b>Marketing Booklet</b>	11	5	2
<b>Marketing training documents</b>	0	29	0
<b>Branding</b>	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	344	544	185

*Figure 6: Materials Collected from Firms*

The fewest documents were collected from Raynor at a total of 185 documents. Texts or

internal messages were not accessible. However, 402 total individual emails were collected including 234 from Holler, 98 from Raynor, and 70 from Gilbert. These were definitely not all of the emails sent on the projects observed, however, these numbers do reflect the attitude these firms had towards email. Holler relied much more heavily on internal emails and phone calls than the other two, including scheduling meetings via email, as opposed to the others that had many more pre-set meetings and spur of the moment meetings. At Gilbert emails were rarely sent internally. At least one associate principal frequently complained that their inbox was too full to receive any more emails, knowing this other employees chose to interact with this person face-to-face rather than through email. Chapter Five will elaborate on how the layout of this firm contributed to this increase in face-to-face interaction.

#### **4.4.3: Observation**

Ethnographic observation occurred in three primary formats. The first was internal and external meetings. Observations were conducted primarily during internal meetings or meetings that were only attended by employees of the specific architecture firm, whether these were meetings on a specific project or general company meetings, and irrespective of where they were held. Less frequently, observations were conducted during external meetings. An external meeting is one attended by employees from the architecture firm being observed and employees of other companies. These other companies were either potential clients or others from the building industry. Most of these meetings occurred face-to-face though there were a number of teleconference meetings as well. The researcher was not an active participant in these meetings (the researcher did not speak unless spoken to directly, which did not occur very often).

Permission to record internal meetings was obtained from both the leadership of the firm as well as those being recorded. Permission to record external meetings was requested at the

beginning of each meeting. If it was the first of many such meetings, the external company would often grant permission to record that specific meeting as well as all future meetings.

Each case study was observed during normal business hours every day of the week, such that the researcher was at the firm just like any other full-time employee. Secondly, additional participant observation was conducted outside of meetings including: walking around the office observing the type of work that was being done; and observing how individuals were interacting with each other. Walking around the space also drew this researcher's attention to meetings that often happened sporadically throughout the day without notice.

The combination of these two methods of participant observation led to a total of 779 hours of collected audio recordings. 341 of those hours were from Gilbert, 244 from Holler and 194 from Raynor. If two meetings were going on at the same time one would be recorded by an iPhone and one recorded by a laptop computer to collect all data possible.

Participant observation was conducted in informal gatherings and social events. These situations were not recorded, though firm employees often joked about the possibility. Observing employees when they were relaxed, hearing their comments about clients and work in a more informal setting enabled this researcher to gain insight about the organizational culture of the firms. It also helped in easing any perceived intrusion of the researcher at the firms during business hours.

Despite the care with which the researcher attempted to conduct participant observation, it was still the job of each individual employee to "explain the researchers presence to others unaware of the project" (Feldman, Bell, and Berger 2003, 117), such as clients and external consultants. Some employees were hesitant to do this even though in some cases clients had already given permission for the researcher to attend external meetings.

#### **4.4.3.1: Field Notes**

Throughout the fieldwork various forms of field notes were taken. Most internal meetings were attended by the same participants so it was much easier to remember their voices and not struggle to remember who spoke. Therefore, these notes consisted primarily of a summary of what was said during the meeting, this included highlighted personal notes with regard to documents or meetings that the employees referred to that the researcher believed would be important to obtain or attend. External meetings on the other hand, were often attended by individuals whom the researcher only engaged once or a small number of times. Notes for these meetings consisted of writing down key words that each individual said during the meeting so that their voice could later be identified. Though the researcher is not trained in stenography, this was attempted to the best of the researcher's abilities during external meetings in which audio recordings were not allowed.<sup>21</sup> During both internal and external meetings anything written on a board to a larger group was also written down to take note of what was being discussed. A personal journal was also kept of things that the researcher found to be especially relevant to future analyses. Occasionally these notes were taken in written format but sometimes they were also taken as audio recordings, depending on the situation in which they occurred.

#### **4.4.3.2: Conversation Analysis**

Once all fieldwork had been conducted it was necessary to analyze the audio recordings, as well as other materials that had been collected. Recordings were played back through a

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<sup>21</sup> This was the case with a few external meetings where architectural employees would explicitly ask me beforehand not to take notes or when, on the very rare occasion, I was asked by a client not to take notes. Most clients did not seem to have any problem with the recordings and some assumed I would continue to stay with them to observe their engagements with all architecture firms prior to them hiring a firm.

compressor in Audacity to improve the intelligibility of the audio.<sup>22</sup> A few files were mostly inscrutable with background noises taking over the audio, but this was relatively rare. The recordings that were transcribed were done so by the author personally rather than sent to be transcribed by an outsider. This was purposeful; as the act of transcribing enabled the data to be both analyzed in detail and kept confidential. There were many advantages for this including allowing the researcher to select those files deemed most significant rather than attempting to transcribe all files (approximately 1000 files). Also, the act of transcribing gave some insight to the organizational culture of the firms since it gave

“access to the 'lived reality' of the interaction that is not available in any other way. In other words, because, for making a transcription, a researcher is forced to attend to details of the interaction that would escape the ordinary listener, transcription works as a major 'noticing device'“ (Have 1999, 78).

Initially this researcher simply transcribed the words that were being said. Trying to analyze these transcriptions led to confusion and frustration. It appeared that individuals were interrupting and ignoring each other, which was originally interpreted as nothing but a jumbled mess. In fact, it turns out that the initial way of transcribing was creating the mess.

Transcriptions were often quick, leaving out a lot of detail of individual words and phrases. Conversation analysts explain that in transcribing “language has often been seen as a carrier of meanings or ideas such that, on receipt of an utterance, the messy stuff of particular phrasing, intonation and so on in which the meaning was packaged can be stripped off to leave the elegant goods within” (Potter 1996, 58). If one embraces the “messy stuff” of conversations then one can see the fine detail of these transitions and the orderliness of conversations.

Conversation analysis is “a field that focuses heavily on issues of meaning and context in

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<sup>22</sup> Audacity is a free open source cross-platform audio software.

interaction” by embodying “a theory which argues that sequences of action are a major part of what we mean by context, that the meaning of an action is heavily shaped by the sequence of previous actions from which it emerges, and that social context is a dynamically created thing that is expressed in and through the sequential organization of interaction” (Heritage 2004, 223). In other words, conversation analysis allows us to understand the meaning of what’s going on in conversations through analyzing their context. The primary assumption of this theory is that “it is fundamentally through interaction that context is built, invoked and managed” (Heritage 2004, 224).

The majority of conversations recorded in this fieldwork was ordinary conversation within which individuals take turns and the current speaker rarely selects the next individual to speak (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974, 704). Instead, as with many conversations that researchers have analyzed in the past, “Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common. Together with transitions characterized by slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions” (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974, 708). There was only one type of meeting that did not conform to typical conversation style: interviews. Interviews were instead conducted in presentation style with one group presenting for a period of time followed by another group asking questions. These interviews will be discussed in depth in Chapters Six and Seven.

In addition to informing the method of analyzing data, conversation analysts also contributed in literature to the discussion of the methods used in this research. Amongst anthropologists there is some debate as to the manner of collecting data that one observes. The three most common methods are videotaping, audiotaping and taking handwritten notes. Videotaping obviously allows for the collection of the most data since body language is important in the analysis of conversation and this is the only method that can capture such

language. Body language also tends to be important in architecture and design as it is one way to express spatial ideas that would otherwise be difficult with words, or when the words used are not understood by everyone involved (Glock 2009; Murphy 2005). However, it was not used in this particular dissertation because it is more intrusive to those being observed and audio recordings were sufficient for a study of process. The use of videotaping has been debated by conversation analysts. One such conversational analyst explains that body language differs greatly from verbal communication in that “it tends not to have a neat turn-by-turn organization, as talk has been found to have overwhelmingly. This may be one reason why video analysis seems to be less used than one might expect, given its obvious importance” (Have 1999, 53). For these reasons it was decided that these meetings would be audio recorded rather than video recorded.

## **Chapter 5 Differentiating Firms**

The following three chapters will draw from the data collected to answer the overarching research question posed by this research: in what ways does the organizational culture of three Michigan-based architecture firms affect their client engagement?

This chapter draws on the fieldwork conducted at these three firms as well as literature from organizational studies to obtain a greater understanding of the organizational culture of these firms. The field of organizational studies posits that organizational culture can be analyzed in several ways. The first of these ways, according to organizational theorist Edgar Schein, is that of the visible artifacts. The chapter begins with a brief description of the artifacts that these three firms have in common, such as dress and technology, before turning to the extrinsic properties of organizational culture that are manifested in organizational structure.

Organizational studies researchers James Skivington and Richard Daft defined organizational structure as the “enduring configuration of tasks and activities” the structure of which has two dimensions. The first of these is the formal framework, which includes “rules, prescriptions of authority, division of labour, and hierarchy of authority”. The informal organizational structure is the “pattern of interaction ‘processes’ among members” (Skivington and Daft 1991, 46). In particular this chapter analyzes these firms’ formal and informal organizational structures through an analysis of organizational charts.

This hierarchy of authority, though extrinsic, informs the intrinsic organizational culture that can be found in the office layout, employee orientation materials, newsletters, and visible behavior patterns, which conclude the chapter. The visible behavior patterns will continue to be



discussed throughout the rest of the dissertation through a description of the ethnographic observations. This chapter begins to touch on these by describing behavior patterns observed during meetings to answer the subquestion: How is the organizational culture of these three firms manifested in their visible artifacts and organizational structure?

### **5.1: Similarities of Firms**

Mentioned briefly in the introduction and as can be seen in Figure 7 below, there were a lot of similarities between the three case studies. In terms of their size, Gilbert, Holler and Raynor were all firms of the largest category, over 50 employees, as characterized by the AIA in their 2016 firm survey report (The American Institute of Architects 2016). All three firms were in Michigan and had the following internal groups of employees: architectural, interior architectural, or “interiors”, finance, IT, marketing, administration and office services. All three firms also pursued projects in different building typologies (healthcare, housing, workplace, etc).<sup>23</sup> They were all headquarter offices, and as such were substantially larger than other offices. The technology used by these firms and their manner of dress was almost identical. It was also not uncommon for employees to spend time working at one firm for a while before moving to one of the others.

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<sup>23</sup> The term “building typology” is used to describe projects based on the similarity of their usage. For example, architectural projects for Apple and Google would be in the same building typology studio of “workplace”.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Size of Firm</b>	over 50 employees		
<b>Headquarter location</b>	Michigan		
<b>Building Typologies served</b>	Healthcare, higher education, workplace		
<b>Technology used by firms</b>	Similar Computer Software and Hardware		
<b>Manner of Dress</b>	Business Casual		
<b>Workplace Clients Served</b>	Including those in Auto Industry		
<b>Percent repeat clients</b>	24	60	33
<b>Projects Pursued with Assistance from other offices</b>	3	20	7

*Figure 7: Similarities and Client Information of Three Michigan Firms*

All three worked with clients who had some connection to the automobile industry, among a variety of other clients. Each firm attempted to maintain contact with clients in case other needs arose. At Gilbert only 24% of the projects pursued during my time with the firm were repeat clients, at Raynor 33% and at Holler 60%. During the fieldwork for this research, approximately 14% of all of the clients were pursued by two of the three case studies. At each of these firms, the majority of projects were pursued without the assistance of other geographic offices.<sup>24</sup> Gilbert pursued the fewest clients with assistance from another office at 3% of the clients they pursued, then Raynor with 7% and finally Holler with 20%. Holler's high

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<sup>24</sup> It is unclear if Raynor's second geographic office brought in enough work or had enough employees to be considered self-sufficient.

percentage of projects being assisted by its other locations could be accounted for since they had more work than this one location could handle during the time of the fieldwork. It is possible that some of Holler's other offices may have been experiencing the opposite situation in which "when one had a small amount of work, jobs in the other units could keep the entire operation running at a profit" (Boyle 1977, 327).

## **5.2: Differences**

### **5.2.1: Studio Structure**

As can be seen in figure 8 below, all three firms had offices in different geographic locations. Raynor had two offices, both of which were located in Michigan. Of these two offices, one was the headquarters and the other a considerably smaller office that was not self-sufficient. Holler had a total of thirteen offices including two in Michigan and one abroad. Gilbert had a total of six offices including its main Michigan headquarters. All offices at Gilbert and Holler were self-sufficient. In fact, many of these offices had historically been their own firm and were later purchased by either Gilbert or Holler. When purchasing a new office, it is common for a firm, or any company, to need to spend some time and resources on incorporating that office into the rest of the firm and in making positive connections across employees of different offices. This chapter will discuss the different meetings that these firms had to create connections across employees in a later section.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Total Number of Offices</b>	6	13	2
<b>Number of Michigan Offices</b>	1	2	2
<b>Services Provided to Clients</b>	architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering		architecture, interior design
<b>Building Types that Firm could Design</b>	workplace, higher education, healthcare, science and technology, sustainable spaces, forensic labs and medical simulation centers	workplace, higher education, healthcare, science and technology, building technology, lighting, planning, research	workplace, healthcare, higher education
<b>Internal Studios</b>	service, building type	service, building type, clients	services

*Figure 8: Comparison by Offices and Studio Structure*

Services provided to each firm’s clients were not based on how the firms employees were organized. To its clients Raynor provided the fewest services of all three firms, only including architecture and interior design. Raynor could conduct architecture for a variety of building types including workplace, healthcare and higher education. Internally employees were only divided based on services and not on building types. The large number of architecture employees were internally divided into four studios each lead by a specific principal. Employees of the four building types did not necessarily sit together in the studio space. Interior design, marketing, and support staff had their own internal studios and sat in these groups.

Gilbert provided a few more services to clients than Raynor including mechanical and

electrical engineering as well as landscape architecture. Gilbert conducted architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, and engineering for a variety of building types including workplace, higher education, healthcare, science and technology, sustainable spaces, forensic labs and medical simulation centers. Internally, Gilbert divided employees by services and then by building types. There were therefore studios for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, interior design, workplace, healthcare, etc. Employees who specialized in landscape architecture, sustainable spaces, forensic labs, and medical simulation centers were housed in these larger studios. The landscape architects, for example, were within the workplace studio.

To its clients, Holler provided the same services as Gilbert. The large number of services that Gilbert and Holler provided to their clients gave them an advantage over smaller firms like Raynor that did not have all of these services, since

“providing all related professional services within a single office not only made coordination easier and more convenient, but made direct supervisory control of the product easier as well. For another, the more areas of professional activity that came under one roof, the greater were the opportunities for increasing efficiency and productivity” (Boyle 1977, 327).

Providing all of these services also ensured that Gilbert and Holler needed to work with fewer consultants to pursue projects than Raynor. Chapter Seven will show some of the disadvantages that companies face when involving consultants. Overall the lack of coordination between employees makes it more difficult to engage with clients.

The services that Holler provided were then conducted for a variety of building types including workplace, higher education, healthcare, science and technology, building technology, lighting, planning, and research. As with Gilbert, Holler also internally divided employees first by services and then by building types. To get work during the 2008 financial crisis, Holler had chosen to pursue projects at two very large auto companies, Clients Orange and Pink. In the

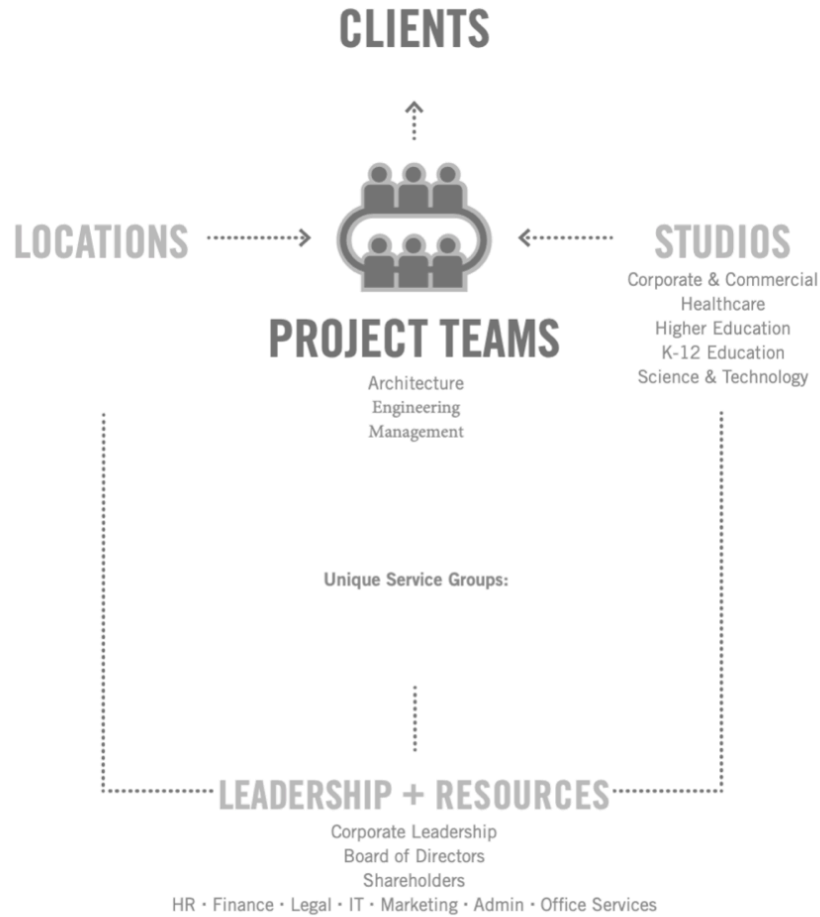
years since the crisis they began to do so many projects for these companies that they ended up dividing employees into studios dedicated to these clients. These individualized studios were an added benefit for these two clients who could work with the same employees consistently.

### **5.2.2: Organizational Charts**

One way to visualize employees' roles within a company is with an organizational chart. Gilbert, Holler and Raynor all had extremely unique organizational charts, which were probably created for very different audiences. Each firm has a complex chart irrespective of the size of the firm. Gilbert's chart, seen in Figure 9, had four groups: studios (building typologies), locations (of offices geographically), project teams (services), and leadership + resources (corporate leadership, board of directors, shareholders, HR, finance, legal, IT, marketing, administration and office services).<sup>25</sup> These four groups have no hierarchical divisions, the chart just shows a circle of the four groups all working together to meet the client's needs, represented by "clients" at the top of the organizational chart with the firm's tagline. Gilbert is also the only firm to list shareholders and they are the only firm that has a full-time legal staff member, included as a "resource". Gilbert's organizational chart only mentions one job title: project managers, which both Holler and Raynor also note. Since this is the only firm to display "clients" so prominently in their organizational chart, and since they have included shareholders, the chart was likely created with these groups in mind as the audience.

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<sup>25</sup> All organizational charts in this chapter have been scrubbed of details such as employees names, qualifications, photos, specific office locations to preserve the anonymity of the firms to the best degree possible.

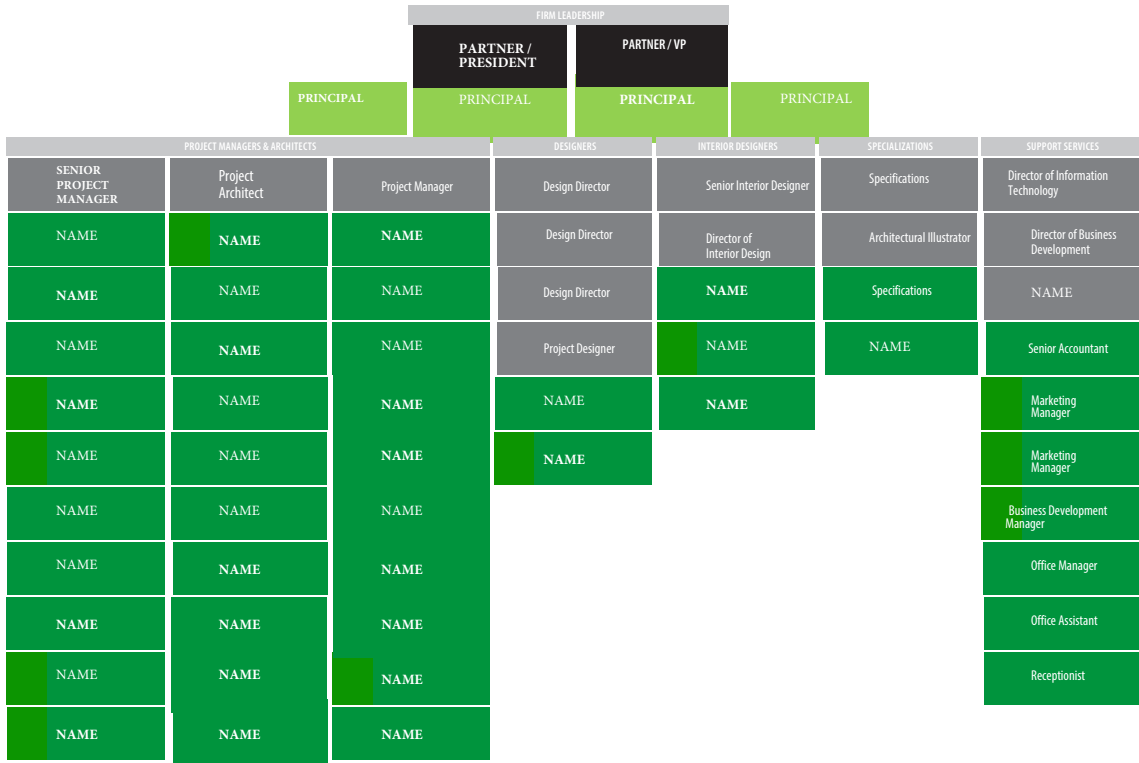


**Figure 9: Gilbert's Organizational Chart**

Raynor's chart, seen in Figure 10 below, shows the firm leadership (partners and principals) with five groups below: project managers and architects, designers, interior designers, specializations and support services. Each of these groups has at least two associates listed first with all the rest of the staff below. There were no connective lines between individuals so it is not clear which partner is in charge of which principal, or which principal is in charge of which of the five groups. Raynor is the only firm not to include human resources in their organizational chart because they do not have a staff member assigned to this job. They were debating whether

they needed to have one. This organizational chart was likely created with the employees in mind. It is the only organizational chart with photos, full names, and qualifications of each employee. By including their qualifications, the firm places value on these qualifications as something to which others in the firm can aspire. In addition to qualifications, Raynor's organizational chart also includes job titles. Both Raynor and Holler include the following job titles in their organizational charts: firm partners, design directors, specifications, executive / office director, marketing manager, office manager and business development. Raynor's organizational chart lists a few more than Holler's, including: senior project manager, project architect, project designer, principals, senior interior designers, director of interior design, architectural illustrator, BIM specialist, and the receptionist. An employee at the firm could easily use Raynor's organizational chart to get to know who is who at the firm as well as figure out who might be the appropriate person to answer a specific question.

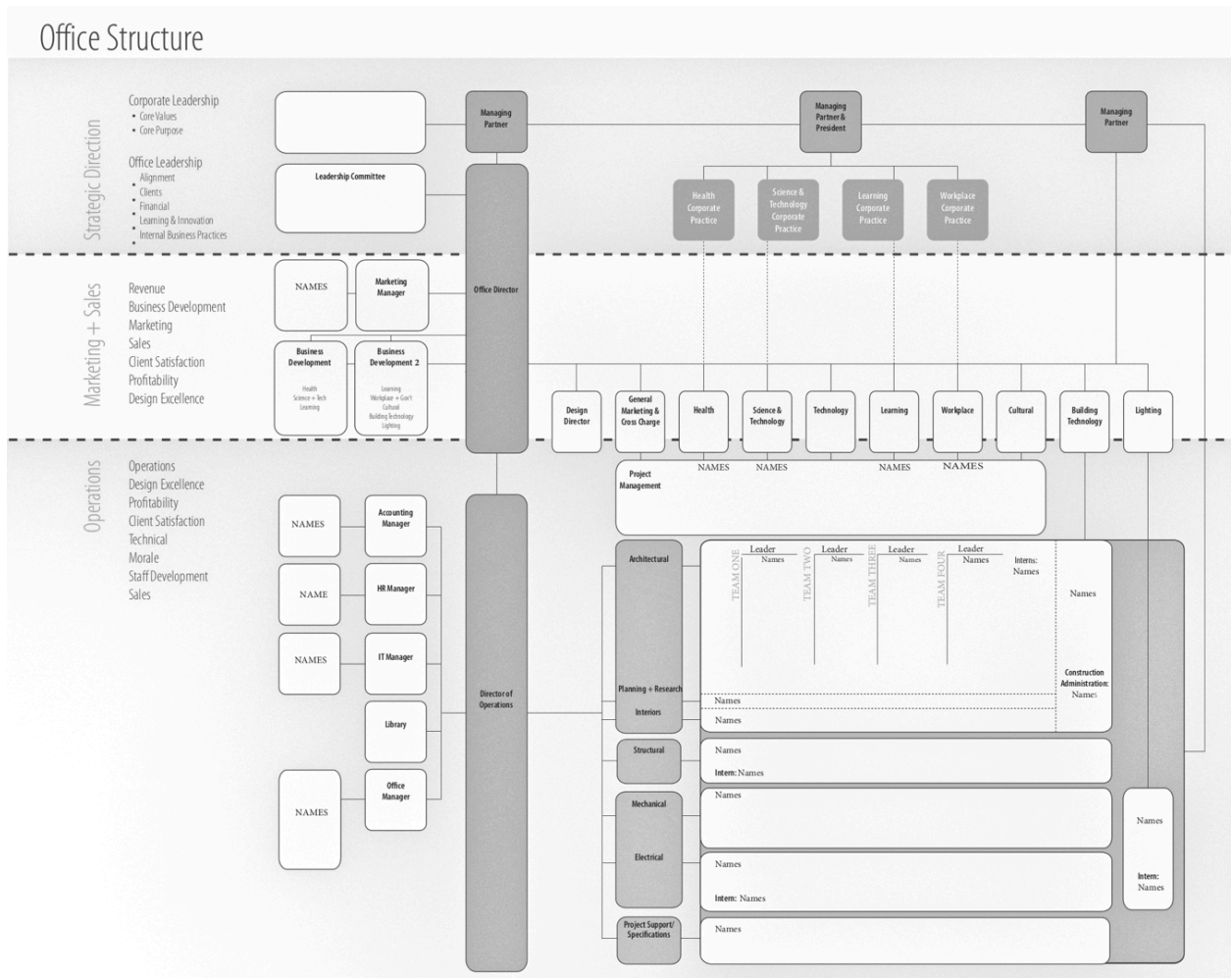




*Figure 10: Raynor's Organizational Chart with names and photos of employees removed*

Holler has by far the most complex chart, seen in Figure 11 below. The organizational charts of both of the other firms include all of their geographic offices. At Holler the organizational chart is only for the Michigan office. To the left of the page there are three groups making rows across the entire page: strategic direction, marketing & sales and operations. At the top of the strategic direction all of the managing partners are listed by name with the board of directors and leadership committee listed next to them. Below these are what Holler calls “practices” by building typology. In the next row down (marketing and sales) on the left are the marketing and business development individuals listed by name next to the leaders of each of the studios, some studios have practices (ie corporate leads) above them and some do not. All of the individuals in each studio are listed below each studio lead in both the marketing and sales and operations rows. Finally, in the operations row at the bottom of the page

Accounting, IT, HR, Library and the Office Manager are listed to the left of the Director of Operations. To the right of the Director are all of the different services with all of their leads. Only two of the groups of service individuals have leaders in the studios in the row above. There are lines showing very distinctly which individual is in charge of which other individuals.



**Figure 11:** Holler’s Organizational Chart with employee names and other specifics removed

Holler’s organizational chart was likely created by and for the leadership committee of the firm’s headquarters. Holler’s organizational chart is the only one to list the roles and responsibilities of the leadership groups: strategic direction, marketing + sales, and operations,

which they don't do for any other groups. Several of the employees in the leadership committee have taken special liberties with their groups in the organizational chart. An employee in charge of business development on the leadership committee has added the division of labor for business development into the chart. A leader of the architectural group on the leadership committee has divided staff into four groups and given them names of nearby streets, potentially streets on which the firm did prominent architectural projects. In addition to these details, this is the only firm to have a full-time librarian on staff, and include a list of interns, director of operations, and leadership committee in the organizational chart. Holler and Gilbert include corporate leadership, board of directors, and clients in their organizational charts. Holler had a receptionist on staff but this individual was not included in the organizational chart.<sup>26</sup>

Gilbert's minimalistic organizational chart reflected more of the firm's day-to-day organization than may appear. Instead of listing the Michigan office first since they were the firm's headquarters, Gilbert's other midwestern office was listed first. This showed that the corporate marketing leader had probably created the organizational chart and primarily worked out of this midwestern office. Though this may have been the only reason to list the Midwestern office prior to the Michigan office, it is also possible that this listing reflected the status of the corporate marketing leader. This individual was also in charge of their rebranding and when they visited the Michigan office it seemed that many of the studios were showing off their work and getting advice from this individual. There were also other situations in which the Michigan office sought out advice from this other location.

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<sup>26</sup> Gilbert's also did not include their receptionist but this was not as important since they only included one job title in their organizational chart.

### 5.2.3: Informal Organizational Structure

In practice individuals in Gilbert's Michigan office were stratified differently than their organizational charts appeared. They seemed to be stratified by job with the executive directors at the top and then by studio based largely on the seniority and amount of time the studio leader had worked at Gilbert. The leader of science and technology had been with the firm the longest and was about to retire, so many other studio leaders looked up to them. The next senior employee at the firm was the Workplace studio leader, who had not been working at the firm nearly as long. The healthcare studio leader looked to the workplace leader for advice and then the higher education leader was still in training during fieldwork with Gilbert. Most of the time studio leaders were principals and associate principals looked to these individuals for advice and direction. If their studio leader had a higher place in the organization, then it would be possible for the principal to also have a high position. For this reason, the associate principal of workplace did some of the training for the studio leader of higher education. Project managers looked to studio leaders and principals with one exception. There was one particular employee who had been with the firm for decades and therefore had more seniority than many others at the firm. The hierarchy below the studio leaders and project managers included designers, business developers and finally marketing in that order. Support staff existed outside this hierarchy.

Holler and Raynor's organizational charts did list specific employees at these firms. In practice these organizational charts did not necessarily reflect the hierarchy of individuals observed during fieldwork.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately there was not an opportunity to observe many of the corporate leaders at Holler. Therefore, this researcher can only speak about the organization of

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<sup>27</sup> I did not observe every individual at the firm. I can only give an analysis of those individuals I did observe.

individuals in Holler's Michigan office. Five years prior to this research, Holler had made some changes to the firm's leadership to bring in new employees so employees who had been at the firm for a considerable period of time could retire soon or not work quite as much. However, at the time this research was conducted, the old leaders had not yet retired. It was common for the new leaders to go to the old ones for advice; and when the old leaders were in the office, they were still understood to be in charge. While seniority and amount of time at the firm lent itself to greater status at Gilbert, at Holler status was obtained with a place in the leadership committee. In some situations, these individuals had spent the most time with the firm but this was not always the case.

There were only a few differences between Raynor's written organizational chart and what was observed in practice. Though the vice president and president are side by side in the organizational chart, it was clear that the vice president took advice from the president. The director of IT wielded as much power as the four primary principals. This individual's romantic partner is the child of one of the firm's namesake. Since the firm's namesake passed away, and the romantic partner no longer works at the firm, the family's control passed to this individual, who used this power to pursue clients the firm wouldn't have otherwise pursued, and neglected their responsibilities in IT in favor of architectural work. Aside from this individual, the director of interior design is in charge of the senior interior designer even though the senior interior designer has been at the firm much longer. Also, one of the design directors is a person that the other directors look up to, though it is unclear whether this individual realizes their position. This researcher did not have the opportunity to interact with the project managers and architects, or specializations very much and so few conclusions can be drawn about their roles in the firm.

#### 5.2.4: Office Layout

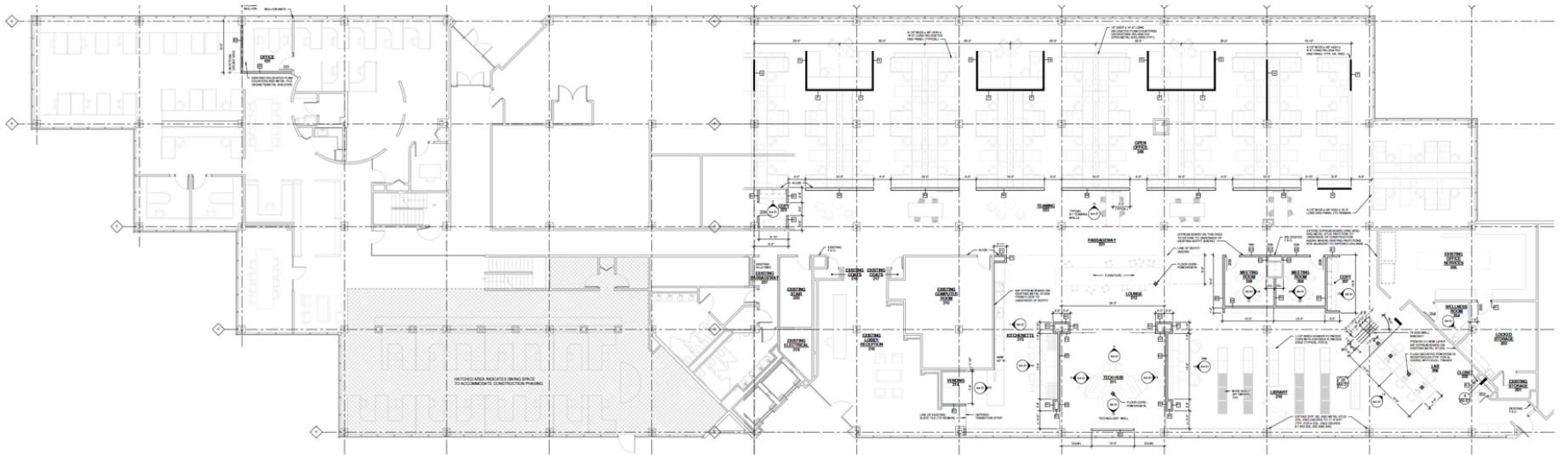
Aside from the organizational chart of each firm, the other thing that affected the culture of the company was the firm's office layout and spatial layout. There were a few similarities between all three firms in terms of office layout. Most employees were separated by short partitions that were easy to see over from a seated position.<sup>28</sup> Private offices were limited and tended to be assigned to two groups of people: those who dealt with very private work (like HR and Accounting individuals) and the CEOs / other principals of the firm. At Gilbert and Holler, the principals had seats closest to windows or offices with a large quantity of windows at both Gilbert and Holler. On the other hand, Raynor's CEOs and principals had the same amount of window space as others at the firm.

An initial glance at Gilbert's floorplan in figure 12 as compared to the other floorplans in figures 13 and 14 may lead one to believe that Gilbert's was the most complex of the floorplans. However, Holler and Raynor's floorplans are conceptual floorplans based on general observation and memory of this researcher while Gilbert's floorplan is a scaled floorplan based on designed dimensions. In reality, Gilbert's office layout was relatively simple. Support staff were located on a separate floor from the rest of the firm (not seen in figure 12), connected by a staircase. The rest of the firm was located in a long rectangular box shaped space with private glass offices at one short end of the rectangle for the president and chief executive officer. There were windows around three of the four sides of the rectangle with a wall down the fourth side separating desks on the one side from kitchen, library and meeting rooms. Along the long window side of the rectangle there was a pathway to get from one row of desks to the next. Desks were arranged in

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<sup>28</sup> Only one of the pilot study firms observed had tall partitions between desks. These partitions made it more difficult for people several rows apart to communicate with each other than was the case with shorter partitions.

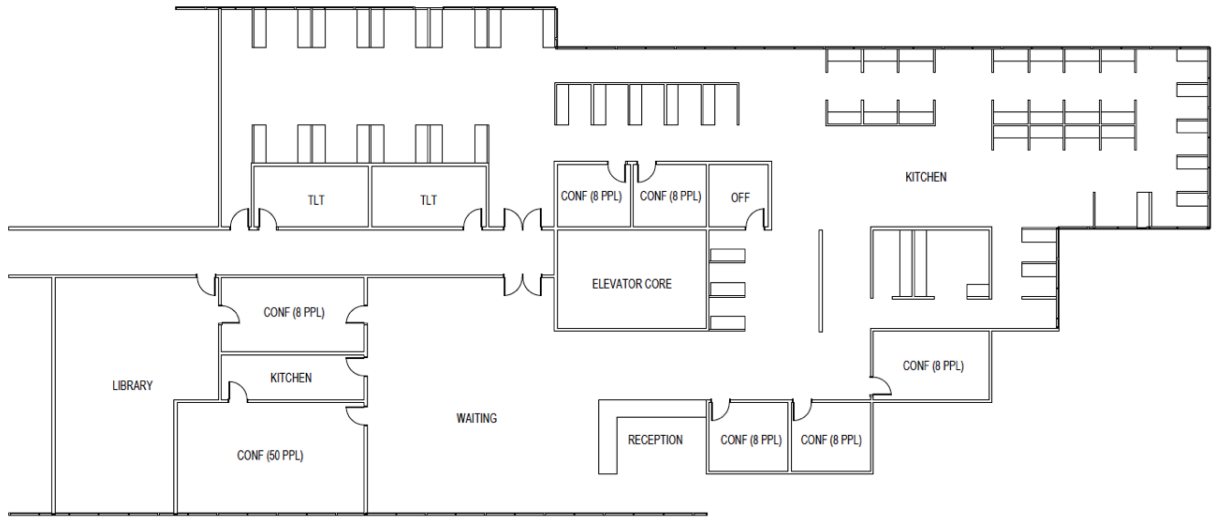
T shaped rows and the short side of the rectangle. Studio leaders sat along the walkway at the short top of the T with two individuals per row. All other staff sat on the long side of the T, three on either side facing each other. There was nothing in between them and those sitting opposite but a short wall and their desktop computer



*Figure 12: Gilbert's Floorplan*

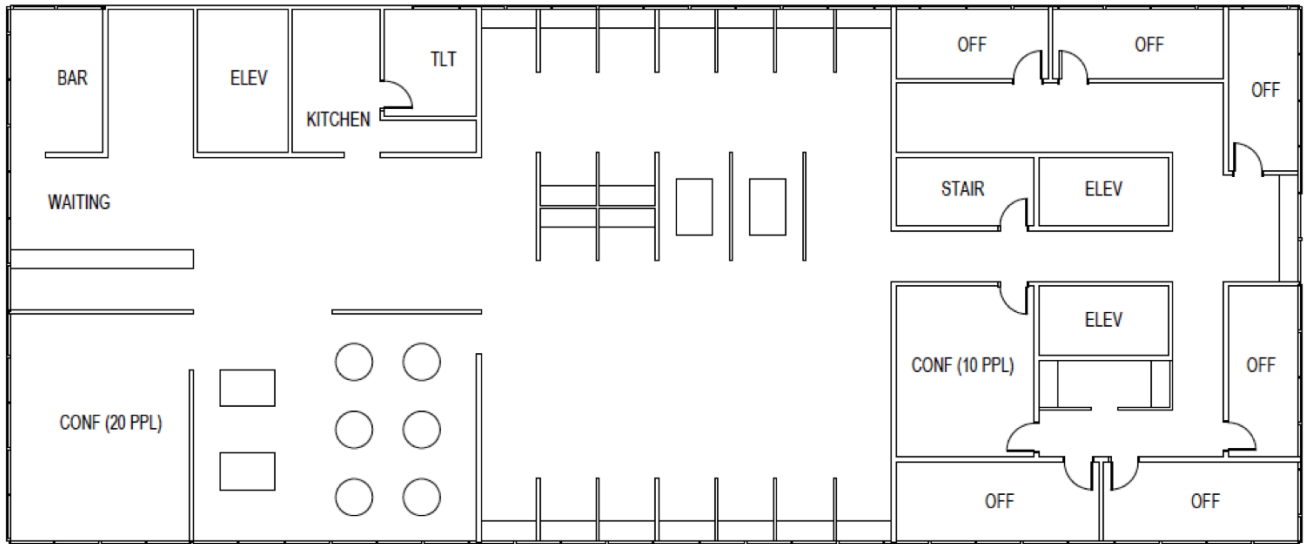


Holler and Raynor's office layouts were much more complex. Raynor's floorplan can be seen in figure 13. This firm was located on one floor of a larger office complex. From the elevator on their floor there were several choices: walk down the hall to Raynor's library and bathrooms, walk the back way in to Raynor's studio, or walk in to Raynor's small waiting room where a receptionist sat. This receptionist was shared between Raynor and a law firm that Raynor partnered with on legal matters. Raynor's space had walls separating the receptionist from some of the support staff from the marketing and business development team from the firm's partners who were up against the windows. Everyone else sat in an open rectangular space surrounded on two one long and one short side by windows. This rectangle was much thinner than Gilbert's. There was a pathway down the long side of the rectangle but instead of being uninterrupted desks like Gilbert's, the kitchen was in the middle of the rectangle separating specializations, the rest of the support services, and some of the architects were on one side of the kitchen closest to the marketing team and firm partners. On the other side of the kitchen the designers sat next to the meeting rooms, then interior designers and finally the rest of the project managers and architects on the far side of the rectangle.



*Figure 13: Raynor's Floorplan*

Holler's staff was located on four separate floors of a rectangular building. The floorplan for their first floor can be seen in figure 14. There were elevator shafts and stairs on the interior of both short ends of the rectangle. Between these elevator shafts and the exterior windows of the building, Holler had six private glass offices on each floor. On one side these offices were occupied by support staff, on the other these offices were occupied by the office director, director of operations, corporate practice studio leaders, business development, and a few local studio leaders. Each floor had one or two assistants, or other individuals in desks just outside these glass offices. Everyone else was located in the middle of the rectangle with two pathways down the long side of the rectangle three columns of desks. There were short partitions and building columns separating interspersed among these employees. One floor was dedicated to marketing, lighting, building technology, interiors. Two of the other floors were dedicated to client studios and the fourth dedicated to operations staff, primarily from architecture and planning + research.



*Figure 14: Holler's Floorplan*

Since Holler had so many facilities separating groups of people it was much easier to interact with a small group. They had many more private offices than other firms and therefore tended to have more closed-door meetings with only two people. At Gilbert, two-person meetings tended to take place out in the open floor plan rather than behind closed doors. People would listen in as they walked by and often join the conversation. In addition to closed meetings at Holler, it was also easier to interact with fewer people on a day-to-day basis. Since employees were divided into separate floors and there were two elevators on each side of the floor, it was easy for an employee to enter and exit each day without interacting with many other employees. If that employee needed to interact with someone on a different floor they could walk over to the individual, or they could just as easily call that person without leaving their desk or floor.

By contrast, at Gilbert and Raynor there were only two ways for an employee to access their desk. At Gilbert there were two flights of stairs and an elevator that all ended around the

same location on the floor where the majority of employees worked. At Raynor an employee could walk through the waiting room or through a back door next to the elevator. It seemed in these particular firms that having line of sight between employees increased the chances that employee would walk to see individuals in person rather than calling them on the phone.<sup>29</sup>

### **5.2.5: Gender & Personalities**

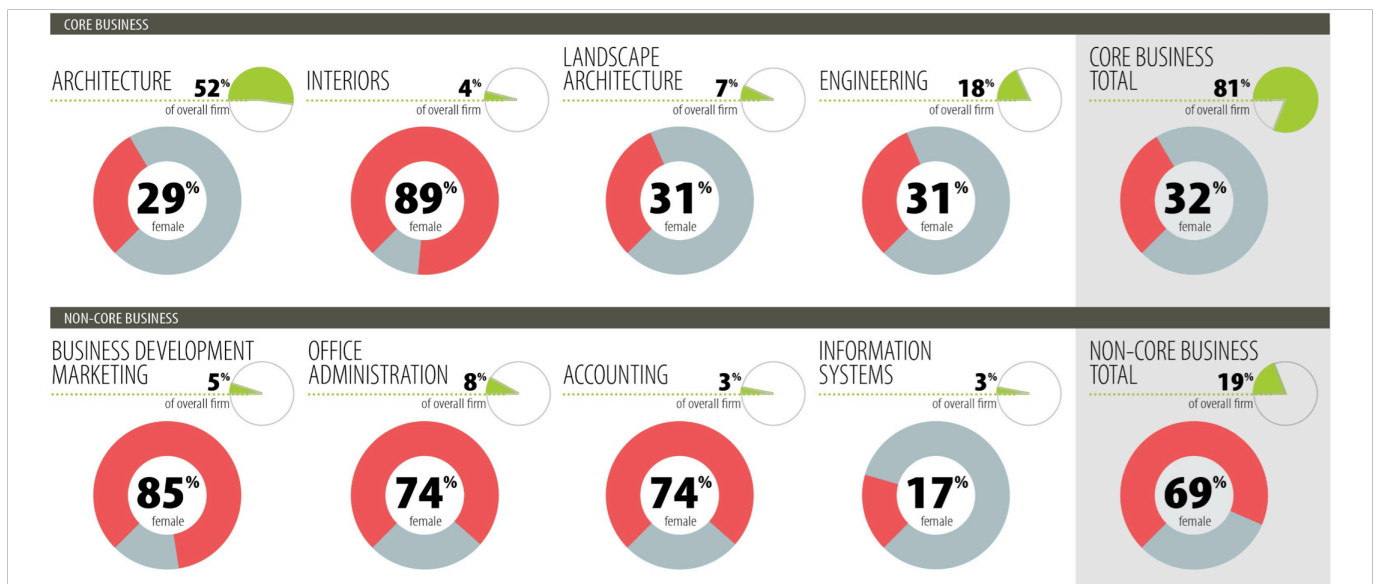
As of 2015, women comprised almost one third (31%) of all architectural staff and 20% of all principals and partners. These numbers increased from 26% in 2005 (The American Institute of Architects 2016). In fact, architecture has always been a male-dominated profession, at least here in the United States, and there is a lot of literature written on gender in architecture (Anthony 2001; A. T. Friedman 1998; Cramer 2016; Day 2000; “In the World of Green, Women Rule” n.d.; Coluccia and Louse 2004). As one of many examples, in 1996, architectural researcher Sherri Ahrentzen wrote about architecture remaining a male-dominated profession which “historically has been largely defined by men, and men in rather insular, exclusionary and privileged (by race, class and education) positions” (Ahrentzen 1996, 77).

Holler had an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion program in addition to a Women’s Initiative, which at the time of this fieldwork had recently done a survey of women at the firm. One of the women in the firm’s leadership committee was presenting the results of this survey to

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<sup>29</sup> At one of the pilot firms everyone was on the same floor in one large space broken up by a central grouping of spaces for kitchen, library and meeting rooms. All of the building typologies were located on one side of the central offices with marketing and business development on the other side and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and principals between the two along the far wall. At this firm there seemed to be a rather strong separation between marketing / business development and those assigned to a building typology. For the most part, those assigned to building typologies were not involved in the project until it was considered a “win” and the marketing / business development individuals were no longer involved. This meant there was a constant handing over of projects from one side of the firm to the other, between two groups that were rarely exposed to what the others were working on. The central grouping of kitchen and meeting rooms acted like a large barrier keeping sights and sounds to one group or another but not both.

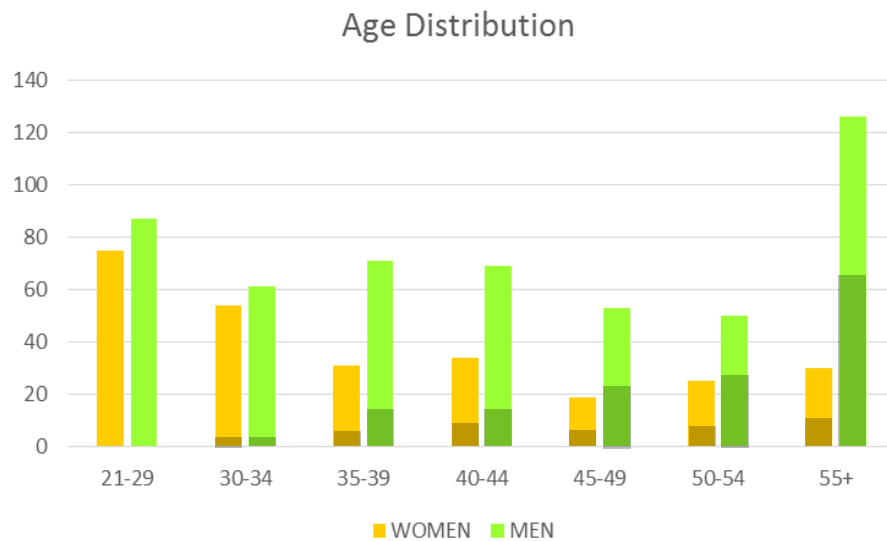
the Initiative so a lot more information on women was collected at Holler than the other two firms. As can be seen in the below figure 15, women comprised a third of the core business roles at Holler, which included architecture and engineering. Of the different job titles in these core business roles women occupied only one third of the firm’s staff, associates and principals but only 12% of their VPs. This percentage is rather similar to that of Raynor where women comprise 26% of leadership positions and at Gilbert with 32% of studio leaders being women. Raynor did not have any female partners or principals, though they did partner with a female minority owned firm. Unfortunately, they didn’t work on any projects with this firm during the time fieldwork was conducted. Gilbert only had one female of ten principals and office leaders. There were no female studio leaders in their Michigan office.



*Figure 15: Women at Holler*

Despite these rather low numbers of women in the core business roles at the three firms, the non-core business roles tell a different story. At Holler, Gilbert and Raynor women make up

seventy percent of non-core business roles, including business development and marketing, office administration and accounting. The percent of women who left Holler voluntarily had increased from 28% in 2012 to 42% in 2013 where it remained through 2014. As can be seen in figure 16 of all the listed age groups, the majority of women were under 30, whereas the majority of men were over 55 years old.<sup>30</sup> The largest percentage of the firm’s women were under 30 years old, at 28% of the female employees, whereas the vast majority of the firm’s men were over 55 years old, at 23% of the male employees. The goal of the Women in Holler Initiative was to bring more females into leadership and core business roles at the firm.



**Figure 16:** Male female distribution by age at Holler

Even though this was the one firm with more gender issues than the other two firms, Holler was the only firm with a Women’s Initiative. There were some incidents of sexual harassment with a male employee at the firm. Someone mentioned a rumor that one person at this firm was not being promoted because he was a man and they were only looking for a woman

<sup>30</sup> Bar graph taken from a presentation put together for the Women in Holler Initiative.

to take the position. Additionally, in two separate meetings a female employee was asked to run the meeting, or was in charge of the group, and a male employee took over the leadership role to the female employee's discontent. However, this firm also had the most complicated organizational structure and the most convoluted office in terms of its physical space. This may reflect a quote earlier in this chapter from Ahrentzen, namely that gender dominance has more to do with the organization of the firm than anything else.

### **5.2.6: Meetings**

Chapter Seven will outline six mini-cases complete with descriptions of both internal and external project meetings. This section will focus on what types of meetings were held at the firms aside from project meetings, a list of meetings and their frequency at each of the three firms can be seen in figure 17. For the purposes of this dissertation, a meeting is defined as a gathering of at least four individuals. At the firms, there were three common types of internal meetings that occurred on a regular basis: studio, all hands, and across geographic offices meetings. There were also meetings that were held between architects and clients that will be discussed in the next chapter. A brief explanation of each of these internal meetings will give a greater understanding of the culture of these firms and how employees interacted at the firms, especially since these meetings are extremely different from one firm to the next.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Studio Meetings</b>	weekly	weekly	weekly
<b>All Hands Meetings</b>	infrequent	monthly	monthly
<b>Marketing and Business Development Meetings</b>	infrequent	monthly	N/A
<b>Meetings Across Geographic Offices</b>	monthly or every other month	monthly	
<b>Board of Directors Meetings</b>	monthly	monthly	
<b>Meetings of Designers</b>	monthly	monthly	
<b>Project Managers Meeting</b>	N/A	monthly	
<b>Company-wide conference</b>		annual	

*Figure 17: Comparison of Types of Meeting*

Studio meetings were held once a week at the firms. A matrix of studio meetings at each of the three firms can be seen in figure 18. At Raynor the design staff seemed to be arbitrarily divided into two groups of approximately twenty employees. Each group was led by two of the firm's four principals. During these meetings each employee would briefly list the projects and individual tasks they were assigned as well as the phase in which they were working. If the individual felt they could take on more work they would mention this to the group and would be tasked with more work from those who needed it. Occasionally people who were working on the



same project would discuss how the project was going or what they were working on in relation to each other but these meetings were largely informational. Once everyone in the room had spoken, the principals would double check the upcoming vacation days to make sure they were correct.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Frequency of meeting</b>	weekly	weekly	weekly
<b>Number of Employees</b>	6+	10+	20
<b>Types of Employees who Attended</b>	all employees in a particular building typology studio	all employees of a particular service-based studio	all employees with the exception of support staff
<b>Leader of Meeting</b>	Business development and marketing kept meeting organized	Studio leader	Studio leader
<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	review all projects that studio was working on by phase	review what was happening in each project as well as goals	each employee briefly lists the projects, tasks, and vacation time
<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	Make sure everyone was on the same page with what was happening	Keep everyone in studio on task	Provide studio leaders with information
<b>Food provided</b>	N/A		
<b>Type of Conversation in the meeting</b>	in-depth complete with stories	series of basic information	series of basic information

*Figure 18: Comparison of Studio Meetings*

At Gilbert studio meetings tended to be much smaller than the 20-person studio meetings at Raynor. Studio meetings were called “Scrums” and were meetings between those who worked on the same building typology projects. For example, the workplace studio meetings had eight people attending them on a consistent basis: a principal, associate principal, a project

architect, business developer, marketing individual, two landscape architects and some of the designers who were working on workplace projects that week. In these meetings they would review all of the projects the studio was working on in order of phase the project was in.<sup>31</sup> They would make sure projects were in the correct stage, and hadn't moved on without being updated in the computer system. They would also talk about each project briefly and what was going on with it if there had been anything that had happened recently, for example if there were a proposal that came in or a meeting scheduled, etc. Rather than quickly listing off tasks or project names, which is what each individual tended to do at Raynor's studio meetings, these smaller meetings often generated in depth conversations that would be continued later in the day. In addition to the weekly studio meetings, this same group, minus the architects and designers, would meet whenever necessary to discuss other general marketing topics such as public relations and photography.

Holler only had weekly service-based studio meetings: marketing, engineering, planning, etc. During the marketing meeting, for example, they would review what project each marketing employee was working on, who they were working with and what their goals were to reach the due dates in terms of proposals, interviews, awards, photography and public relations. They would also review on-going projects and conferences they were attending.

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<sup>31</sup> Phases will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Frequency of meeting</b>	infrequent	monthly	N/A
<b>Number of Employees</b>	9	30	
<b>Types of Employees who Attended</b>	marketing, business development, CEO	marketing, business development, studio leaders, office director, director of operations	
<b>Leader of Meeting</b>	CEO	Marketing	
<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	informal agenda: marketing to present what they had been working on	pre-set agenda: marketing to present public relations, photography, marketing budget, submittals, interviews, and proposals	
<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	Keep marketing on task	Keep marketing on task	
<b>Food provided</b>	N/A		
<b>Type of Conversation in the meeting</b>	series of basic information	series of basic information	

*Figure 19: Comparison of Marketing and Business Development Meetings*

In addition to the weekly marketing meetings, Holler also had monthly marketing meetings, seen in figure 19 above. For these meetings all of the marketing employees gathered with the studio leads, office director and director of operations to review the different projects that marketing was working on by building typology, which projects had proposals due soon, had they been shortlisted for, or had been recently won or lost. Marketing would present what they were working on for public relations and photography as well as a report of the marketing budget, and a list of the submittals, interviews and proposals for the last 2-3 years by year.

Raynor did not have such marketing meetings and this researcher did not observe marketing meetings while at Gilbert, though such meetings were discussed. Gilbert monthly marketing meetings were described as meetings of all marketing and business development employees with a very informal agenda to ensure that the marketing employees were kept on task.

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Frequency of meeting</b>	Infrequent	monthly	monthly
<b>Number of Employees</b>	several hundred	over 1000	just over 50
<b>Types of Employees who Attended</b>	all employees	all employees	all employees
<b>Leader of Meeting</b>	CEO	office director or director of operations	CEO
<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	informal	formal: purpose, people, process, performance, pronouncements	informal, a staff member would present about an event, class, or trip they had recently, some brief firm-wide announcements made
<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	present staff with something that firm had been working on that pertained to everyone (such as branding)	Unite staff	Unite staff
<b>Food provided</b>	snack	snack	lunch
<b>Type of Conversation in the meeting</b>	presentation-style	presentation-style	presentation-style

*Figure 20: Comparison of All Hands Meetings*

All Hands meetings, seen in figure 20 above, were less frequent than studio meetings. Raynor was small enough to have the whole company meet once a month over lunch. This

meeting was very intimate, people would present photos from trips they went on with their spouses or conferences they attended. At Gilbert and Holler these were meetings in which the firm would order food and drinks and everyone from the Michigan office came together. There was only one of these meetings during fieldwork with Gilbert and the firm primarily discussed their new efforts to rebrand the firm.

Holler held these meetings once a month. The preset agenda for these meetings included: purpose, people, process, performance and pronouncements. Purpose was information about initiatives, thought leadership, and design excellence that the firm was trying to accomplish. During the people portion of the meeting the Office Director would review the firm's new employees and employees with promotions, anniversaries and big life changes, such as births, as well as presentations that employees had given and a quote of appreciation that a customer had recently said about the firm. In the next process part of the meeting a couple of employees would get up to present projects. During one meeting it was the process of a particular project, another meeting was celebrating Earth Day so they discussed the ways sustainability could be brought in to a project, and during a third meeting there was a pecha kucha of several different projects.<sup>32</sup> Then the Director of Operations would present the firm's performance in terms of how they were doing financially and in relation to the budget as well as projects that had received awards, were in pursuit or that the firm had won. And finally, pronouncements were projects that employees were working on within the firm and in the community such as

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<sup>32</sup> Pecha Kucha "is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk along to the images" ("PechaKucha 20x20" n.d.).

Construction, an exhibit of structures made of unopened cans of food that are later donated, Gleaners Community Food Bank drive, and the Toastmasters Club. Internally the firm had a SWAG team and a Design at Nine group that would present student projects and anything else employees were working on.<sup>33</sup>

	<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Holler</b>	<b>Raynor</b>
<b>Frequency of meeting</b>	monthly or every other month	monthly	N/A
<b>Number of Employees</b>	10+	15+	
<b>Types of Employees who Attended</b>	employees from all offices that belonged to a particular building typology studio	employees from all offices that belonged to a particular service-based or building typology studio	
<b>Leader of Meeting</b>	unclear	corporate studio leader	
<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	briefly review all projects a particular office was working on		
<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	unite staff		
<b>Food provided</b>	N/A		
<b>Type of Conversation in the meeting</b>	series of basic information		

*Figure 21: Comparison of Meetings Across Geographic Offices*

Holler and Gilbert also had meetings across geographic offices, seen above in figure 21. At Gilbert these were simply a broad overview of the projects and clients from each studio. At

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<sup>33</sup> At Holler the SWAG team was in charge of getting the firm together for fun events, such as going to a baseball game together. The Design at Nine group met at 9am. At each meeting one individual would present a school project or something they were working on outside Holler.

Holler these were monthly building typology studio meetings with the practice lead and studio leads from all geographic offices.

Aside from studio meetings, marketing meetings, meetings across geographic offices, and all hands meetings, Gilbert and Holler also had a few meetings unique to their specific firms. Gilbert and Holler both held board of directors' meetings, none of which were attended by this researcher. Gilbert's board was comprised of a group of principals with the most seniority and the leaders of each individual office (who were typically the CEOs), gathered together to make decisions on the general direction of the company. Gilbert was just starting to have meetings where interior designers gathered together with the Director of Design to share their work and get critiques by other designers who were not assigned to that particular project. These meetings often happened organically at Raynor because all of their designers sat in the same section in the studio space. Holler held several meetings that were unique to their firm. There were weekly gatherings of project managers to discuss staffing at the firm. They also had an annual company-wide conference for employees in leadership roles. The location of this conference would change from one year to the next and it happened to be in Michigan the year of this fieldwork. The researcher was not, however, invited to the conference and only happened to attend a single client meeting that was part of the conference.

### **5.2.7: Newsletters and Training**

Gilbert and Holler both had weekly email newsletters. Holler's marketing team created weekly e-newsletters to send out only to Holler employees. It included things like tips and tricks about searching images, new photography of former projects, new staff members such as that seen in figure 22 or faces around the office, and a raffle to get people engaged in the newsletter.

Gilbert’s newsletter was created by a marketing employee to be sent primarily to clients once a month about new healthcare projects they were working on. Gilbert also had an e-magazine that was published to their website twice a year. This magazine contained articles written about each building type such as these two workplace focused articles: “Platforms and Pathways: New Directions in the Emerging World of Work” published by the workplace principal and “Creativity at Work: Three Case Studies on Workplaces that Inspire, Invigorate, Energize”.



*Figure 22: Introducing This Researcher as a New “Staff” at Holler*

Holler also had a miniature school that would publish its annual catalog of classes, just like an institution of higher learning. In this catalog there were webinar, videoconference, and



classroom-based classes organized by practice, discipline, technology and leadership, an example page can be seen in Appendix H. Each staff member would be required to take classes in their respective areas, such as asset repositioning, design build strategies, workplace strategies, and the annual design review for workplace. There were even course booklets for each topic, for example a marketing training manual, attracting and retaining clients workbook, pursuit booklet, in addition to the employee handbook and “communication standards and guidelines”. Individuals from across the firm would gather for these classes.

### **5.3: Conclusion**

Although these three firms seem to have much in common, the cultures of these firms are nevertheless vastly different. Raynor has one single corporate culture which in addition to its rather small size, contribute to it being the most informal or casual of the three firms. This informal nature can be seen best in their communications with each other that included frequent cussing, as well as the All Hands meetings where lunch was provided for the whole firm and at each meeting someone different got up to share about a recent trip they took. The firm’s value on inclusion can be seen in their All Hands and Studio meetings where people notice if one person is missing. Their relatively small staff with a policy of not having private offices (with only one exception for HR), keeping everyone on one floor with window space equally distributed contributes to the more familial, less hierarchical feel to the firm than the other two. This familial feel could also be seen in their organizational chart, which was designed with the intention in mind that everyone at the firm should know everyone else’s name. Despite this familial atmosphere, the firm also valued individuality, believing that “people are responsible, motivated and capable of governing themselves” (Schein 1984, 5). This was reflected in the organizational chart’s inclusion of qualifications of each employee, and their lack of human

resources management.

By contrast, Gilbert and Holler, which both have multiple geographic offices, operate within a larger corporate culture.<sup>34</sup> Holler was the most formal of all three firms. The firm values privacy with many more closed-door meetings, communication by phone, facilities separating individuals, and employees being excluded from meetings. This was also reflected in interactions with the firm. About half way through fieldwork observations with Holler, the researcher conducted several private meetings with specific individuals to reassure firm leaders that observations were not covert in some way. This was not something that the researcher needed to do with Raynor and was only done once in a group setting at Gilbert. These private meetings at Holler were with members of the leadership committee. This clarity amongst leadership committee members also shows that Holler operates on the paradigm that “truth comes from high status members” (Schein 1984, 5). This was also noted in their organizational chart and privately by several employees.

Lastly, of the three firms Gilbert operated on the paradigm that truth comes from older, wiser, more experienced members (Schein 1984, 5). These individuals received priority seating in the studio, with one private office and the others distributed closest to the windows. The firm valued independence of each of these wise men, since all of the principals were men who had been at the firm for some time. They each had their own groups that pursued clients independently, and had different marketing tactics. As the associate workplace principal pointed out, they had an inconsistent brand across the firm. The organizational chart may have been created for the clients but it also reflected the value the firm placed in each of these wise men,

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<sup>34</sup> It's impossible to tell whether the overlaying culture exists or not since fieldwork was only at one office rather than all the offices of these firms. The researcher also did not observe the one firm-wide conference that Holler held during the fieldwork.

rather than job titles that typically accompany an organizational chart. This was also reflected in the firm's consistent meetings of wise men throughout this fieldwork but only one meeting of marketing employees or business developers.

## **Chapter 6 Client Engagement Process**

The next two chapters will look to complete the puzzle of architectural organizational culture and client engagement by comparing the results collected through two different methodologies to answer the following subquestions: What cultural factors affect firms through the different stages of the client engagement process? And how is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process? This chapter will focus on analyzing the documents collected on the client engagement process. The next chapter will rely on data collected from specific mini-cases observed as examples of this process, before culminating in a comparison of the two chapters. This chapter begins with the client engagement process as laid out in facility management textbooks and request documents to begin the process as an idea that some sort of spatial change may be needed within the client company, whether this is a renovation, build out of an entirely new space, or something else entirely. At some point, the architecture firm also begins their piece of client engagement by creating a marketing plan.

The description of each stage of the client engagement process will gradually become more detailed from the client and architect working separately on internal ideas toward more communication between the two. This detail comes from ethnographic observations while embedded in the three firms as well as some literature from architectural researchers and architectural professional practice and documents that can be found in Appendix I collected from Gilbert and Appendix J collected from Holler. One important contribution the researcher has made is with aligning the client's steps with the architects since this has not been done

previously. In general, one of Holler's documents list the overall phases and Gilbert's documents outline the detailed stages of each phase with a second Holler document giving short descriptions of each phase. Raynor had no similar documents. The five phases outlined in this chapter can be seen in figure 23 along with each step that will be outlined in this chapter. The four primary phases are: start-up, project pursuit, initiation, and service delivery. The colors correspond with the individual that is responsible for each step with maroon being the architect's steps, green the client's steps and teal the steps that the two parties conduct together. All of the names of these phases were taken from Holler's process with the exception of the external consultant phase that was added from observations. As with the names of each of these stages, the terminology used to describe each stage also comes from the firms.

These descriptions will elucidate the ways in which the organizational culture motivates firms through different stages of the process as well as the ways in which employee roles and assumptions affect the process. This chapter will focus on the motivations and roles, leaving assumptions to be largely overturned in the mini-cases of the next chapter.

Name of Phase	Names of Steps Within Phases	Names of Steps within Steps	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning		
	Need for Change & Business Case		
	Functional Programming		
	External Consultants		
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding		
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms		
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	
		Tour and/or Meeting	
		Response Strategy	
		Creating Response Document	
		Shortlisting	
		Preparing Presentation	
		Interview	
Project Win / Loss			
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees, Agreements and Contracts		
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming		
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

**Figure 23:** Phases of Technical Client Engagement Process

## **6.1: Start-Up**

The term “start-up” comes from Holler’s document describing the different phases of the client engagement process. Though derived from an architect’s document, the term applies equally well to what the clients are doing in this early stage. This is the only phase in which the steps performed by the architect and client are independent because the client and architect are not yet interacting. It is possible that the architect has already positioned themselves in relation to a specific client for many years before the client has any idea that they may wish to conduct an architectural project. Similarly, a client company may have a very well thought out idea of the architectural project they wish to conduct and invite an architecture firm to submit a response that has never heard of the client before and therefore never had time to position themselves in relation to that client.

### **6.1.1: Strategic Planning and Positioning**

Holler’s documents do not mention as much detail about what the “start-up” phase entails as Gilbert’s documents, which break the phase into two: strategic planning and positioning. Strategic planning is conducted by a role that architectural researchers David Burstein and Frank Stasiowski call the marketing director. This role is responsible for internal analysis, external analysis, opportunity assessment, target market selection and marketing strategies, which includes “setting a course for pursuing these markets, budgeting marketing activities, and preparing and maintaining the firm's marketing plan” (Burstein and Stasiowski 1991, 125). Decisions made by the marketing director to pursue specific clients are based on trends in the

greater industry and the architecture firm's understanding of their clients as a whole. In the case studies, like those mentioned by Burstein and Stasiowski, the marketing director role was generally occupied by one principal or owner of the firm. At Raynor the marketing director role was occupied by six individuals: two partners and four principals. At Holler this role was occupied by at least nine individuals: the Office Director, CEO, three managing partners and four corporate practice studio leaders. At Gilbert it was not clear how many people occupied this role. It is possible that Gilbert did not have a clearly articulated marketing or strategic plan since their workplace associate principal explained,

“I sort of feel like the challenge we have is that each one of us sells the firm slightly differently and we don’t mean to it’s just what we’re comfortable saying to somebody [...] How does someone ever look at us and how [is] our brand something that’s consistent? You know, just, I don’t want to script people’s statements, at all, but I just want to know how you put it all together.”<sup>35</sup>

A marketing or strategic plan would act as a script for people’s statements, unifying how each employee sells Gilbert as a firm.

Positioning begins when the marketing plan is shared with others, typically business developers, who work alongside the marketing team. Business developers then use their resources to position themselves alongside individuals and companies that the marketing plan has suggested would be potential future clients. Business developers also position themselves alongside past clients, others in the building industry, and friends who have opportunities to become future clients. Networking often involved attending events, award ceremonies, conferences, as well as more informal meetings such as going out for coffee or a meal. Marketing creates documents and text for business development to use while networking. Such

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<sup>35</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/10/15 meeting with 3 business developers, the workplace associate principal, and an architect.



documents include newsletters, advertising, reprints, awards, press releases, articles, speeches, that Gilbert outline, as well as “other marketing and public relations items” (Burstein and Stasiowski 1991, 125). Firms also create brochures for individuals who want to know more about their company. Holler’s business developer mentioned that their “euphemism for a brochure is a quals [qualifications] package”. These packages usually don’t

“have team members in it. It’s basically just our project experience and our services available. We don’t respond to any questions, we don’t have any schedules in it, there’s usually no fee, there’s no project descriptions. We don’t know what it is yet so basically we’re just telling them here’s what we’re capable of doing and here’s some of the projects we’ve worked on.”<sup>36</sup>

To create these documents, marketing teams are consistently working on their writing and graphic design abilities as well as taking and organizing architectural photographs. Architecture firms have different ways to keep track of the individuals that business developers meet during this positioning phase. In Gilbert’s weekly meetings, and in their computer system, they track these individuals in the stage of “long lead” and make sure they check in with them every once in a while, to make sure they haven’t progressed into a different phase.

### **6.1.2: Need for Change and Business Case**

The first step in the client’s start-up is often referred to as the period of “growth” in facility management literature. It is called such as many clients experience some sort of growth

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<sup>36</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/7/16 of a personal conversation between one of Holler’s business developers and this researcher. The majority of workplace request documents were requests for proposal (RFP) and the number of quals packages collected was limited, so it is a little unclear the difference between a request for qualifications (RFQ) and a qualifications package. This is what the business developer explained was the difference between these qualifications packages and a RFP or RFQ.

that makes them consider different future spatial plans. However, in practice clients don't necessarily need to experience growth to make decisions towards change. One of the clients observed for this research was looking to downsize and another was co-locating services from facilities that were previously in different geographic areas, hence this stage has been renamed "need for change".<sup>37</sup> For those that are experiencing growth, there are a number of different reasons to grow. One facility management textbook groups growth into four major categories: growth in the industry or field, company growth, employee growth, and growth to accommodate individual's needs (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 126). During this research there were two primary types of growth observed: one client company that was experiencing growth in the industry or field. All of the rest of the companies mentioned why they were looking to hire an architect discussed some sort of personnel growth. The terminology that was most commonly used to describe the personnel growth was to "attract and retain" personnel.

Once this need for change is identified within a client company, the second step occurs. This is generally in the form of a meeting of top-level executives at the company to determine whether a business case can be made to justify acting on the growth and come up with a statement about the needs of the company. This is primarily a meeting to discuss the conceptual basis for the architectural project.

### **6.1.3: Functional Programming**

After this meeting the facility manager is tasked with the functional program.<sup>38</sup> The first

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<sup>37</sup> This term "need for change" is one created by this researcher.

<sup>38</sup> Facility managers are also tasked with feasibility studies, which are conducted to "ensure reliability of expenditure and profitability projections." However, there were not any workplace request documents collected that mention feasibility studies having already been conducted. There are only facility management textbooks that mention feasibility studies conducted by

thing to note about functional programming is the term itself. None of the request documents and the majority of the facility management literature uses this term. Instead they simply refer to this stage as “programming”. However, as has been mentioned several times in this dissertation, the term “programming” is problematic because it refers to several different things. As was mentioned in Chapter Three’s literature review, the design studies researchers that have acknowledged the discrepancy are the ones that refer to this phase as functional programming to contrast it with architectural or special programming, conducted by an architect or external consultant.

All types of programming are conducted to determine the scope of work for the project. Design studies researchers describe programming as “more a matter of discovering what was previously unknown or poorly understood than of collecting information and ideas previously formulated” (Franck and Howard 2010, 26). Unfortunately design studies researchers do not distinguish between functional programming and other types of programming so it is unclear whether this applies. Facility management researchers on the other hand, speak primarily about functional programming. These researchers describe scope of work as something that “covers design, construction and/or installation, testing and commissioning, and start-up activities necessary to deliver an operational asset” (Atkin and Brooks 2015, 33) and must be determined “before you can be in a position to seek professional assistance” (Molnar 1983, 61). During this fieldwork there was only a few collected request document that outlined the functional programming that client did prior to sending out the request document. Functional programming was conducted by both Clients Yellow and Purple in Chapter Seven.

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facility managers and non-workplace request documents asking architects to conduct feasibility studies. Many fewer request documents discussed having conducted these interviews than the quantitative results of the feasibility study. This may, however, be due to the fact that these discussions were informal conversations rather than formal interviews. Also the request documents may include results from the interviews without needing to mention that interviews had been conducted.

#### 6.1.4: External Consultants

Though it is possible for the client to conduct the entire design process without hiring a consultant, this is not the situation observed during this fieldwork. All of the client companies observed hired at least one external consultant.<sup>39</sup> What an external consultant is hired for depends “partly on the capabilities of his or her organization and availability of qualified in-house individuals (easy to determine) and partly on the chosen strategy (more difficult)” (Kumlin 1995, 10–11). In general, four types of external consultants are typically hired: real estate developers, owner’s representatives, special programmers, and/or architects. The next sections will describe the roles of these consultants.

Once the need for change has been determined, companies decide whether it is feasible for them to act on this change. Of the projects observed, an equal number of clients decided to relocate as to renovate, with only one company creating something entirely new. Twenty three percent of the companies observed hired a real estate developer prior to hiring the architecture firm. Of these, many had not yet found land or hadn’t yet completed the process of purchasing this land by the time they were in pursuit of an architect. Another twenty percent hired an owner’s representative, a third party hired by the Owner to represent them during site selection, design and construction phases as well as relocation. Of the clients observed, the owner’s representative was often from a construction company.

The least common, at only three percent, reason to hire an external consultant was for programming. This type of programming will be called “special programming” to distinguish it

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<sup>39</sup> This statement includes architects as external consultants.

from the other types of programming and since it seems relatively rare in comparison to the other two types. With one of the client companies that Gilbert pursued, the external consultant or programmer, did a very thorough job of collecting data from the company. This individual collected photos of all the spaces, had every individual in the company fill out the questionnaire form and spent time summarizing all the findings, pages of this can be seen in Appendix K. The owner of the company never filled out a questionnaire. Gilbert then used these results for their schematic designs, which they presented to the owner of the firm. The owner was extremely unhappy with the schematic design and Gilbert had to start over on the programming process, this time relying heavily on input from the c-suite and not much from other individuals at the company.<sup>40</sup> The external consultant was successful in making employees feel like they were being included in the design but their input ultimately did not matter for the final design.

For the remaining fifty three percent of clients observed, the earliest external consultant hired was an architect. This high percentage of architects show that design is “the most frequently outsourced facility management service” (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 228). There are several reasons for this high percentage, companies may not have internal design teams, not have enough time for these activities, or have an inadequate design team for the project.

Despite the high percentage of client companies that hire external consultants, many companies experience hesitation around hiring anyone external. Facility managers may not understand the types of services that are available, may not know at what stage such services should be retained and many facility managers “feel that when they perform these services, they can better interpret their own needs and have better control over the entire project” (Molnar 1983, 59). Roper, another facility management researcher, echoes this sentiment favoring “the

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<sup>40</sup> C-suite is the group of individuals who have “chief” in their title, such as the chief executive officer, chief financial officer, etc.

facility manager either doing the interviews personally or controlling the participating consultant” (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 218). To overcome several of these challenges, Molnar explains the extent of consulting and contracting services that are available to facility managers, in hopes that more knowledge will make them more comfortable hiring the right consultant.

## **6.2: Project Pursuit**

Project pursuit involves three primary steps, two of which are described by Gilbert. The first Gilbert calls “business development” but the researcher has renamed “lead finding”. The second is the client’s step of creating the request document and inviting firms. Clients typically have a lot of control when it comes to the project pursuit process. There are times when a client company decides they are not interested in creating a request document and they simply hire an architecture firm they have already met without doing anything more than having the firm sign a contract. However, in the cases observed this did not happen very frequently, in part because several of the companies had internal requirements to interview multiple firms.

The third and final step of the project pursuit phase is what Gilbert’s document calls “sales” but Holler’s document calls “pursuit”. In practice the term “pursuit” was used by employees at Gilbert, Holler and Raynor. This term suits both the client and the architect as they are both pursuing each other so this term will be used instead of “sales”.

### **6.2.1: Lead Finding**

The stage Gilbert calls “business development” can be conducted by the business

developer but could also be conducted by anyone else at the architecture firm. Therefore, this researcher has chosen to rename this stage “lead finding” since it is performed by the role Burstein and Stasiowski call the “lead finder”. A “lead” is a potential client and the “finding” process may involve the business developer discovering the potential client through positioning or may come from a relationship that any other firm employees have with the lead. If the lead finder is not a business developer, the lead finder will often hand the project over to the business developer relatively quickly so they can be in charge of the rest of the pursuit process. At Holler there were situations where the lead finder chose not to hand the project over to the business developer, and instead to pursue the client only with the help of marketing. In this case the business developer may be unaware of the pursuit unless informed by marketing or other top executives.

This exchange of information from the lead finder to the business developer is the first “handoff” that can occur within the architecture firm during the client engagement process. Handoffs are problematic as clients often assume that the individual they have interacted with the most will be working with them on the project. If these team members change at any point in the process, even after the firm has been selected, “trust can deteriorate” (SMPS Foundation 2013, 12). Of the three case studies, Holler had the most potential handoffs whereas Gilbert and Raynor had fewer potential handoffs. One potential reason was that Holler involved so many individuals from their leadership committee in the client engagement process. There was therefore one handoff from business developer to studio leader just before the response document was created. If the client company hired the firm that studio leader often had too many projects to take on a new one and it would be reassigned to someone else. At Gilbert and Raynor those involved in the client engagement process were those assigned to that project so there was only one handoff from business developer to the principal-in-charge.

Sometimes a lead can be developed through the relationships that exist outside the architecture firm. Friends, for example, may divulge secrets to whom they are closest. Otherwise lead identification often occurs when the client company begins their pursuit of an external consultant. This often gets the word out to the rest of the building industry that this client company will soon be looking to hire others to assist with the design process. Even if the external consultants are not permitted to say the name of the client company, they may give their architecture colleagues hints about where to hear about the project that they will soon be pursuing. For this reason, relationships with others in the building industry are an extremely important part of gaining clients for an architecture firm. Such relationships are often developed through working with the same individuals on multiple projects and creating a reciprocal relationship. In this way, “when the next opportunity presents itself, they bring us in again and again. This kind of strategic alliance has grown more than anything in the last 5-10 years” (SMPS Foundation 2013, 16).

If an architecture firm has a relationship with an external consultant who has been invited to pursue a project, they have leverage to be hired by that client over firms that don't have such relationships. Relationships with external consultants who are hired by the client give a firm even more leverage. There were several examples of this while observing Gilbert. One client hired a specific real estate developer as their first external consultant. This real estate developer helped them create the request document and select firms to invite. Although it is unclear the exact impact the real estate developer had on the client's decision, they ended up hiring the architecture firm that employed one of the real estate developer's best friends. In two other situations Gilbert had had so many previous interactions with the real estate developer that they were involved in helping the client find a new building and helping a real estate developer find a tenant. Some of the other employees at Gilbert weren't fond of these situations as it meant that



Gilbert's employees were doing work for which they weren't being paid. However, such architecture firms are then able "to assist the client with initial project issues, allowing them to establish a relationship with the client, which hopefully leads to winning more work from the client" (SMPS Foundation 2013, 14).

Once business development has identified a lead, with or without the assistance of an external consultant, they then begin the pursuit process. A business developer may give a presentation to the potential client, presenting them with research or entertaining them.

In a few of the Holler meetings, the corporate head of a particular studio got together with the firm's business developers to discuss clients that were highly ranked on their list of prospective clients. They spoke about how they had interacted with these individuals, what they had learned both professionally and personally about these individuals, and what had happened politically that might affect these potential clients. Each studio at Holler also conducted annual roundtables to help business developers interact with qualified leads. For the workplace roundtable they invite real estate executives, facility directors, workplace strategists, human resource professionals, and designers to "network, share best practices, build relationships, and connect with peers from diverse industries, all facing similar challenges". The agenda for these meetings "begins with a common theme that is often derived from the most spirited exchanges we heard in the previous year as a sort of ongoing dialogue."<sup>41</sup>

Though there were no round tables while with Holler, one topic that was discussed in depth by employees at Gilbert and Holler that might be a potential round table topic was how to "attract and retain" clients. This was one of the most common reasons many clients felt they were experiencing change, in other words one common reason clients chose to employ an

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<sup>41</sup> Quote taken from Client Blue proposal draft written on 3/22/16.

architect. To attract and retain clients or employees, companies would often rebrand their space to make it look more attractive. Rebranding was especially important for companies that were in the building industry. During fieldwork, Gilbert had recently gone through a large renovation on their second floor away from the large partitions and individuals in separate offices toward a more open studio plan with only two offices. After the renovation, they encouraged clients and suppliers to meet in their studio and would use part of the meeting time to show off their space. This allowed them to empathize with their clients by showing that they understood what clients would be going through working in a space under renovation and getting used to a new space. It also allowed them to talk about the advantages of having an open studio from a very personal perspective. It is unclear whether Gilbert was able to attract and retain employees from creating a new studio. They did, however, use it as a talking point to attract and retain clients. Neither Holler nor Raynor had recently renovated their space. Instead, Holler was conducting post-occupancy studies in hopes of being able to show that their spaces attracted and retained individuals effectively. These studies were going on at the time of the fieldwork so they were not yet using them in any marketing context, but they hoped to do so in the future.

### **6.2.2: Creating request document and inviting firms**

Prior to hiring an architect, a client must combine, interpret and approve the results of the interviews and functional programming before passing them on to the design team in the form of a request document (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 220). This request document comes in many types so clients must determine what type of document they want to create (a request for proposals, fee proposals, qualifications, etc.). Twenty-three of the thirty workplace request documents collected (73%) were request for proposal documents. Four of the documents were

requests for qualifications and proposals, two were unnamed and one was a request for information document. All request documents can include specifics on the response document that the client would prefer to receive, instructions on how to submit the proposal, the evaluation criteria, legal documentation, and a list of next steps. Legal documents could include such items as protest procedures, wage requirements, conflict of interest disclosures, cost liability, debarment, insurance requirements, assurances that must be made, and indemnification clauses. A request document may also have an entire functional program attached.

Once the document has been created, the client company must also put together a list of potential architecture firms to invite to submit their work. Most clients observed created a list of five potential architecture firms. These firms can be of several different types. They could be “starchitects”, famous architects that are known for a particular style of design, for example Rem Koolhaas, Le Corbusier, or Frank Gehry. These individuals know that clients are coming to them for their brand and will sell exactly that. Otherwise they could be traditional architecture firms, such as the three Michigan firms observed for this dissertation. Regardless of what type of firms this list of potential firms could be generated by the client company alone. It could also be influenced by other external consultants the client has already hired. Therefore, the relationships that business developers create during the positioning stage could help them find a potential client in the lead finding stage.

### **6.2.3: Pursuit**

For architects, the pursuit of a particular project begins the moment they receive the request document. Sometimes the client sends a request document to a firm, sometimes it's up to the firm to watch for it to come out publicly, and sometimes a client notifies a firm that they're

sending it out publicly. Each firm had their own approach to both how these request documents were received and what was done immediately after the documents were received. While request documents could be received by anyone at an architecture firm, they were more often received by principals, business developers, and leadership employees. At Raynor there were only four primary people who received or were on the lookout for request documents: two principals and two business developers. If anyone else received a request document it was immediately shared with the principals. It was up to those who received the request document to determine which employees would be working on the project. The small size of the firm made this process rather simple.

At Holler request documents were also primarily received by business developers and leadership committee members. Request documents from repeat customers were likely received by studio leaders assigned to that client. Occasionally these pursuits were handled by the studio leader and marketing alone without the involvement of other leadership committee members or business developers. If a request document was received from a new customer then it was generally received by business developers who would schedule a meeting mostly with leadership committee members who would then determine which studio the project belonged to.

At Gilbert, the tactic was a little different, instead of all studio leaders gathering together to discuss which studio a project should fall under, whoever got the phone call about the new project sent the project to the studio that individual believed it would belong. If the client returned later with another project, they might be sent to an entirely different studio than the first project. Then multiple people at the studio would end up trying to maintain a relationship with the same client, instead of one studio maintaining that relationship. During the fieldwork for this dissertation, several individuals gathered together to discuss the disadvantages to this tactic and how it might be changed.

Overall the pursuit process was the process most commonly observed during fieldwork. This was primarily due to the large number of projects that were discarded or lost at some point during this process. There were only a few projects that the architecture firms won and the start-up phase was rarely observed while with the firms. Aside from business developers, who were already involved at this stage, marketing was another common role that played into this process. The marketing coordinator generally holds a supportive role rather than a speaking role, throughout the pursuit process.<sup>42</sup> They observe the process to understand what should be included in the documents they need to create throughout. Marketers at Raynor seemed to speak up less at meetings than marketers at Holler who would often bring up their own ideas about how to create the documents they were assigned to create.

### **6.2.3.1: Architect's Step 1: Go / No-Go**

Once a request document is received by an architecture firm, the role of the sales sponsor is initiated. The sales sponsor has “primary responsibility for organizing and implementing the sales approach once a prospect has been identified” and includes “contacts with the client and establishing sales strategies” (Burstein and Stasiowski 1991, 125). At Holler the term “sales sponsor” is not used, instead Holler’s documents identify the “pursuit champion” at this point in the process. This is an individual identified during the go / no-go stage to be in charge of the pursuit for that project, generally Holler’s business developer. At Gilbert and Raynor neither term was used but these responsibilities generally fell to a principal. The first decision this

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<sup>42</sup> This was determined by analyzing conversations of a marketing coordinator. When marketing coordinators speak during conversations they have a strong tendency to use what conversational analysts call back channel or accompaniment behavior such as “mm-hmm” “yes” “right”. These statements do “not constitute a turn or a claim for a turn” (Duncan 1972, 288). Silence can also be seen as supportive (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003). Therefore this will be called a supportive rather than a speaking role.

individual must make, often aided by the project manager and occasionally the lead finder, is whether to “go” or “no go” the project. These are terms the case studies use to refer to whether or not they wanted to pursue a particular project. If the firm decides to “go” the project then they will pursue it with the stages outlined in the next sections. If they decide to “no go” it the pursuit process will end.

In addition to the sales sponsor, the business developer is also generally involved in the go / no go stage since they are the one who knows the client the best.<sup>43</sup> Aside from the business developer, each firm had different individuals involved in the go / no-go step. At Gilbert the primary workplace principal and associate principal work on determining whether to go or no go a project, occasionally with the help of a landscape architect, architect or engineer. At Raynor a project manager, director of interior design or designer may be involved in the process.

As can be seen from the different individuals involved in this process, each firm’s approach to this go / no-go process was a little different. Gilbert, Holler and Raynor all had documents outlining the criteria by which they determined whether or not to go, or pursue, a project (found in Appendix L and M). Gilbert was in the process of changing their go / no-go form. Their old form was a proposal / contract review checklist that needed to be completed for all Owner Agreements and Supplements to Ongoing Service Agreements unless it was waived for a project valuing under a certain amount of money. The first of five milestones on this checklist was the go / no-go criteria. This checklist needed to be approved by the CEO, Managing Principal, Corporate Leader or Managing Principal, Principal-in-Charge, and Corporate Finance. Their new go / no-go form was a questionnaire of 15 questions with three

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<sup>43</sup> Sometimes the lead finder may actually be the one who knows the client better but is not involved in pursuit at the firm and therefore left out of this stage. Business developers will make attempts at asking this individual specific pertinent questions.

potential answers: negative (0-3 points), neutral (4-6 points) and positive (7-10 points). The questions on this new form were more detailed than the first form. For example, on the first form one of the bullets was client compatibility and credibility, whereas the second form asked does the client know Gilbert with the highest points being for a well-developed working relationship.

Raynor had a similar questionnaire with ten areas to rate either negative (1-2 points), neutral (3-4 points) or positive (5-6 points). There was also a column to estimate the ratings of competitor A and B for the project. These questionnaires allowed Gilbert and Raynor to determine in a quantitative way whether or not the project was a “go”. If the answers fell below a certain number then they would “no-go” the project. In Raynor’s go / no-go form, if the overall rating, calculated by the total score divided by ten fell below a certain number they would no-go the project. Holler did not have a similar form but did have a page in their Marketing Training Manual dedicated to “What it takes to win: 9 things guaranteed to work.”<sup>44</sup> These nine questions could fall under one of Raynor’s categories, namely “client contact and rapport”. The first asks “Did we meet with the client before the RFP was published?” and notes “If not, forget it; 81% of winning teams met with the client before the RFP was published.” Similarly, for all of the case studies the number one criterion to “go” a project was whether or not they had an existing relationship with the client including whether it was a repeat client or whether they knew anyone on the selection committee.

Many projects decide to go or no go a project as the first step in the pursuit process. However, occasionally firms make the decision to “no go” at some point after the process has started. For example, Gilbert expressed initial interest in one project, but after several attempts

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<sup>44</sup> Holler’s Pursuit Booklet cites SMPS Marketer Journal for these 9 things but it is unclear if it’s a direct copy of a page from the Marketer or only a few questions taken from that page.

to put together the team that the client had requested for the work, they realized their potential consultants had already paired off with other firms. They had to no go the project because they couldn't meet its requirements. Examples of firms deciding to no-go a project will therefore be referred to throughout the rest of this chapter. If, at any point in time, the decision is made to "no go" a project that the client has explicitly invited the architect to, then the client must be contacted and made aware of the reasons the architect has decided to "no go" the project. In seven percent of the request documents collected, client companies required firms to submit a notice of their intent to respond, which would notify the client that the firm had decided to "go" the project. Other times the client required a proposal agreement letter, which was submitted either along with or instead of the response document.

If the decision is made to "go" the project, the next step Holler lists is to create a sales number for the client to track their account. The forms collected from Gilbert and Raynor do not mention creating a sales number but a similar step could be assumed. Gilbert then mentions putting together the required credentials for the project. If there is a request for qualifications, the submission of this document could happen simultaneously or prior to the submission of the proposal document. Aside from this step, architects typically followed the same steps for RFQs and RFPs. Only one of the request documents asked the architect to submit the qualification package prior to the proposal document.

### **6.2.3.2: Client and Architect's Step 1: Tour and/or Meeting**

Two thirds of the request documents collected had a, usually required, tour or meeting for invited architecture firms. Three clients required both a tour and a meeting at the same time. The rest had either one or the other, with two more tours than meetings with 10 tours and 8



meetings.<sup>45</sup> Most often the tour was of space the client company was renovating or purchasing. Occasionally it was of their current space rather than their new space. If a request document did not mention a tour or meeting prior to the response document due date it was not uncommon for an architecture firm to reach out to the client to request this engagement. It was then up to the client to approve the idea.

In many cases the firm would make a rather hasty go / no go decision prior to this meeting and then would re-evaluate the decision with the new information. For example, Gilbert attended one pursuit in which the clients “offered nothing to inspire us to say we should go after this thing. In the end, it sort of felt as if we were being treated as, you know, help us install this machinery in these various places and that was it” so they decided to no-go the project. On the other hand, Gilbert had been to these meetings in which they told the client “your budget is really tight and our fees are going to look really strange against your budget” and the client responded “don’t worry about it, we’ve already got it set aside” that left Gilbert with a feeling that the client had a “lot of energy.”<sup>46</sup> Gilbert ended up deciding to go this project despite its small budget. Halfway through they found that the client had a lot of future architectural projects that Gilbert had a chance at winning now that they had interacted with the client in the initial project.

### **6.2.3.3: Architect’s Step 2: Response Strategy**

The documents collected from Holler list the stages of the response strategy next. These begin with creating an outline of the response before scheduling the kick-off meeting. A kick-off meeting is a meeting to “clearly communicate assignments and due dates to establish

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<sup>45</sup> These meetings are often referred to as pre-proposal meetings if the request document is a request for proposal.

<sup>46</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 11/9/15 of a personal conversation between Gilbert’s workplace principal and this researcher.

accountability, foster a team approach, and set the proposal team up to win the project.”<sup>47</sup>

Also prior to holding the kick-off meeting the firm creates a list of questions. Firms that decide to “go” a project typically have a lot of lingering questions, even if they have interacted with the clients multiple times already. They might have known the client for years but if, for example, the client decides not to schedule a tour, the architects may have questions about the new space. These are generally questions that architecture firms have about the materials noted in the request document, whether it’s questions about the site, budget, project scope, etc. Clients gather these questions and answer them prior to the due date of the response document so that firms can use this material to clarify. Only eleven percent of the request documents collected did not have a designated submission of questions stage of the pursuit process. In some occasions, this list of questions should be created prior to the tour / meeting mentioned in the last step. However, this only occurred with seventeen percent of request documents.

Once the proposal has been outlined, the kick-off scheduled, and some questions gathered, the firm could prepare materials and lead the kick-off meeting. Holler’s document mentions that the studio leader, pursuit champion, marketing coordinator and project manager or project architect are required to attend the kick-off meeting in addition to the business developer, project-type expert and marketing manager as needed. In practice, the most common people to attend kick-off meetings at Holler were those of highest rank in the organizational chart, most commonly studio leads. If the project were large enough, studio leads from multiple building typologies and services would attend along with the office director and director of operations. These large meetings would occur even if the company knew from the beginning to which studio the project would likely go. It seemed as if these individuals were present to show the project

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<sup>47</sup> This is the definition of kick-off used by Holler in their Pursuit Booklet, Gilbert uses the term to refer to the first meeting the architect and client have once the architect is hired.

respect and acknowledge it as a large project, especially since they didn't often say anything extremely important or anything that had a great impact on the direction of the project.<sup>48</sup>

The project manager's role starting with this kick-off meeting is to research "a client's needs, preparing the technical aspects of a proposal, preparing budgets and schedules for the proposal, describing the firm's approach to the project during an interview" (Burstein and Stasiowski 1991, 125). Gilbert, Holler and Raynor all had a single individual on each project that was the project manager.

During this meeting, attendees will "review project brief and client background and why we are pursuing."<sup>49</sup> Gilbert's documenting of this meeting mentions several things that need to be determined or analyzed during this meeting including the firm's approach to the proposal, services to be included, number of man hours for the project and fees, construction cost, project schedule, project work plan, and professional licensure. These are not mentioned in Holler's Pursuit Booklet, instead it explains that during this meeting the

"Marketing Coordinator distributes a proposal checklist and timeline for the proposal, the team discusses and confirms assignments and due dates, [they] name a client point of contact who will submit questions, ensure people attend site walk throughs, etc. [And] brainstorm launch documents."<sup>50</sup>

The last thing that the firm often tries to do during the kick-off meeting is to "discern what the selection criteria actually are" (American Institute of Architects. 2009, 134) in any way they possibly can so that all of their interactions with the client can be tailored to this. To show that the client company is important, the architecture firm needs to "understand the priorities that the client has at the proposal stage so that the proposal and work focus on exceeding their needs and

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<sup>48</sup> This example will be highlighted in greater detail in the next chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Quote from Holler's Pursuit Booklet.

<sup>50</sup> Quote from Holler's Pursuit Booklet.

expectations” (SMPS Foundation 2013, 13). Aside from understanding the client, the firm can express the project’s importance by being able to “demonstrate how much he or she wants to do the project, in a way that is natural and proportionate to the project” (American Institute of Architects. 2009, 122).

In one occasion the decision to no-go the project was made as late as after the kick-off meeting. Holler had already sent people on the client’s tour of the new space, held the kick-off meeting and decided to go the project but they needed permission from the client’s competitors who they were already working with to pursue the project. This client was not pleased with the idea of the firm working for their competition. The firm had to “no go” the project to maintain ties to their current client. The decision to no-go projects after the kick-off meeting is relatively rare compared to beforehand.

#### **6.2.3.4: Architect’s Step 3: Creating Response Document**

After the kick-off meeting, the firm begins to prepare the response document. If employees at the architecture firm were divided up into building typology, as they were at Gilbert and Holler, this gave the firm some advantages when it came to creating the response document. Request documents from hospitals, for example, often asked architecture firms to provide a list of previous healthcare clients, and projects the firm had done. If a firm had a healthcare studio they could easily respond to this question and include team members in the response document who had specialized in that typology. Unfortunately, some clients did not identify with one typology. At Holler, studio leaders got together to discuss which studio these clients would fall under, as we will see with Client Blue in Chapter Seven.

There are four primary steps to response preparation: break out groups / content gathering, final draft review, final edits and production and delivery. At Raynor, this is the stage

in which the business developer occasionally stops pursuing the project quite as heavily or pursues it from a supportive role rather than a speaking role. These business developers would often just attend to assist the marketing employees in creating the proposal or interview presentation. Instead the principal, project manager and interior designer take over the project. This did not, however, occur with Gilbert or Holler where the business developer was still heavily involved during this stage.

Response documents were often put together using old response documents as templates, in addition to following the client's protocol for content. This protocol generally included formatting requirements to follow as well such as number of pages allowed and the order in which pages should be presented. Holler's business developer recounted an example in which the proposal was put together so that the client would likely reject them as a potential firm. Holler was not interested in the project since it lacked the budget and creativity that they desired. It was with a repeat client, so they ultimately decided to "go" the project to save face and maintain their relationship with the client. They did submit a proposal with a higher asking price than what they believed the client wanted. This way it was up to the client to reject the firm. Occasionally request documents ask for design concepts to be submitted along with the rest of the material. These could also be submitted as part of the interview.

Just before submitting the response document to the client, Gilbert sends the final fee to the Corporate Executive Officer, Corporate Market Officer or Corporate Chairman for review to insure compliance with the firm's expectations, seen in Appendix I. This likely occurred to some extent at the other firms but was not noted in their documents. There was one client at Holler whose request document came with some version of a legal contract document between client and potential architecture firm. Holler's legal aid reviewed the document and submitted the response document with some changes to this contract. Generally, submissions happen very

close to the due date, so close that many times clients will mention an exact due time, after which they will not accept any more response documents. In some cases, such as Clients Blue and Orange that will be outlined in detail in the next chapter, architecture firms decide to deliver these response documents in person. This ideally gives them a chance to interact face-to-face with the client once again and remind the client that this is an important project to them.

### **6.2.3.5: Client's Step: Shortlisting**

Once the deadline has passed, the client takes some time to review the response documents. Such documents are generally reviewed based on some pre-set criteria, just like the criteria the architecture firm has to go / no-go the project. Beyond what was mentioned in the request documents and what the organizational studies literature has to say about positive connections, other data does not exist on these criteria since the projects were being observed from the perspective of the architecture firm. Some of the request documents collected mentioned evaluation criteria but many did not. The request documents that were collected showed that the primary selection criteria for architecture firms was the cost of the project, which Holler's chief operating officer noted was "Typically no more than 5% spread between low bidder and high bidder."<sup>51</sup> This primary criteria was followed by an equal importance on all of the following: professional qualifications, past involvement with similar projects, understanding of scope, firm's approach for meeting project requirements, completion schedule, proposed team, and design quality. One of the request documents collected even had specific language to allow them to select other on criteria other than cost: "[Client] reserves it's right to Select, for contract

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<sup>51</sup> Quote taken from audio recording on 4/14/16 of personal conversation between Holler CCO and this researcher.

negotiation, a proposal other than the one with the lowest cost.”<sup>52</sup> If, as was the case with one of the Client Orange projects, request documents ask teams for design concepts then evaluation criteria may include “how they address the ideas, intentions, goals and guiding principles as listed in this request for proposal.”<sup>53</sup> Facility management textbooks largely reflected these same criteria, with one citing specifically that the architecture firm should be:

“of appropriate size, have the necessary capability, and have experience relevant to the project. The firm should be large enough to absorb your project without undue impact upon its workforce. A too-small firm may not be able to adequately staff the project, whereas a too-large firm may not devote appropriate attention to it. In either case, the project will suffer” (Molnar 1983, 72).

If, in the process of reviewing the documents for these criteria, the clients have any issues then they will either discard that particular firm as a potential client or they will send the architecture firm some questions to be answered before they decide on a select few firms that they will be interviewing. Gilbert’s flowchart notes that once the client reacts to the response document they may return to the architecture firm to “negotiate and/or modify to reach a consensus.” The firm may then need to resubmit the response document. This is very similar to what happened with one particular client. Prior to shortlisting architecture firms, the client company came back to Holler with a negotiation on the wording of their changes to the legal contract. Unfortunately, Holler’s legal aid recommended they not accept the changes so they had to stop negotiations with the client and did not get shortlisted for the project.

Regardless of whether the firm has been shortlisted, client companies will generally notify all invited firms of whether or not they made the shorter list of firms invited for the

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<sup>52</sup> Quote from Holler Hospital Request Document.

<sup>53</sup> Quote from Client Orange Master Plan Request Document.

interview process. This notification is generally done by way of email. As part of this email notifying the firm that it had been shortlisted, client companies generally also sent a date and time when the firm was to show up for an interview.

#### **6.2.3.6: Architect's Step 4: Preparing a Presentation**

If an architecture firm is shortlisted on a project they will typically spend some small period of time celebrating before they move on to the steps that Holler outlines to prepare for their interview. The first step is to schedule an interview strategy meeting with the project team members. Project teams for interview strategy meetings are generally comprised of a few primary roles. The first is the marketing coordinator who, at all three firms and in Burstein's research, was in charge of creating the presentation materials for the design competition or interview, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Aside from this role, project teams at the firms were a little different. At Gilbert and Holler on the few projects where the architecture firms needed to include consultants in their team to pursue the project, it is at this stage in the process that they got involved. Sometimes they would do practice presentations with the firm and sometimes they would just send the firm their slides and show up at the interview. It was rare that Holler worked with consultants, one in every seven projects, whereas at Raynor this was one third of all projects. Rather than just attending the interview prep meeting and the interview, consultants with Raynor would sometimes attend all the meetings from proposal through interview. Gilbert also employed consultants in about one third of all projects.

At some point, generally during this meeting, the project team designates an interview coach. At Holler the interview coach is typically the business developer who has already been working on the project for some time now. This person takes it upon themselves to drill the project team on questions they expect the client to answer during the interview and knowledge



the team has about the client. They will also observe the interview presentations to make sure they are as smooth as possible and as close to what they think the client wants as possible. Finally, they would warn the team beforehand not to have more than one person answer a specific question so that ideally the client company would be able to ask more than one question and press them to explicitly state that they want the project during the interview. At Raynor the interview coach is often the chief executive officer, and at Gilbert it was typically the principal or associate principal. The role of the interview coach at Gilbert and Raynor was very similar to that at Holler, though Holler's seemed a bit more aggressive in instilling their role. Potentially since the interview coaches at Gilbert and Raynor were not business developers, the business developers at these firms were not quite as involved at this stage as Holler's. Gilbert's business developer definitely took a more active role than Raynor's who, at this point, was long disconnected from the project.

Also during the meeting, the project team will begin to develop the interview outline, discuss the interview presentation template, assign individuals to certain parts of the presentation and they may discuss potential presentation visuals. Sometimes clients send architecture firms specific guidelines about what they want to see in these presentations. Otherwise architecture firms can use old presentations as templates for the new presentation. Gilbert's design director explained that "Typically whenever we have these scenarios where we submit and they want to have a follow up interview more often than not it's we want to talk to you about your proposal."<sup>54</sup> After the meeting individuals will put together the pieces of the interview that they have been assigned, both verbally and physically putting the slides together. The smaller the architectural project team, the smaller the likelihood that individuals were assigned particular

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<sup>54</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

parts of the interview. If they are not, the whole project team may meet several times to complete these talks or the principal in charge may complete the majority of tasks with some assistance from others in the project team.

If the presentation is put together by different individuals then the slides will need to be collected and made to look graphically like a single slide set. Once this has been done the firm will schedule and lead a presentation “stumble through” meeting. A “stumble through” is a very rough mock interview presentation frequently interrupted to edit the presentation or slides. The document mentions a quality assurance / quality control review of the final presentation but this was not clear from the meetings. Firms then do one final presentation run-through before leading a rehearsal of choreography. At this point they should be ready for the presentation to the client though it is very common for architecture firms to prep for this interview right up to the last possible moment. Gilbert, for example, had their final rehearsal with one client on a Friday. That weekend a presentation visual was created by one of the team members and added to their speaking portion of the interview with only a quick notice of the change before the presentation itself.

#### **6.2.3.7: Client and Architect’s Step 2: Interview**

All but three, 85%, of all corporate request documents required an interview. The interview process was in a different format than any of the other meetings observed. This new type of conversation, as was mentioned in Chapter Four, had an inherent imbalance to it. Architects would present their material generally in the form of a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation without clients speaking very much at all, and then there would be a question and answer session in which clients would interview the architects about what they had presented. Of the interviews observed, questions that the client company asked came from the following

respective categories: design, schedule, previous experience with building type, budget / maintenance, MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing), team structure, previous experience with the client, and collaboration. Other questions were asked only a small handful of times including location of the firm, legal contract, building site, design tools, and scope the client presented. Though some firms suggested architecture employees limit the number of people answering each question so as to give the client time to speak, in practice this only happened sometimes. Other times the architecture firm would succeed but the external consultant wouldn't follow this same advice.

Business developers and marketers were rare at interviews. At Holler business developers did not attend interviews. The workplace business developer at Gilbert wanted to be involved in interviews to assure that the networking component remained throughout the process but in reality, it happened fairly rarely. Instead the associate principal seemed to be the individual who attended interviews most frequently with the principal falling in close second. When an interview could be attended by a fewer number of people, then it would be. There was one interview with Raynor where the marketer was in attendance, though did not have a speaking role and instead was in charge of setting up the event. This was the only time that a marketer was at an interview. The people who attended interviews more often were principals, project managers, interior designers and architects.

Gilbert and Holler would leave client companies with a copy of the response document at the end of the interview. Raynor emphasized their personal nature and informal approach with clients by leaving some sort of branded "goodie bag" for each client employee attending the interview in addition to the proposal. They tried to make these tokens as specific to the client as they possibly could. If it was close to lunch time they would bring popcorn and soda to make sure clients weren't starving during the meeting. They left a chocolate car for clients at an

interview with a well-known auto company. At another interview they knew there would be several clients they had never met before so they made a placemat for each client with their faces and names on it. These tokens were generally put together by the marketing team and while simple, said a lot about their more personal way of interacting with clients.

#### **6.2.3.8: Architect's Step 5: Project Win / Loss**

After all firms had been interviewed, and in one case after a design competition that took place after the interview, the client company took some time to review their criteria and preferences. They then notified the one firm they wished to hire and sent everyone else a rejection letter. At Gilbert and Holler the business developer was then in charge of conducting a debriefing interview about the firm's win or loss to figure out what they might do differently next time or what they should continue to do.

### **6.3: Initiation**

The selected architecture firm and the client then begin on the next phase of the project. Both Holler and Gilbert mention the steps of this phase, though only Holler has a name for the whole phase, which they call "initiation". The steps mentioned by both Holler and Gilbert include: negotiations, contract preparation, fee development, final contract approval / owner agreement, and the consultant / supplier agreement. This stage was not observed by this researcher for legal and financial purposes.

### **6.4: Service Delivery**

The next phase that Gilbert mentions is called “service delivery.” This phase, as its name suggests is the phase in which the architecture firm delivers all of the services that they have promised the client. The first potential step, and the only part of this phase observed during this research, is architectural programming.

#### **6.4.1: Client and Architect’s Step 3: Architectural Programming**

Sometimes this programming stage is left out of the architect's purview and instead the architect is expected to begin with conceptual, schematic design or some other aspect of the design process without programming. In most cases, however, the architecture firm begins programming once they have been selected. In design literature this type of programming is often referred to as architectural or facility programming since the program is prepared primarily by architects. The first thing the architecture firm does is to review the functional and special programs. Sometimes these architects may reinterpret the entire program document for their own use. Other times they may take the client’s program word-for-word without any interpretation. The extent to which these programs are reviewed by the architect seems to depend on several factors including timing, and the specific individual involved in the process. Beyond this initial review of previous programs, an architectural program, is reserved for the “qualitative goals and strategies or the final list of spaces, budgets, etc.” (Cherry 1999, 13). At the end of the architectural programming process the firm has developed a “program instrument from which the designs are produced” (Kumlin 1995, 4).

Unfortunately, the researcher only observed a few programming meetings with each firm so the approaches were largely specific to the individual at the firm conducting the meeting and to the client company. At Raynor the director of interior design is typically the individual who runs these meetings, which start with giving clients markers and a sheet of paper with a prompt

at the top to draw an image of their ideal swing set. According to the Director of Interior Design, this shows what kind of people they are working with: creative, quantitative individuals or something else entirely. Once individuals have completed drawing and explaining their swing set, the director moves on to posters that have been put together with images of different office spaces. Clients are asked to put one of two colored stickers on these images. One color represents images the individual doesn't like and the other color represents images they do like.

Early on in the programming process Holler did site tours with their clients. Employees at the architecture firm would come up with a list of spaces they thought were pertinent to the project and after discussing with the clients they would go on a tour of the different spaces. Sometimes these spaces were in the same discipline as the intended project, sometimes not. Generally, they were in the same geographic location and generally they were not owned by the client company that was creating the intended space. On one project Holler even brought in an external consultant who specialized in programming to be on the architecture firm's team. This individual had the clients lay out all the ways that different types of individuals would move through their space. Asking questions such as: How does a student move through a school? What about a teacher? What makes the two different in their interaction with the space? Can we lay out the activities they are doing in the order they are doing them in separate from the space itself and create a new space that might follow their flow? Later in the project this individual conducted several experience focus groups with clients and staff.

Prior to the experience focus groups, however, this client company and several of Holler's largest clients were asked to participate in their annual firm-wide meeting, that a large number of principals and executive staff flew in to their headquarters for. For one of the sessions, the staff broke up into disciplines and each discussed a particular project. One of the disciplines brought in several individuals from a client company to this meeting. They then

broke up all of the executive architecture firm staff into groups with each group having at least one individual from the client company. They were asked to sketch out their ideas of what the space would look like. Each group came up with their own ideas and presented them to the rest of the group. They then had a fairly lengthy discussion with the clients on which of the sketches was the best approach.<sup>55</sup>

Despite their differences, there was one programming activity that both Holler and Raynor engaged in. Prior to the initial programming meeting with one client company observed at Raynor, the client company had sent the architecture firm a list of spaces that they needed to have. The director of interior design cut these spaces out into different shapes and clients were asked to place these shapes on different parts of the floor plan for an adjacency activity. The director then engaged with clients on everything they said, often questioning them and arguing what the architect's belief in how the floor plan should look. The same activity was conducted by architects at Holler, but in this situation the clients were broken into two groups to conduct the activity before coming together and sharing with the other group. The two groups were given the same initial instructions but the architects assigned to each group took a very different approach. One architect conducted the activity like the director of interior design at Raynor. This seemed to promote a lot of one on one discussion with the architect. The other architect helped clients understand the assignment and then remained silent while observing and taking notes about the client's thoughts. This seemed to allow for a lot of discussion between clients. It was unclear whether the point of the activity was to learn from the architects, as in the first group, or learn from the clients what their preferences were, as in the second group. When the two groups came together to present to each other, the architect who ran the first group took over

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<sup>55</sup> It is unclear if this was the approach that was used in the program, partially because the researcher did not attend all of the programming meetings.

the discussion and the ultimate floor plan looked exactly like the first group's plan.

## **6.5: Conclusions**

This chapter took the client engagement process as outlined by Gilbert, Holler and design studies literature and added to it from data collected through ethnographic observations and facilities management literature to answer the research sub-questions: What cultural factors affect firms through the different stages of the client engagement process? And how is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process? The in-depth descriptions of each of these stages also outlined individuals' motivations throughout the process. Clients begin with motivations around growth and change, such as relocating, downsizing, and attracting and retaining personnel. These initial motivations are resolved by the decision to hire an architecture firm, which are selected based primarily on proposed cost. Although there are a few other motivations to hire an architecture firm, including professional qualifications, past involvement with similar projects, understanding of scope (client's needs), approach for meeting project requirements, completion schedule, and proposed team. Once the firm is hired, the first stage of service delivery is motivated by client needs and budget. Documents suggest that architects, on the other hand, begin with strategic motivations before moving on to similar motivations as their clients. The motivations as listed in these documents are largely concrete tangible things that can be easily pointed out and measured. However, ethnographic observations and quotes from the architects themselves began to show a slightly different picture. In addition to the lack of budget to properly pay architecture firms, or the inability to find the necessary project team members to go after a project, architects decided to not go after projects that lacked creativity, did not have "passion" behind them, or were not



“inspirational“. This shows creativity as a potential motivator for architecture firms. Firms were also motivated by “smooth presentations, and establishing, maintaining and initiating relationships with others that could be clients but could also be other consultants. In analyzing the six mini-cases of the next chapter we will see if these trends towards relationships as motivators continue and continue to answer the research subquestion: how organizational culture is manifested in motivations, assumptions and individual roles throughout the client engagement process.

Each firm’s organizational culture was also manifested in the roles employed during different stages of the client engagement process. At Raynor, there is one individual who plays many different roles. The managing partners, specifically the CEO, play a stronger role than they do at the other two firms acting as marketing director, lead finder, interview coach and often stepping in and out of meetings throughout the client engagement process. Since this individual occupies more of the roles than at other firms, the roles of business development and marketing are more supportive rather than speaking. They attend meetings to create documents based on other people’s specifications, not to voice their opinions about how such documents should be created or coach the team to answer questions a certain way. Handoffs between business development and the rest of the project team happen relatively early in the process if the business developer is involved at all. The small size of the firm may also contribute to the large role that the managing partners fill. In general, it seems that with larger firms like Holler and Gilbert managing partners can not play as big a role in the process of client engagement as they have many other administrative duties to attend to and can not be in more than one office at any given time.

At Holler, just like at Raynor, there are times when lead finders may pursue projects without the involvement of business development. Occasionally the lead finder is Holler’s CEO

but it is seldom a managing principal. Instead business developers take on many of the roles that Raynor's managing principals occupied including lead finder, and interview coach. The size of the firm once again has an impact in the client engagement process. With so many employees, the client engagement process at Holler has many more handoffs than at Raynor, there are a lot of potential marketing directors and a lot of people attend the pursuit and go / no-go meetings. Each of these individuals has a prosocial voice, in other words they express "work-related ideas, information, or opinions based on cooperative motives" (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003, 1371) rather than taking a supportive role. The number of people involved in the process likely contributes to the firm's less casual culture.

Gilbert's more informal culture comes across through very similarly as it did in the previous chapter through these roles. Despite, or potentially because of, it's recent potential bankruptcy, there is more work done to maintain and create relationships with other individuals rather than necessarily for profit. For example, the associate workplace principal plays several non-paying roles in interactions with real estate developers such as assisting with finding a new building or finding new clients for a building owned by a real estate developer. Like Raynor, there are few involved in the go / no-go and marketing director role in each studio with these roles primarily occupied by the workplace principal and associate principal. However, unlike Raynor, this is the culture of one studio within the firm rather than the culture of the entire firm. The role of business developer at Gilbert was a combination of the role of business developer at Raynor and that at Holler. While still involved with a prosocial voice as the response document was being created, Gilbert's business developer did not act as interview coach quite as much. It is interesting that business developers at Holler did not express their interest in being involved in the interview process as much as Gilbert's business developer expressed this. The business developers at these two firms were often the individuals who had the most interaction with the

client throughout this process and their involvement at the interview might help to bridge the gap between the firm and the client. Potentially the reason this was not voiced as much was that the business developers at Holler were expressing either quiescent or acquiescent silence.

Acquiescent silence can be described as “passive withholding of relevant ideas, based on submission and resignation” whereas quiescent silence is “more active withholding of relevant ideas in order to protecting the self, based on fear that consequences of speaking up will be personally unpleasant” (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003, 1364). The next chapter will show how these roles continue to inform the client engagement process through each of these individuals’ assumptions.

## Chapter 7 Mini-Cases

This chapter will focus on the project pursuit part of the client engagement process through six mini-cases. A mini-case here is defined as a project that at least one of the three architecture firms pursued during the fieldwork.<sup>56</sup> The project pursuit story for each of these mini-cases will be told using quotes from audio recordings.<sup>57</sup> To refer to each of the clients and their competitors without mentioning specific names, each mini-case client has been given a pseudonym and competitors will be mentioned in terms of whether or not they are in the top firms of the particular year in which fieldwork was conducted for this research (“2016 Top 300 Architecture Firms” n.d.).

Since each of the transcripts was analyzed using conversational analysis, this chapter will refer to that analytical method to a certain degree. Conversational analysis is a theory which argues that “the meaning of an action is heavily shaped by the sequence of previous actions from which it emerges” (Heritage 2004, 223). Therefore the analysis for each of the six mini-cases will be left until the end of each mini-case story with a chart in between the two showing what happened in each phase of the client engagement process for that particular client.<sup>58</sup> Instead of analyzing one or two mini-cases in depth as would generally be the case with conversational analysis, six mini-cases have been chosen, two from each of the three architecture firms. Since these mini-cases were chosen at random they are examples and do not reflect all of the clients

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<sup>56</sup> Some of these mini-cases were pursued by more than one of the three architecture firms.

<sup>57</sup> Gilbert’s mini-cases will be in a little more depth than the mini-cases from Raynor or Holler since the open floor plan of the firm enabled me to collect more data from this firm than the others.

<sup>58</sup> External analysis is only used in the one case that each of these mini-cases has been summarized into story form.

that particular firm pursued during observations with the firm or in general. This allows for a continued focus on organizational culture of these firms rather than specific issues of sequence in analysis of each of these mini-cases.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter will examine how organizational culture is manifested in motivations, assumptions and individuals' roles. In the previous chapter, ethnographic observations were used to highlight examples of the different stages of the client engagement process. This chapter will use the documents mentioned in the previous chapter, with specific focus on the go / no-go document to analyze each of the mini-cases ethnographic stories. It will also rely on literature from organizational studies to examine how organizational culture enables architects to create positive connections with their clients. Positive connections are those that “lead to feelings of inclusion, a felt sense of being important to others, experienced mutual benefit, and shared emotions” (Baker and Dutton 2007, 10). The previous chapter mentioned briefly that each stage of the documented client engagement process seemed to be motivated by concrete, tangible, measurable factors, yet the observations seemed to rely on soft factors such as relationships. To examine whether this continues to occur and more specifically what types of soft factors motivate architects and clients through this process, this chapter will also analyze each of the mini-cases using literature from organizational studies.

## **7.1: Mini-Case 1**

### **7.1.1: Mini-Case 1: Narrative**

Client Green was constructing a “permanent visitor information” structure that would appear as “the tallest lighthouse in North America” for a nearby city. As part of their initial work

they hired a construction company as their advisors on the project.<sup>59</sup> This construction company had “obviously”, according to Gilbert’s design director helped them write the request document since “part of the submission was to submit a full set of documents on a work, on a more creative and complex or comprehensive set of documents.”<sup>60</sup> The request document itself contained information about the height of the structure, that it would be up for LEED rating, a wide estimated cost range, some information about the site, parking, and code but otherwise a lot of things are left to choice. For example, it described the “exterior structure system - TBD, could be glass panels, metal panels, no panels, open air structure, tubular steel structure, etc.”

The first day of observations at Gilbert, the project team invited the researcher to attend the pre-proposal meeting for this project before the researcher had even been introduced to the workplace team. The initial comments about the project were from the workplace principal in the first workplace studio meeting the researcher attended at Gilbert: “I think it’s a tight project. But from our design standpoint it has the risk of immersing a bunch of people in something that’s going to cost an awful lot with little compensation for it. I think there’s that risk.”<sup>61</sup> After the studio meeting there were some Gilbert employees who privately mentioned that they questioned whether the project was worth the firm’s time.

A few days later the pre-proposal meeting occurred with the design director, the workplace business developer and a landscape architect. The pre-proposal was led by the chief executive officer (CEO) for the visitor’s bureau, and two individuals from the construction company. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the project. The CEO showed a video that “a friend’s son” had created all about the city that ended in a rendering of the future

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<sup>59</sup> Quote taken from field notes written about Client Green meeting on 11/4/15.

<sup>60</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert’s design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

<sup>61</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 11/2/15 of scrum meeting with Gilbert’s workplace studio.

visitor's structure.<sup>62</sup>

Once Gilbert's team left the interview location, they drove past the potential site that had been mentioned in the meeting. On the way they discussed whether they wanted to go the project. The landscape architect said "I think absolutely, in fact the connection to some of the big players in the region is really for me the bigger reason you'd go after this than anything else."<sup>63</sup> The following Monday morning the firm had their weekly workplace studio meeting, where the business developer notified the team of their competitors for the project including: Raynor, Holler, a firm that is in the top 10 architecture firms of that particular year ("2016 Top 300 Architecture Firms" n.d.), and a small firm roughly the same size as Raynor.

With the decision to "go" the project made, Gilbert put together the proposal, using a previous project's proposal as the template. As soon as the proposal was submitted, the firms were informed they would all be interviewed since Raynor and Holler had both decided to drop out. The workplace studio leader then invited the design director, landscape architect and a marketing employee to an early interview preparation meeting. The project manager was also invited but could not attend. At the meeting, the design director expressed some concerns about including this particular project manager, explaining "Initially I sent this out to [project manager] saying hey, we should connect at the meeting and as soon as I hit the send button I came back with this fear that [project manager} was going to go up and call [Client Green's CEO] and not include anybody else, filter the information and come back."<sup>64</sup>

Though Gilbert had reached out to the client to get a better understanding of who and

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<sup>62</sup> This client did not allow audio to be recorded in meetings, so less material was recorded relative to other clients.

<sup>63</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 11/4/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, landscape architect and workplace business developer discussing Client Green pre-response meeting.

<sup>64</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

what would be expected from the interview, they had yet to hear back. All they could do was guess what the client would want to see and who the interview team should include. This tall lighthouse required a civil engineer and structural engineer. It might need a more experienced structural engineer than any they had on staff as well as a lighting expert, both of which would be hired as consultants to Gilbert. Were these external consultants necessary at the interview? Due to timing of the interview the structural engineer could not attend and despite this individual's protests, the design director decided not to invite the civil engineer because it was too early to hear about "soil borings". Ultimately the team decided to bring their healthcare principal because as the workplace principal explained "we're convinced he's the voice of the community" since he grew up in Client Green's community.<sup>65</sup>

Knowledge of Client Green came primarily from the pre-proposal meeting and emails that had been sent back and forth. The design director explained that the CEO of the visitor's bureau was a "delightful, energetic, big picture thinker. She wants to know that you're going to wow her and develop her dream". On the other hand, the emails that the construction company sent made the landscape architect think that they "will play more of a wet blanket role than they will a positive cheerleader role of what we do. They'll be telling you can't do this, you can't do that, you're going to need this, you're going to need that."

Gilbert never heard back from the client about specifics on the interview so they had to put together the presentation themselves. Since the request document emphasized the height of the structure Gilbert decided to send someone out to take images and video of the town from a drone of the height and general location Client Green had discussed for the project. The

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<sup>65</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/11/15 of meeting with Gilbert's workplace principal, landscape architect, higher education principal, design director, workplace marketing employee, corporate practice leader, and project manager about Client Green.



landscape architect also put together a poster the size of a table cover that included some key images related to the town. It took a long time to figure out what the interview presentation should focus on, towards the end of one meeting they pointed out one potential reason:

“This thing is really without a program” - design director  
“I can’t get a vision from it and there’s no statement in there of what a vision is so they’re missing the critical point.” - Project manager

A day before the interview, the design director threw together some sketches of the potential tourist destination. After the interview, the client mentioned not appreciating these sketches. A few days later Gilbert found out that the smallest firm won the project. In response, the workplace principal exclaimed “I didn’t even think to pay any attention to them being a competitor” and the business developer responded “We really underestimated them”. The business developer speculated as to why the smallest firm might have won, “I know one thing we’ve never done and I’m kind of surprised that they would take that route is. Are you really going to sit there and talk about the competition like do we ever go into an interview and talk about the competition?” to which the workplace principal responded “no.”<sup>66</sup> The landscape architect expressed an interest in knowing who the consultants were that the firm employed. If they brought on a large consultant “that kind of defeats the purpose of them being this small little” firm.<sup>67</sup> Later in the day when the landscape architect asked the design director whether they expected that firm to win the director responded “They were the smallest of the group and probably the least expensive and probably said oh, we’re a design office, we’re not one of these multi-disciplinary big ass firms.” In summary of the project the design director commented “It’s always an interesting scenario when you are [...] looking for someone truly terrific that’s really

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<sup>66</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of workplace studio members at the end of the day.

<sup>67</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of Gilbert’s design director and landscape architect about Client Green.

going to change how we do things that's been led by the contractor" to which the landscape architect replied "Even still don't you think a contractor would have a greater level of confidence in the constructability of something if it's coming from a firm that's got integrated deep experience?"<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of Gilbert's design director and landscape architect about Client Green.

		Gilbert with Client Green	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	N/A	
	Need for Change & Business Case	tallest lighthouse in North America to bring more visitors to area	
	Functional Programming	minimal functional programming conducted: video created by "a friend's son" of the city including rendering of future visitor's structure; height determined, LEED rating; budget, materials and site still unclear	
	External Consultants	Construction Company Hired	
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Construction Company connected Gilbert to Client Green	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	Request Document created with assistance of Construction Company. Competitors: Raynor, Holler, firm the same size as Raynor and a top 10 firm of 2016	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	No-Go? potential to use a lot of resources with little compensation to Gilbert
		Tour and/or Meeting	Meeting required by client with CEO for visitor's bureau, 2 individuals from construction company, Gilbert's design director, workplace business developer and landscape architect. Brief drive-by of potential site.
		Response Strategy	Go: project connected to some "big players". No kick-off meeting held, just discussed project in studio meeting.
		Creating Response Document	created by workplace marketing employee based on previous project template
		Shortlisting	no shortlisting necessary since Raynor & Holler decided to no-go the project
		Preparing Presentation	no guidelines from client about who or what they wanted to see at the interview. Several meetings but no formal run-through of presentation
		Interview	included conceptual sketches from Gilbert's design director, large poster of area, and videos from drone of height & location
		N/A	
Project Win / Loss	Lost to the smallest competing firm		
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	N/A	
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	N/A	
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

*Figure 24: Client Engagement Process with Gilbert and Client Green*

### 7.1.2: Mini-Case 1: Analysis

From the very beginning this pursuit was distinct from others as far as the involvement of the researcher. The researcher was invited to the pre-proposal prior to asking for permission, and the workplace studio did not take time to contact the client to ask for their permission for the researcher to attend. This was the only workplace pursuit that the researcher followed at Gilbert where neither of these things occurred. This was potentially since Gilbert did not have a clear understanding of their involvement in the project before the pre-proposal meeting.

In an analysis of Client Green's project against Gilbert's go / no-go criteria, a few things stand out. Client Green did not know Gilbert, instead Gilbert was recommended through the construction company. The request document was the first Gilbert had heard about the project and the workplace principal's initial instinct was that it was "something that's going to cost an awful lot with little compensation."<sup>69</sup> They have relevant experience but not "same as" client project. The project cost varies widely so it's difficult to tell Gilbert's pricing competitiveness. The corporate operations leader questioned whether they have qualified staff for the project.

The project scope in the request document is relatively broad so there's little way for Gilbert to tell if the project will promote them as a design firm, whether they meet or exceed client requirements, or whether they understand the problem enough to know whether they had technical capability for it. The request document has a few things based on the "nature of the parcel's dimensional layout" yet in the initial pre-proposal meeting "they intimated that maybe their site wasn't their actual site."<sup>70</sup> Aside from the "most important" aspects of the project mentioned, the pre-proposal meeting doesn't really narrow the project scope down any more than

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<sup>69</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 11/2/15 of Gilbert's workplace studio in a scrum meeting.

<sup>70</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

the request document. Therefore, the design director and project manager's comments about the program being missing or the project not having a vision are not surprising.

The only questions from the go / no-go questionnaire that this project does pass with high marks are that Gilbert can commit resources to the proposal effort, the project is a good geographic fit, and Client Green's "connection to some of the big players in the region" allows them to help Gilbert build strategic alliances.<sup>71</sup> There was no way to tell whether the cost of this pursuit was comparable to other projects. The researcher did not observe Gilbert go through this go / no-go questionnaire but from this analysis if they had the project would not have gotten a high score.

Aside from the initial decision to "go" the project, Gilbert's project team did get a chance to meet the client. However, when Client Green did not give them any guidance on what the interview presentation would be about, it was up to Gilbert to put together the interview presentation without any client's input. This situation, as with most social behavior, is "predicated upon assumptions an actor makes about the knowledge, beliefs, and motives of others" (Krauss and Fussell 1991, 2). In this situation it is the project team, rather than an individual, that must prepare the presentation based on their assumptions. Unfortunately, since they have only met Client Green once thus far, they do not have a lot of knowledge to base these assumptions on. Instead, as studies have shown "lacking time to formulate their addressee's perspective with any precision, speakers may employ simplifying assumptions and heuristics that yield approximate outcomes" (Krauss and Fussell 1991, 20). In this case the motives of the client team may be vastly different because it is comprised of individuals from two different groups: the city, who has the money to create the visitor's bureau tower, and the construction

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<sup>71</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 11/4/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, landscape architect and workplace business developer discussing Client Green pre-response meeting.

company, who they had hired as advisors. The design director's assumptions of the CEO from the visitor's bureau at the city are that she "is a delightful energetic, big picture thinker. She wants you to know that you're going to wow her and develop her dream."<sup>72</sup> The construction company on the other hand had "been instrumental in figuring out what will and won't fit"<sup>73</sup> and the workplace principal mentioned that they "seem like they're keeping it very very localized to executing a set of shop drawings basically" which the design director agreed with.<sup>74</sup> The project team combines these assumptions about the client team's motives with their assumptions about the interview based on their previous experiences. The design director assumed they needed to spend the interview time presenting the proposal, while the workplace studio leader assumed they needed to present a "strong statement of civic purpose" showing that they understood "what convention visitors bureaus are all about" and that they understood the community.<sup>75</sup>

These assumptions of their audience stuck with the design director as they made several decisions. When determining whether or not to invite the civil engineer the director questioned whether the CEO would "want to know about a civil engineer that's going to tell you about soil borings at this stage in the game."<sup>76</sup> The design director also decided to bring a scroll of sketches of the potential tourist destination to the interview. Though it is unclear who from the client team did not appreciate these sketches, it would make sense if this were someone from the construction team thinking "you can't do this, you can't do that, you're going to need this, you're going to need that."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

<sup>73</sup> Quote taken from field notes written about Client Green meeting on 11/4/15.

<sup>74</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/9/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, project manager, workplace principal, landscape architect, workplace marketing employee, and structural engineer about Client Green.

<sup>75</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

<sup>76</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

<sup>77</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/9/15 of meeting with Gilbert's design director, project manager, workplace principal,

The workplace studio leader asked for a different project manager, which might suggest that these two individuals have a low quality connection. Low quality connections are defined as ones in which “a tie exists (people communicate, they interact, and they may even be involved in interdependent work), but the connective tissue is damaged” (J. E. Dutton and Heaphy 2003, 263), although there could have been other reasons for this request. Not only did the design director mimic the project manager, they also specifically mentioned being worried that the project manager would call Client Green’s CEO without including anybody else, filter the information and report back. These reactions portray a corrosive connection between the design director and the project manager, “created and sustained by an infinite variety of disrespectful, disabling, untrusting, alienating acts” (Dutton 2003a, 111).

Organizational studies research on civility has shown that “civility within or outside of the team often spreads, as teammates “catch” the positive emotions felt by their colleagues, even if they didn’t share the experience or witness the civility personally” (Porath 2011, 443; Lipps 1903; Lakin et al. 2003). Though similar studies have not been done on incivility, it would make sense to assume the opposite, that the incivility the design director showed the project manager by mimicking them may have been felt by their colleagues. Even though nothing is said directly to the project manager or within earshot of the project manager, studies have shown that “our bodies and our minds are well-tuned sensors that pick up the signals that another person sends about our basic worth” (Dutton 2003a, 24), otherwise called “authenticity detectors” (Harter 2002). Also, studies have shown that “by removing incivility, one doesn’t necessarily feel treated civilly. Something more is required (Porath 2011, 439). In fact, in one study “800 workers of tertiary education, health, and long-haul transport industries” were interviewed and

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landscape architect, workplace marketing employee, and structural engineer about Client Green.

the results showed that “covert forms of denigration resulted in more extensive emotional trauma than did physical abuse” (Mayhew et al. 2004, 130). This project manager seemed to be strongly tied to workplace projects during fieldwork with this case study, so how did this incivility affect the next mini-case study, Client Yellow.

## **7.2: Mini-Case 2**

### **7.2.1: Mini-Case 2: Narrative**

Client Yellow was an electrics manufacturer that had recently been acquired by a parent company. They were previously housed in a facility that they were “outgrowing and they bought a facility that used to be the old [...] building.”<sup>78</sup> According to Gilbert’s workplace principal, Client Yellow got Gilbert’s name and the name of a firm smaller than Raynor from a construction company. They were both potential underdogs since they were competing against two of the top 10 firms of 2016 (“2016 Top 300 Architecture Firms” n.d.) that the parent company had worked with in the past.

Once the workplace principal received the request document they set up a tour of Client Yellow’s current space with an electrical engineer, mechanical engineer, and the design director. Client Yellow’s facility manager began the tour by describing what their process had been before sending out the request document. Client Yellow

“put a committee together here which was a cross functional, diverse, multi-age and

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<sup>78</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/17/15 of meeting with Gilbert’s workplace principal and mechanical engineer about Client Yellow.



multi-gendered team and we asked them to go out and select things they liked. To put a picture, we set up a slide show type format where you pop that picture in and they say what they like about it and what we did was that whole team then voted on those and the top, I think it was the top 30% or the top 70% was what we supplied you [in the request document]. So that was like what everybody voted on.”

Since completing this functional programming, Client Yellow was working on putting together “a full specification list of all the equipment that is moving as well as whether it’s electrical requirements, air requirements, whether it needs chilled water requirements and we’re going to anticipate what we have”. Gilbert was the only firm on the tour because tours were only conducted upon request of the architecture firms and Gilbert was the only firm to make such a request.

In addition to an in-depth description of the client’s process thus far, the tour also gave the workplace principal a chance to bring up some concerns with the request document, “There’s a general sense of a relatively spare approach that is it seems you guys are sort of saying [...] let’s just do a light touch there to which the facility manager explained being comfortable with their budget. The workplace principal later repeated concerns about the budget to the parent company who noted “We think that we might add something to the project once it gets going.”<sup>79</sup>

The request document had architecture firms submitting response documents only 24 hours prior to the required interview. Gilbert therefore had to prepare both the response document and the interview at the same time. The same project manager as Client Green was once again assigned to Client Yellow, which could have been a potential reason for the workplace principal to question whether having a project manager was necessary at all. The workplace principal asked a project architect, “If I threw you in as project manager and project

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<sup>79</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on [2/2/16] of meeting with Gilbert’s workplace principal and project manager about Client Yellow.

architect, how would you feel? [...] that would make the team more spare, sort of separate some things, and I think ultimately feel better.”<sup>80</sup> After some discussion the workplace principal decided to include the project manager because without this project manager “the interview is easier” but the project itself would be more challenging without a project manager.

As for the rest of the team, the project manager asked about having a lab consultant and the principal explained that the project architect would be used as the guy that understands labs. They also decided that the mechanical engineering leader would go to the interview instead of the mechanical engineer who had gone on the tour because this individual had never been to an interview and was a shy person. While this was not problematic for the presentation portion of the interview, during the question and answer session “there’s no thinking about it. You have to spit it out. Now I have no problem with [this particular engineer] being there with me but that’s the rule of the interviews. You don’t have somebody there that doesn’t speak to the issues.”<sup>81</sup>

The workplace principal explained to the project architect that they were expecting clients at the interview to be “knowledgeable about what it takes to put a building through”<sup>82</sup> but it was unclear who else had been told this.

On the day of, the interview began with introductions. There were eight participants from the client’s team: two employees from facilities, one from global procurement, one from the business department and four individuals from the parent company. Gilbert’s team had five individuals and a civil engineer from a consulting firm. During the initial presentation portion of the meeting, Gilbert admitted ignorance when the workplace principal was describing their

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<sup>80</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/4/16 of meeting with Gilbert’s workplace principal and project architect about Client Yellow. The team would be more spare because the project architect would be occupying two separate roles: project architect and project manager, rather than two individuals in the two separate roles.

<sup>81</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on [1/5/16-2] of meeting with Gilbert’s mechanical engineer about Client Yellow.

<sup>82</sup> In this case by “putting a building through” the workplace studio principal was referring to the fact that the client had been through the experience of designing and constructing an architectural project before.

design process and said

“How we put the project together is very important for us. One of our first steps is to take a look at how work is done at [Client Yellow]. I’m not sure what experience you’ve had with the way that programming is done with other organizations. For us it’s both a technical kind of programming that takes place but certainly something that really in fact gets into the way in which we work, the flows, adjacencies, changes, adaptability, expansion over time.”<sup>83</sup>

Otherwise Gilbert’s team made several assumptions about Client Yellow. After the introductions Gilbert mentioned several projects that they believed were relevant to Client Yellow. For each project a Gilbert team member would note the town and general location of the project, describe the site, the process, and a brief mention of why they believed it was a relevant project. Most of these brief statements presented assumptions that Gilbert had about Client Yellow. For example, after describing one relevant project that Gilbert had completed, the project architect said “we know how you guys work, well at least we know how [former information technology client] works and we assume that [you] work the same way” to which the workplace principal responded “so we kind of get it, in other words” referring to Client Yellow’s operational process. When the project manager was asked to describe how resources would be managed throughout the design process, the project manager began

“This schedule was put together and what we’d like to do is eventually have a schedule that’s a collaboration of all team members. As [workplace principal] mentioned, beginning, you know ignition is very important. It helps create a successful project. Much like if you’re doing a project at home, right? How many of you have gone to, how many times did you go back to Home Depot or the box store because you didn’t have this, you didn’t have that.”

Others on the project team used architectural terms throughout the presentation such as

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<sup>83</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of Client Yellow interview.

slab access floor compressed system, quick test-fit, enriched line, water main loop, fireizer, prove turnaround, and wall boarding. Only one of these terms gets an in-depth explanation since it was relatively unique.

During the question and answer portion of the interview Client Yellow addressed some of these assumptions. No one asked to clarify terminology. One of the parent company employees asked “And you guys are all out of [Michigan]?”<sup>84</sup> The facility manager also asked “the new location is a primarily established as an office environment, and there’s the challenge of incorporating the lab into that space. Have you folks ever had experience with doing that in the past specifically?” In addition to these questions about the assumptions Gilbert’s team made, the interior designer brought up the budget.

After the interview Gilbert found out who their competitors were and Client Yellow asked them for contractor references, then Client Yellow’s parent company interior designer notified Gilbert that they were “one of two left standing.”<sup>85</sup> A few days later Gilbert learned they did not win Client Yellow’s project. There was a lot of internal discussion about the loss. The day they got the news workplace associate principal mentioned “[the construction company] kind of booted us on [Client Yellow]” to which the principal responded “well, they didn’t boot us but they” and the associate principal filled in “didn’t help us.”<sup>86</sup> The workplace principal also noted the parent company

“very much wanted us but felt that because this acquisition was so new they couldn’t put the big corporate overlay on [Client Yellow] just yet. [Client Yellow] liked [smallest competitor firm], they sort of felt that they were a small firm, they’d have more contact with them, get greater attention, etc. as per result, so [smallest firm] is in there.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> In other words, “are you all from Michigan?”

<sup>85</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/28/16g of meeting with Gilbert’s workplace principal, higher education principal, and project manager about Client Yellow.

<sup>86</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 2/1/16 of Gilbert workplace studio’s scrum meeting.

<sup>87</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 2/1/16 of Gilbert workplace studio’s scrum meeting.

As with Client Green's project, this project was once again awarded to the smallest competing firm who Gilbert believed was "an outlier" that they should "dismiss." The workplace principal concluded

"I think that's something to, this thing about being too big we've seen in a couple different cases recently and I think it's queued me up to exactly what you're saying. Try to nip that in the bud early. And the crazy thing is, that I don't think people understand, is that a small firm quickly gets overwhelmed by a single project. A big firm is very easy, agile basically to move things around. If we're getting attention we probably, we over-attend to our clients."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 2/2/16 of meeting with Gilbert workplace principal and project manager about Client Yellow.

		Gilbert with Client Yellow	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	N/A	
	Need for Change & Business Case	electronics company recently acquired by parent company, outgrowing their current space	
	Functional Programming	a cross functional, diverse, multi-age and multi-gendered team voted on most preferred images. Top images were included in request document. Working on putting together “a full specification list of all the equipment that is moving as well as whether it’s electrical requirements, air requirements, whether it needs chilled water requirements and we’re going to anticipate what we have”	
	External Consultants	N/A	
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Construction Company connected Gilbert to Client Green	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	Request document created by local company with the help of parent company. Competitors: 2 of the top 10 firms of 2016 and a firm smaller than Raynor	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	Go determined informally: large project with well known parent company. Despite concerns about budget.
		Tour and/or Meeting	Upon Gilbert's request with client's facility manager of company's old space with Gilbert's workplace principal, design director, mechanical and electrical engineers
		Response Strategy	Kick-off meeting; discussion about project team. Questions submitted to client.
		Creating Response Document	response document due 24 hours prior to interview
		Shortlisting	N/A
		Preparing Presentation	No run-throughs of presentation
		Interview	required by all those submitting response documents; 8 participants from client's team comprised of those from local company & from parent company
Project Win / Loss		Additional Step: References requested for contractors Lost to the smallest competing firm	
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	N/A	
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	N/A	
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

**Figure 25:** Client Engagement Process with Gilbert and Client Yellow

### 7.2.2: Mini-Case 2: Analysis

In analyzing this case, the first thing that stood out was that Client Yellow and Client Green had a lot in common. They were both clients that Gilbert received through a construction company referral for workplace studio projects that similar team members worked on including the same project manager. To put these project teams together the individual in charge of the project went around and asked other Gilbert employees to be part of the team. Studies have shown that asking, rather than demanding, is one way to ensure supportive communication, since “when people make demands they send the signal that blame or punishment will follow if the demand is not fulfilled. [...] Requests only work if you genuinely believe the other person can freely choose a response” (Dutton 2003b, 57). The language that the workplace studio leader used when interacting with the project team members for the first time should ideally be in a request form to make a team built on supportive communication. The workplace studio leader’s interaction with the project architect, for example, begins with an in depth description of the project and what the team has done so far, including details about the interview “we’ve got a proposal going in today that will have your name as PA, and we have a presentation interview with them at [x time], which I hope you’ll be able to make.” In expressing desire that the individual attend the interview rather than demanding it, the workplace studio leader expresses supportive communication. This type of communication is continued later on in the conversation when the workplace studio leader asks “If I threw you in as project manager and project architect, how would you feel?” The leader allows the project architect to express his feelings before following up with “that would make the team more spare, sort of separate some things,

and I think ultimately feel better.”<sup>89</sup> Just as with Client Green, the only individual that seems to interact with the team with unsupportive communication is the project manager. In both cases the team would have agreed that without this individual the interview would have been “a little bit easier,”<sup>90</sup> but both projects needed a project manager. They both had a wide variety of different firms competing for the project rather than the more standard competitors, the three case studies. Gilbert also lost both projects to small firms.

Each of these firms was asked to present to a client team coming from two very distinct groups. Client Green’s team was individuals from the construction company and the city whereas Client Yellow’s team was individuals from the client company and its parent company. As with Client Green, Gilbert did not have a lot of prior knowledge about Client Yellow before the interview and needed to rely on their prior assumptions. Gilbert made several assumptions about Client Yellow’s design expertise in their presentation. The design terms used by Gilbert’s team are typically associated with a high level of design expertise that could be associated with a client team where, as the workplace principal put it, “probably all of you are now sort of very much experienced people in the world in which we live.”<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, references to Home Depot could be, though are not always, associated with a client team with a low level of design expertise. This could also be associated with the project manager’s different perceptions from the rest of the team, highlighting the low-quality relationships the project manager had with the rest of the project team. However, the project manager also presents a nonparallel preconception, namely that the client understands terms like prestige and wall-boarding without describing what they are. Does this therefore mean that the project manager is confused about

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<sup>89</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/4/16 of meeting with Gilbert workplace principal and project manager about Client Yellow.

<sup>90</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/4/16 of meeting with Gilbert workplace principal and workplace associate principal about Client Yellow.

<sup>91</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of Client Yellow interview.



the level of design expertise the client has? Potentially. This client team might consist of individuals with extremely different design expertise's. The parent company invited two of the top 10 architecture firms of that particular year ("2016 Top 300 Architecture Firms" n.d.) because they had worked on previous projects together so they are more likely to have design expertise than the local client company that had not completed any design projects and was relying on a construction company for referrals. It is possible that if Gilbert had tailored their presentation to an audience that did not have as much experience with design that they would have appeased the local client company and the parent company wouldn't have needed to "put the big corporate overlay on [Client Yellow]" to win the project. In either case it would be best to tailor the presentation to the audience with less experience so that everyone in the room can understand.

When making assumptions about others, one should think about the social categories that individual may belong to properly tailor conversation to that individual. In other words, "every individual is a member of a number of social categories, and knowing that a person belongs to a particular category can allow one to predict some of the things that person is likely to know" (Fussell and Krauss 1992, 380). The local client company was based in Michigan, so they likely belong to the social category of people who understand Michigan geography. The parent company, on the other hand, was not based in Michigan and did not understand the local geography. Instead of continuing with the assumption that Gilbert could present projects with only local names of towns, it might have been best for Gilbert to identify that each of these towns was located in Michigan. Both Gilbert and the civil engineering consultant introduced their companies and named the town their company worked in. They also described projects using the name of the town the project was located in, or even the street it was on. This assumption could have been resolved, and client's question avoided, if Gilbert had, as one

example, images of maps in their slide show on each project page of where the project was located and where their offices were. Presenting information in multiple different ways like this in attempts to avoid a situation with incorrect assumptions is helpful when communicating with a group one does not know as well, such as a new client, because

“perspective taking and adjustment [of content to information people believe another person possesses] has been linked to greater comprehension by listeners (Krauss & Fussell, 1991). Thus perspective taking may build social bonds by fostering mutual understanding, promoting communication that makes others feel understood and decreasing conflicts that arise because of miscommunications” (M. Williams 2011, 463).

The more an architecture firm tailors their presentation to their audience, the more the audience will understand and feel understood. The better the connection is with clients, the greater the likelihood they will get hired.

Aside from the few similarities mentioned between Clients Yellow and Green, there were several ways in which Client Yellow was unique. Both the tour and the interview were recorded for this client, something not done for the previous client. The transcriptions allow me to analyze these meetings in more depth than the notes taken for Client Green. In Client Yellow’s transcribed interview there was only one instance when the workplace principal mentioned they were “not sure what experience you’ve had with the way that programming is done with other organizations.”<sup>92</sup> At first glance it would seem that if one is unable to assess “the background knowledge, plans, attitudes, beliefs, outlooks, and so on, of one’s fellow interlocutors”, in other words taking the perspective of the other then it would be best to admit ignorance. Indeed, this is often a good approach but it can only be taken so far since “little is known” about people’s abilities to judge others perspectives (Fussell and Krauss 1992, 378). Studies have shown that

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<sup>92</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 1/6/16 of Client Yellow interview.

expertise between clients and architects typically is such that clients are experts in the problems and architects' experts in design. By expressing this distinction, and admitting the knowledge the architectural team is lacking, they allow clients to be the experts and encourage collaboration.

Client Green's team remained consistent between the initial pre-proposal meeting and the interview, with the exception of adding some new individuals. This was also the case with Client Yellow with one exception: the mechanical engineer who handed off information about the client to the mechanical engineering lead for the interview. Though the workplace principal privately noted the mechanical engineering lead's exceptional work during the interview, and none of the clients commented about the handoff, it is possible that it still had some effect on the project. Client Yellow's facility manager could have preferred the mechanical engineering lead over the initial mechanical engineer but known that they wouldn't have the lead on the project. Or vice versa, could have preferred the junior mechanical engineer during the tour and not the lead mechanical engineer that everyone else met. The junior mechanical engineer that went on the tour could have spoken to issues that the lead did not raise in the interview. It is impossible to tell how this particular handoff affected the client or the interview.

One final difference between Clients Green and Yellow was that Client Yellow had conducted a lot of internal work on this project prior to selecting architecture firms to invite for the project. In the analysis of the go / no-go decision for Client Green, one of the important no-go factors was the lack of information Gilbert had about the project. The facility manager for Client Yellow, on the other hand, had already conducted a lot of internal programming and created a much more detailed request document, which improved the ability for Gilbert to make a go decision on this project.

### **7.3: Mini-case 3**

#### **7.3.1: Mini-Case 3: Narrative**

Client Blue is slightly different than other clients in this chapter since the researcher first heard about this project while at Gilbert but the request document was not sent out until the researcher was observing Holler. Client Blue is a large company that sold medical supplies with locations all over the world that had conducted many architectural projects previously. For this particular project they had already hired a construction company that they worked with on a previous project, and purchased a plot of land for a new building. They had also already hired an architecture firm to “complete the architectural programming phase of the project”. This program report was “organized into 16 parts, each giving qualitative and quantitative program data for the associated Business Units, Work Groups, and Support Spaces” [request document]. Client Blue wanted to keep their project and site secret so the request for proposal and qualifications document didn’t include any information about the site, and noted that contact with any staff from the client company “should not occur and could be grounds for elimination from consideration” [request document]. Additionally, all invited architecture firms were required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) agreeing to not speak with anyone about the project or risk disqualification.

These NDA documents were sent to the firms at different points in time. About two weeks after fieldwork began at Gilbert one of the principals mentioned signing the NDA and that they were waiting for the request document. On the other hand, Holler did not receive the NDA

or request document until this researcher's first day at the firm on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016.<sup>93</sup> Holler was the only firm on the list of invited firms that had not already worked with Client Blue. They had been added to the list upon request of their construction company who had worked with Holler's business developer previously.

Once Holler received the request document they signed the NDA and set up an internal meeting that thirteen people were invited to including marketing, four studio leads, two business developers, a designer, an electrical engineer, a landscape architect, a civil engineer, the office director, and the director of operations. Of all thirteen people present at this meeting, only seven ended up working on the project, five of whom were in the proposal document and only three of these individuals ultimately went to the interview: the key studio lead, the civil engineer, and the architect. The meeting began with one of the business developers stating "I guess the first thing we obviously know it's a go, guess we need to discuss team and projects and strategy to win this:: cause I want to win this." This was the only time throughout the meeting that the go / no-go decision was mentioned. They then turned to the business developer to get more information about Client Blue but little was known, so they began brainstorming. The request document did not mention a pre-proposal meeting and the civil engineer only had a guess about where the site was. They had a few ideas for people they could talk to about the project but they couldn't reach out to any of these people because they had signed the NDA.

Without much knowledge about Client Blue they turned to the details in the request document to put together the proposal. The request document did not limit the number of projects they could include. Projects of similar scope were noted for having a similar percentage

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<sup>93</sup> There was no information on this client from either Gilbert or Holler between these two recordings so it is unclear when this happened in the pursuit process. All firms probably received the request document at the same time and all firms except Holler received the NDA at the same time.

of indoor to outdoor, office to research, and office to lab spaces. The number two reason for suggesting certain projects be included in the proposal was also mentioned in the request document: similarity in terms of the size of the project. Beyond these two, several projects were mentioned based on their proximity to the project site, number of positive customer reviews, and how old the project was. Once a few of these projects were mentioned, the Director of Operations asked “would it be important to show projects outside of [the state] if we’re competing with [those firms]” to which both business developers respond affirmatively. Later the primary business developer returned to this point, stating that the construction company “said they have an international office too, so I think as international as we can make the project experience the better it’s going to be”.

After the meeting the business developer reached back to the construction company to ask a few questions. During this phone call the construction company asked if Holler had ever worked with the architecture firm that did Client Blue’s architectural programming but they had not. After the call there were several breakout group meetings between the workplace studio leader and the marketing employees to put the proposal and interview presentation documents together. The civil engineer, landscape architect, and architect also met as a breakout group to put together slides that the marketing team inserted into the final interview presentation. Though the firm had received permission from Client Blue regarding the researcher’s involvement in the pursuit process, the researcher was not invited to attend the interview or tour Client Blue’s space.

The researcher did, however, attend the post-interview tour that Holler gave a few days after the interview of a building they had constructed for a different client. This tour began with an “interactive presentation” that Holler put together on a variety of topics that Client Blue had asked about. After the PowerPoint presentation and tour of Holler’s previous client’s building Client Blue asked two important questions that they felt had been left unanswered. The first was

from Client Blue's vice president of quality and facility management about the phasing table that Holler included in their "leave behind" that was given out at the tour. This phasing table had each project member listed next to their percent involvement by phase.

"When I went through and looked at project teams of involvement I looked at the first column and if I remember I think the highest one was 60% so I'm trying to understand the 60%, these percentages and how all that worked and if you can talk to your process as to why 60% as opposed to 20% or 80% or [...] "I'm trying to think of the process, so you're obviously figuring we're going to work with this group or with us this way that's what I'm trying to figure out [...] It's not that it had to be 100 but it's not 100 so therefore how does that work and what's the interaction and then" - Client Blue vice president  
"In a leadership role of all the people you're looking at who have other responsibilities that maybe we're phasing another project out or we have other administrative managerial responsibilities, I would say anybody who, I would say at the level of people here today if someone's saying that they're 100% I think they're being a little disingenuous and not realistic in terms of the multiple responsibilities that they have" - project manager

The second question was also about a page from the "leave behind" entitled "project team matrix" that listed each of Holler's proposed project team members and 10 specific past projects to show which project each member had worked on. One of Client Blue's team members asked "On your matrix you've obviously got another big project, [name of project with one of Holler's biggest clients], so how, and then you have 70-80% of your people on it so how does that affect us?" The workplace studio leader responded. After these questions the workplace studio leader finished the meeting doing just as Holler's business developer had advised: asking for the project, "We're very selective because it's a busy time and we don't take every project but this is one that we felt there's a great alignment between how we approach working and how we see [Client Blue] as working". Once the clients left Holler's project team discussed how the tour went. The project manager noted "My sense was they were starving wanting to look at more examples of lab facilities" and the workplace studio leader agreed.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 4/21/16 of meeting about Client Blue.

After Holler learned of their loss, the business developer was overheard on the phone describing the project to someone else, saying that the senior director of local real estate was a “big decision leader” that “kept citing us on the lack of international capability.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 6/7/16 of phone call with Client Blue and Holler’s business developer.



		Client Blue		
		Gilbert	Holler	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	repeat client	N/A	
	Need for Change & Business	medical company consolidating campuses into one location		
	Functional Programming	Unclear what was involved in functional programming. Most recent programming conducted by architecture firm. Program report was “organized into 16 parts, each giving qualitative and quantitative program data for the associated Business Units, Work Groups, and Support Spaces”		
	External Consultants	Construction Company Hired; Site purchased; Architecture firm conducted Programming		
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Gilbert had done previous project with client and was expecting this project	Construction company connected Holler to Client Blue	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	sent NDA on 11/16/15, unclear when request document was sent	sent NDA on 3/7/16 which was returned and Holler was sent request document immediately. Only competitor that had not worked with company previously.	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	Go determined informally in principal's meeting: repeat client	Go determined informally at beginning of kick-off meeting: large project with well known client company
		Tour and/or Meeting	N/A	
		Response Strategy	Not followed by researcher	Kick-off meeting attended by 13 employees, only 3 of whom went to the interview. Discussed team (assigned to workplace), projects, and strategy to win. Questions submitted to client
		Creating Response Document		no limit of projects to include. Pieces of response document created in break-out groups and stapled together by marketing using a previous response document as a template
		Shortlisting	Not shortlisted due to some concern with partnering consultant	Shortlisted
		Preparing Presentation	N/A	Several run-throughs of presentation
		Interview		Interview and tour of client's space. Researcher not permitted to attend despite client company having already given permission
		Project Win / Loss		Additional step: Tour of completed Holler workplace client's space with interactive presentation. Leave-behind: document with project team matrix that client had requested
		Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	N/A
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	N/A	N/A	
	Conceptual Design			
	Schematic Design			
	Design Development			
	Construction			

Figure 26: Client Engagement Process with Gilbert and Holler and Client Blue

### 7.3.2: Mini-Case 3: Analysis

Though Client Blue was pursued by both Gilbert and Holler, this analysis will primarily focus on Holler since that is the firm this researcher spent the most time with. According to the process laid out in Holler’s internal pursuit booklet, the initial meeting should have been a go / no-go meeting where they had discussed “opportunity background, client history, etc, gauge interest, identify limitations and understand amount of passion” and answer the question “why should we pursue.”<sup>96</sup> Yet the decision to go the project seemed to have been made based on passion for the project. If the decision had been made purely based on a go / no-go questionnaire they may have decided otherwise.

The previous chapter noted that 81% of winning firms met with clients prior to the request document being published yet Holler did not meet with Client Blue beforehand, nor did they “have a relationship with anyone involved in the project from the client’s organization.”<sup>97</sup> In fact the signed NDA made it so that they did not have any way to get information about the client and had to rely on the request document instead. The only one of the nine guaranteed things to win that Holler potentially had was “an advocate (someone who speaks on our behalf at crucial times) on the selection committee prior to the RFP” since the construction company got Holler invited to the pursuit. However, it was unclear how strong Holler’s relationship was with this individual beyond the initial invite.

An analysis of Holler’s decision to go or no-go Client Blue through Gilbert’s questionnaire showed that not only did the client not know Holler and this was the first they’ve heard of the project, but they were “an underdog”<sup>98</sup> since their competitors are strongly favored.

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<sup>96</sup> Quote from Holler Pursuit Booklet.

<sup>97</sup> Quote from Holler Pursuit Booklet.

<sup>98</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/8/16 of meeting with Holler’s marketing, four studio leads, two business developers, a

The business developer being asked about their collaboration with the firm that did Client Blue's architectural programming suggests not only that they might favor this firm but also that the collaboration between the two firms would have been their most ideal selection. Finally, Holler had qualified staff but this staff may not be available for the project if, for example, they win the second task of the project from their biggest client. It seems that Holler spent a lot of billable hours on Client Blue's pursuit when they knew from the beginning that their chances were extremely slim.

Not only did Holler not know Client Blue, as was also true with Clients Green and Yellow, but Holler also did not get a chance to do a pre-proposal meeting with them before the interview. Studies have shown that "perspective-taking presumes that communicators can assess the knowledge of their co-participants with some accuracy" (Krauss and Fussell 1991, 19). Therefore, Holler was at an even greater disadvantage with their first interaction with Client Blue than Gilbert was in interviewing Clients Green or Yellow. As with the last two clients, Holler relied more on their assumptions from past experiences to put together the presentation than knowledge from interactions with the client. Each employee in the initial internal meeting was making an argument for why projects that they personally had worked with in the past would fit well into the relevant experience for this project. Of the 29 total projects mentioned during this meeting, only seven were not mentioned by a Holler employee who worked on the project.

Since the request document did not limit the number of projects to include in the proposal, the group had no reason to debate projects and agree on a select few that were the most similar to Client Blue. Instead, the workplace studio leader who worked the most with the marketing team to put together the proposal and interview presentations was able to strongly

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designer, an electrical engineer, a landscape architect, a civil engineer, the office director, and the director of operations about Client Blue.

influence the included projects. Of the ten projects in the Project Team Matrix from the leave behind the workplace studio leader and the structural engineer worked on the most projects. Of the 31 projects in the Relevant Project Matrix in the proposal all but ten projects have an “innovative workplace vision”, which is the most of all the categories except for “learning & research”. Since both the proposal and the interview were so strongly workplace-based suggests that perhaps the workplace studio leader might not have been a good listener. Studies show that “listeners too often focus on their own goals for a given conversation, instead of hearing what another person is saying. Many people listen as if waiting for an opportunity to make a point” (Dutton 2003b, 56). However, the workplace studio leader also may have just disagreed with other Holler employees who suggested that it might be best to focus on something aside from workplace. The director of operations noted “it’s easy to focus on building type in terms of workplace and research labs but they’re all about healthcare so we can’t lose that” then the team should think twice about giving a tour of a former workplace project after strongly presenting the workplace studio in the proposal, interview, and tour leave behind. In fact, after the tour they agreed that the client was “wanting to look at more examples of lab facilities.”<sup>99</sup>

In addition to the type of projects that were presented, the location of these projects was brought up in the initial internal meeting. The business developer noted that Client Blue had “an international office too, so I think as international as we can make the project experience the better it’s going to be” yet Holler never presented any international projects in the proposal or interview. Of the projects in the Project Team Matrix only two of the twelve are outside the state of Michigan, and those were in Illinois. After the project this was noted as another concern that one of the client’s “big decision leaders” “kept citing us on the lack of international

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<sup>99</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 4/21/16 of meeting with four of Holler’s studio leads, two business developers, a workplace strategist, a designer, an electrical engineer, marketing employee, and an interior designer about Client Blue.

capability.”<sup>100</sup>

Finally, the idea of having an “interactive presentation” might work for a presentation in which the architecture firm does not know what topics the client might be interested in. This might be the case, for example, in an interview in which the firm does not get a lot of guidance on what the client company wants to see, such as with Client Green or even with Client Blue’s interview at Client Blue’s facilities. However, for this particular meeting Holler was already informed of Client Blue’s questions and only had a very limited amount of time. Asking individuals to choose a topic when there are seven clients at the meeting wastes time. The probability that the clients want all of their questions answered is also relatively high so if Holler wants to put together this type of interactive presentation they need to make sure they have time to run through the entire presentation if that’s what’s asked of them. As it was Holler did not get a chance to answer several of the questions the clients asked because they did not have time.

## **7.4: Mini-Case 4**

### **7.4.1: Mini-Case 4: Narrative**

Holler had two studios dedicated to repeat clients with a lot of projects: Client Orange and Client Pink. One of the projects with Client Orange was a pursuit for a technology-related project spearheaded by the IT department. Prior to sending out the request document Client Orange had worked with a building typology company “to develop the program requirements”, one of Holler’s mechanical engineers “wrote parts of the RFP” and Holler’s design director’s

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<sup>100</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 6/7/16 of phone call between Holler’s business developer and Client Blue.

“aesthetic guidelines for the site are in the RFP.”<sup>101</sup> In addition to these design guidelines the request document also included a site plan, blocking diagram, mechanical diagram, conceptual electrical diagram, low entropy diagram, program of requirements, and security guidelines.<sup>102</sup>

When Holler received the request document, they decided “to make a go decision on this primarily because [Client Orange] love what we’ve been doing out there [previous work with the client] and we got feedback on that.”<sup>103</sup> Once the go decision had been determined, the firm spent some time putting together a project team. Holler’s CEO, who had been working with Client Orange longer than anyone else at the firm and knew the most people at Client Orange, had asked the chief operating officer (COO) to serve as the design team executive in charge of the pursuit. The COO was concerned that Client Orange

“didn’t want to see [the same architectural employees as were on other Client Orange projects] get buried on this project cause [Client Orange is] using them as like master architect / engineers watching everything, but we want them there on our chart [in the proposal] because they bring a very powerful advantage to [Holler].”<sup>104</sup>

Therefore, these employees were listed in the proposal as oversight employees. In addition to these individuals the proposal had many others from Holler’s Michigan office included in the project team. Holler also had individuals on the project from an office in the western United States as well as from two construction companies they decided to team with.

Once the team had been put together, the design team executive went with the design project manager and some employees from one of their construction companies to a pre-proposal meeting. This was a rather large pre-proposal meeting attended by a total of five construction

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<sup>101</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/17/16 of Holler marketing meeting. “Building typology companies” refers to companies that focused on constructing and running the particular type of project that Client Orange was requesting.

<sup>102</sup> A copy of the request document was unfortunately not collected, only the attachments that came with the request.

<sup>103</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/17/16 of Holler marketing meeting.

<sup>104</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/17/16 of Holler marketing meeting.

companies, and three building typology specific companies.<sup>105</sup> Holler was the only architecture firm at the meeting. One of the construction companies had a long relationship with Client Orange and had several employees attend the pre-proposal meeting, of which was the individual who ran the meeting. Other employees from this construction company were there to submit a response document for the project. In addition to this pre-proposal meeting, qualifications packages and questions were submitted to the client prior to the proposal due date.<sup>106</sup>

After the pre-proposal meeting the design team executive mentioned several concerns they had with the project. The firms who decided to go the project only had 5 weeks to create a design that met the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) with only a few stakeholder's preferences included. If selected, the architecture firm then had only 13 weeks to incorporate all stakeholder's preferences into the design and readjust it to a new GMP. According to the design team executive, "the number one problem here is that we know too much about [Client Orange], that could actually hurt us."<sup>107</sup> The project lead gave several examples, Holler knew that Client Orange didn't "even know if they have the funding to reward" a contract, they could just hire someone directly. The final concern the executive had was with regards to pricing. The executive explained

"We may now know something that is a hard requirement but the contractor may think it was a target and turn in something that was a lower number [...] so that's a case where we'll be right but we'll be more expensive [...] and all of a sudden we lose. Well, we gave them what they asked for so, I hate these things."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> It is unclear whether any employees attended the pre-proposal meeting from the second construction company that Holler was teaming with.

<sup>106</sup> Without the initial request document, it is difficult to determine whether questions were submitted prior to or after the pre-proposal meeting.

<sup>107</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/17/16 of Holler marketing meeting.

<sup>108</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 3/17/16 of a personal conversation between this researchers and Holler's director of operations.

Despite airing these concerns, Holler continued with the pursuit process. It is unclear whether the pricing and design were due in the proposal or separately to Client Orange but at some point prior to the design due date Holler's western office spent several days doing a design charette for the project.<sup>109</sup> The construction companies also put together a price for the team's design. A few days after the proposals were due, Holler's chief operating officer mentioned that Client Orange had received 10 proposals and that the primary construction company that they had partnered with had submitted two teams, the second one was anonymous.<sup>110</sup> Unfortunately the CCO could not attend the interview so the CEO had to go in their place.

A few days before the interview presentation, the team members from Holler's western office flew in to meet with the primary construction company employees and Holler Michigan team for a few days of interview preparation. At one point the team was going over a list of "what sets us apart". The first was that their rankings over the last five years in the Engineering News Record rankings of top 500 design firms. The CEO commented on the rankings, "If I'm [client orange] I'm asking so what [...] that's not a reason to hire you, so what? So, you've got the most experience, what does that mean to them? What's the benefit?" The second thing that set Holler apart from competitors was the length of time they had worked with their construction company. In response to this the CEO made a similar comment "if I were [competitors] I'd say we have, we have, we're in the same company. There's no gap for us". After some discussion of their history working together the CEO mentioned "I mean they are, they are tougher than hell to get them to agree on anything. They don't want to spend any time helping to make sure we're agreeing on things. I think we should tell them it takes risk out of things. We've been doing this

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<sup>109</sup> In this particular case the term "design charette" refers to an internal meeting with architects and engineers to determine the proposed design for the project.

<sup>110</sup> Though there were several examples of construction companies or others submitting two teams in a pursuit, architecture firms were never observed submitting two teams.



for [##] years. I think there's a story there." The project team spent some time putting together the story they told at the interview and then the business developer asked if they needed to invite someone from the second construction company on the team for the interview to which the CEO responded "they're not going to hire based on who shows."

The third thing that set Holler apart from their competitors was their "In depth knowledge of [Client Orange]". The CEO mentioned that Client Orange had a "lot of idiosyncrasies" and "I probably know most of them well enough that when I tell them they'll chuckle about it."

According to the CEO, Client Orange had a "culture of consensus" and "our knowledge of that, of how to be practical as hell, bring this thing on, at the same time get them through what their concerns are, are realistic and good luck [Competitors] figuring that one out." The construction company and project executive then started to discuss the fourth bullet point, "We understand conservation of capital with low initial cost" but the CEO cut in

"by the way, their senior executives are like me and like most of them, we have no idea what IT is doing, we just don't trust them because they tend to want to get the best of everything in the moment and there's no way to value exactly what this does for the business. They demand a business case for everything, not like we have the latest and greatest, let's get some super-fast deal, it's got to be a business case. So, I think part of our thing should be about your experience about what does make sense for a business case and they're going to look at you, look at us collectively and say are these guys smoking something or are they on a wish list front here or is this going to be substantiated by proof that it's good for a business case."<sup>111</sup>

If they start with the business case the CEO mentioned that they "will resonate with purchasing for sure, IT not quite as much but you already have IT and then [branch of Client Orange], they're always looking for their proof. [Branch of Client Orange] has to back up every

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<sup>111</sup> One of Client Orange's other projects that Holler was working on was the creation of a master plan program, which was defined in an earlier chapter as a program created to determine feasibility of the project. With these master plan programs it is common for the architecture firm to need to determine whether building needs have been justified or are simply "wish list" desires of one individual. With this particular Client Orange project, however, the feasibility of the project had already been established and therefore there were no "wish list items".

decision they make.” The final interview for this project with Client Orange was not attended by the researcher.

		Holler with Client Orange	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	repeat client	
	Need for Change & Business	technology related building to add to campus	
	Functional Programming	Unclear what was involved in functional programming. Client worked with a building typology company “to develop the program requirements”	
	External Consultants	Client company worked with a construction company on many different projects	
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Holler had done previous projects with client and was expecting this project	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	Request document created with help from Holler's mechanical engineer and design director. Included a site plan, blocking diagram, mechanical diagram, conceptual electrical diagram, low entropy diagram, program of requirements, and security guidelines	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	Go determined informally: repeat client
		Tour and/or Meeting	Meeting run by client company's construction company attended by 5 construction companies and 3 building typology specific companies. Holler was the only architecture firm at the meeting.
		Response Strategy	Questions and quals package submitted to client. Holler's Michigan office teamed with 2 construction companies and a western Holler office
		Creating Response Document	design required so western office spent several days doing design charette
		Shortlisting	Shortlisted
		Preparing Presentation	Many run-throughs of presentation
		Interview	Interview not attended by researcher
		Project Win / Loss	Loss
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	N/A	
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	N/A	
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

*Figure 27: Client Engagement Process with Holler and Client Orange*

#### 7.4.2: Mini-Case 4: Analysis

Unlike some of the other mini-cases we have seen thus far, the go / no-go decision on this particular project seemed rather obvious. This is the first project observed in this fieldwork where not only did Holler know the clients well ahead of the request document but they were also involved in assisting the client with the creation of the request document. In analyzing this mini-case the first question was whether or not Holler actually “knew too much” that “could actually hurt us”. To analyze this, let us look at the concerns that the COO and CEO brought up throughout the meeting. Several of the concerns that the COO had were not addressed. Despite the COO’s concerns and the story that the CEO can tell of their experience working with Client Orange, the project was never rewarded to Holler, directly or after the competition. Also, the CEO ended up going to the interview despite the COO’s concerns about Client Orange not wanting “to see [the same architectural employees as were on other Client Orange projects] get buried on this project”.

Rather than focusing on giving the project team insight on the client, Holler’s CEO instead acted as interview coach with comments like “if I were [either the competitor or the client] I’d say / ask” are the types of things that a business developer generally asks to try to prepare the project team for certain types of questions at the interview. That the CEO, who had the most experience with Client Orange, was posing these questions instead of helping the team answer them may suggest that Holler’s CEO does not have as much knowledge about how to interact with Client Orange as the rest of the team believes he does.

Also, in addressing the energy saving issues that they understand, a point that was brought up during the interview preparation meeting, the CEO brought up the concern that senior

executives don't trust IT and Holler would need to address how the project makes "sense for a business case." This concern seems to portray that the CEO does not understand this particular project very well. As referenced in the previous chapter, architectural projects need to be "substantiated by proof that it's good for a business case" prior to creating and sending out a request document. This technology-related project has therefore already had the IT group substantiate it to the senior executives. Architectural firm interviews for a particular request are a time for firms to sell themselves to the client, not a time to present something new that needs a business case to be substantiated. If architectural firms were trying to substantiate a project for a business case they would need to do it earlier in the pursuit process. The project is not in the "wish list" phase, the concerns of several stakeholders have already been incorporated into the request document and the request is asking for a guaranteed maximum price. Finally, Holler does not "already have IT," IT is the primary group in charge of this project and selecting a firm. Therefore, Holler needs to sell themselves to IT.<sup>112</sup>

Once again, as with some of the other mini-cases, the presence of an individual who knew the client more than others on the project team, in this case Holler's CEO, at the very end of the pursuit process could have had a strong impact on the outcome. Though the CEO had not been to all the meetings that Holler's team had about this particular Client Orange project, they did have more interactions with Client Orange than anyone else on Holler's team. This is therefore the CEO's starting point for the meeting, they show empathetic listening, which involves "putting yourself into another person's shoes, intellectually and emotionally" (Dutton 2003a, 38) when it comes to listening to others on the project team and the suggestions they make for the interview. For example, the primary construction company's project director

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<sup>112</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 4/27/16 of five employees from the construction company and Holler's two marketing employees, CEO, electrical engineer, technology director, project manager, and two architects about Client Orange.

mentioned their rankings at the beginning of the meeting and the CEO repeated these later on, the business developer responded by making sure they included these rankings in their interview presentation. However, the CEO often presented information about the client in a way that made it unclear who the source of the information was, whether it was the CEO or Client Orange. An example of this is the statement “they’re not going to hire based on who shows.” Presumably this is the CEO’s opinion and not something that Client Orange said but it could be interpreted as exactly the opposite, in which case bringing the second construction company really isn’t something that should be considered. Since the team is not told the source of any of this information the team is left to judge for themselves. Their tendency is to accept the information the CEO provides without question since they are aware of the amount of time the CEO has spent with the client. Studies on silence have also shown that employees “were more silent when they saw their supervisors as having a high status in the organization” (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008, 59) such as in this case with the CEO.

## **7.5: Mini-Case 5**

### **7.5.1: Mini-Case 5: Narrative**

Client Purple was a furniture supplier hiring an architecture firm to design a new building “from the ground up” on a piece of land they had already purchased because they had “outgrown” their current space “and perhaps it doesn’t reflect our future brand.”<sup>113</sup> They hired

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<sup>113</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 7/28/16 of a meeting with four Client Purple employees, and two employees from Raynor: an architect, and an interior designer.

an owner's representative, a "personal friend" who "helped them lease their showroom space", who created the request document for them. The request document was sent out with photos of their existing facility, adjacency diagramming that they had done, "inspiration images for the exterior," along with a copy of a site plan. There were four firms invited to submit responses: Raynor, a firm about the same size as Gilbert, and two much smaller firms including one that was owned by Holler's workplace studio leader. As a furniture supplier, the interior designers at Raynor and several other firms had worked with Client Purple on several architectural projects in the past. The Director of Interior Design was therefore the individual at Raynor who had the most interaction with Client Purple. The Director believed that of their competitors one of the smallest firms was "our biggest competition probably" but also mentioned that "I think there's a high probability that we [win the project] because I know all of them and they've been telling me about it for two years."

The first internal meeting on the project was held between the Director of Interior Design, an interior designer and a designer to explain some brief details about the project and get the designers to start thinking about what design they would submit in the response document. In the meeting the designer asked about the hot button issues for the project and the director responded "I think how we're going to work with the city, cause [Client Purple's VP of sales] has mentioned in multiple conversations with me it's like we've gotta get this and that done by the city, that by the city, the city, the city, and then it's a design competition, and who do we want to work with." The budget for the project was brought up briefly in the first meeting and the second internal meeting, between the same individuals, a marketing employee, and a partner of the firm, began with the designer voicing this concern "I'm very afraid, I don't think we can do all this for [\$\$]" with some help from the partner they found a way to create within the budget by the end of this second meeting though the partner did comment

“I’m just saying this building type is hard for us to do. Not type but size and quality that we want to do. [...] any fee that’s below [\$\$\$] is hard for us to do because we don’t make money, we’ll still work on it for 1.5 years, we’ll do renderings and we’ll change design and we’ll get excited by it and it’ll all be good but it will be, when we have a big project that needs our man power this is one that will be draining 2-3 people that could be working on something that would be financially a better place for them to be”

Yet they decided to go the project anyways because it’s for Client Purple, it will be good to show off to Client Purple’s clients and it will be fun and creative. The designer also mentioned “it’s a new type of building, it’s totally not in our portfolio” both because of the type of building that would fit the client’s budget and because Client Purple was planning to use a unique product throughout the building that had never been used in that particular way.<sup>114</sup>

Though the request document did not mention a meeting prior to the final interview, the director of interior design reached out to schedule one. The designer and interior designer went to this meeting and brought a model of the design they were going to submit with their response document. At the very beginning of the meeting, the designer asked about the product that Client Purple would be showcasing throughout their building “because I couldn’t find a lot of information about it.” Later on, Raynor’s designer mentioned the sketches they had brought of their design for Client Purple’s project, “if you’re open to it, if we can get some quick feedback” to which the client responded “we’re very open to it”. The client then presented the product before they worked on the design that Raynor had come up with.

Unfortunately, the director of interior design was unable to attend the final project interview so Raynor’s president went instead. At the beginning of the meeting Raynor spent some time with some of the clients waiting for others to return from lunch. During this time

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<sup>114</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 7/22/16 of meeting with Raynor’s principal, director of interior design, interior designer, and architect about Client Purple.



Raynor's president turned the director's absence into a joke about having a life-sized cutout of the director in the room as they presented. The clients chimed in their appreciation about the joke and the firm's designer continued the conversation by mentioning a photo that one of the clients had posted recently on social media. This got the client talking about their son and the situation of the photo.

When the owner's representative came back with the rest of the client's team from lunch, the representative introduced themselves since they hadn't been at previous meetings. They then turned the meeting over to Raynor to give their presentation. During the presentation several of Raynor's slides were turned counter clockwise and they had to rotate them back.

After about fifteen minutes, Raynor completed the presentation of their design and the clients began to ask a handful of questions about code, maintenance, and materials. Ten minutes later Raynor asked for more questions and after no one responded the owner's representative said "I think we all like what you've done. It's very thoughtful and thorough. We really appreciate it, it's really great work." Raynor's president then said "I'll tell you this, this is a fairly simple. It looks complicated but this is a very simple building. Simple in structure, simple in lines" and one of the clients responded "It should be, with what we're gonna showcase and put on the inside we want to."

The owner's representative then asked a few more questions including one about the budget "on your budget did you guys, you guys included the restroom core so, can we pull up the floor plan, do you mind? So, I'm assuming you guys have all the perimeter walls finished with dry wall and I'm assuming you guys figured this all hard wall?" to which the designer responded that these walls would be part of Client Purple's unique product, "that was something we had learned in the last meeting that we had". Later on, one of the clients asked about next steps and Raynor's president made a few comments about the best projects: "most successful projects

include constructor at the table early on” and then mentioned a particular construction company, “Thank God you have someone who is repping who can distill the information flow, which is good. Many times, we’ll sit across from people who want to do a building without this guy in the room. That’s a recipe for disaster.” The president also said

“To have a project with friends of our own, those are the good ones. When we’re sitting across the table from total strangers that just found us on the internet, we’re pitching to them and we don’t even know anything about them or what their, you know, philosophy is or whatever. It’s nice to work with people we know.”

The meeting ended with one of the clients commenting “We just have to again, commend you on your effort and professionalism and, you know, you went above and beyond and I think we’re all impressed and grateful.” Conversation then turned to a text the Director of Interior Design had sent about how the meeting went and seeing a person with a boat being pulled over by a police car outside. One of the clients had a brief discussion with Raynor’s president about the construction company that had been mentioned earlier. As the owner’s representative stepped out of the room, one of the clients commented that the representative would “keep us on point” to which other clients commented “He kept asking questions and I’m like yes!” and “he was really relaxed, happy”. The Raynor employees returned to their firm only to learn a few days later that they had won the project and started on programming.

		Raynor with Client Purple	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	client Raynor had worked with many times as a supplier	
	Need for Change & Business Case	furniture supplier hiring an architecture firm to design a new building “from the ground up”	
	Functional Programming	adjacency diagramming completed, inspirational images collected, building to be constructed by specific material that client had worked with many times in the past	
	External Consultants	Site purchased; Owner's Representative hired	
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Raynor had worked with client in the past and was expecting this project	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	Created by owner's representative. Competitors: 2 small firms under 10 employees and 1 firm larger than Holler	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	Go determined informally despite budget concerns: client had interacted with Raynor many times before, creative project, opportunities for exposure
		Tour and/or Meeting	meeting requested by Raynor, opportunity to show client design prior to interview
		Response Strategy	Very minimal internal conversations, no formal meetings
		Creating Response Document	design required so architect spent time working on this
		Shortlisting	N/A
		Preparing Presentation	No run-throughs of presentation were observed
		Interview	Very brief interview, lots of compliments, Raynor president attended instead of Director of Interior Design
			N/A
Project Win / Loss		Win	
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	Not observed by this researcher	
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	Several meetings conducted before program determined	
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

*Figure 28: Client Engagement Process with Raynor and Client Purple*

### 7.5.2: Mini-Case 5: Analysis

This researcher has chosen to analyze this mini-case a little differently than some of the others in this chapter. Mini-cases one through three were all new clients that Gilbert and Holler had never interacted with prior to the client engagement process. Mini-cases four and five are both clients in which one employee from the architecture firms, Holler and Raynor respectively, has had many interactions with the client prior to the client engagement process. A comparison of mini-cases four and five gives more detailed insight into how to enable positive connections with project teams where the teams were able to take advantage of that connection to different degrees depending on the intra-team connections.

As with Client Orange, Client Purple was an easy “go” decision who had worked with the client as a supplier for many years and knew about their project of constructing a facility from scratch for two years prior to the request document. Unlike Client Orange, however, the Director of Interior Design was very clear in making statements about what information they had gathered from which source. Holler’s CEO made third person statements about Client Orange like “they are tougher than hell to get them to agree on anything” along with statements like “they have a culture of consensus” and “they’re not going to hire based on who shows.”<sup>115</sup> Many of these were statements of beliefs rather than things the CEO had been told directly by someone from Client Orange. The Director’s statements about the client were much more specific. For example, the director noted that one hot button issue “I think how we’re going to work with the city, cause [Client Purple’s VP of sales] has mentioned in multiple conversations with me.” The director also requested a meeting between Client Purple and the rest of Raynor’s project team.

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<sup>115</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 4/27/16 of five employees from the construction company and Holler’s two marketing employees, CEO, electrical engineer, technology director, project manager, and two architects about Client Orange.

This not only allowed the client to meet the project team face-to-face but it also allowed for some extremely valuable time for the team to review their design with the client prior to the interview. This meeting began with Raynor's designer admitting their ignorance about the client's product and then ended with an hour of especially valuable time since the architecture firm was being selected based on their design. Holler did attend the pre-proposal meeting but this was a large formal meeting and it is unclear if any Client Orange employees attended. Holler might have been able to request a more informal meeting between their project team and Client Orange but this was not requested.

For both Client Orange and Client Purple, the participating architecture firms had rather last-minute handoffs to members of the team that had not yet been included in the project. With Client Orange, Holler handed the project from the COO to the CEO with the assumption that the CEO could prepare the project team just as well as the COO partially because the CEO had interacted with Client Orange frequently. With Client Purple, Raynor handed the project from the Director of Interior Design to Raynor's president because the Director had more interactions with Client Purple than anyone else. Also, the rest of the project team had already met with Client Purple and discussed the design previously. The team, therefore, did not need to rely on the knowledge given in one meeting with the Director of Design. Instead they relied on the knowledge directly from their own experience with the client. It also was not Raynor's president's first-time meeting with Client Purple. This handoff therefore had less of an impact on the firm's interview. The client knew the president was just sitting in for the Director and would not be on their project team, and the team knew they had more information about Client Purple's project than Raynor's president.

There are several things that occurred in this interview that made it unique. None of the interviews for these mini-cases were sandwiched by casual conversation except this one. In most

of the pre-proposal meetings and interviews the researcher attended, the conversation before the meeting was formal and kept to a minimum if the two groups spoke to each other. Studies have shown that “humor gets people in a good mood, which then primes them to be more helpful or conciliatory” (Cooper and Sosik 2011). It is possible that the life-sized cut-out of the Director of Interior Design was not mentioned at the beginning of the interview as a joke. However, regardless the motivation for this comment, the response that Raynor’s president received was laughter. It was also followed by the designer asking one of the clients about a photo of their child on social media. The discussion of the client’s child added to the laughter over the cut-out in putting the client in a good mood. Sharing positive emotions, like these and the ones around the boat at the end of the meeting, has been shown to build “personal resources essential for cooperation” (Cooper and Sosik 2011, 476).

The interview between Raynor and Client Purple was the shortest observed for this fieldwork. It was also the one with the most compliments from the client to the architecture firm. In one study that contrasted two organizational cases, “one distinguished by an active and deliberate policy of building interpersonal trust and another in which trust was not an object of conscious organizational choice and Human Resource Management (HRM) policies”, one organization promoted paying compliments and found that “as a positive relational signal, a compliment helps build interpersonal trust.” Public compliments were especially potent “when paid by an experienced and respected colleague to a newcomer in the presence of other colleagues who had not yet worked with the newcomer. This helped to build the trust of others in the newcomer and the self-confidence of the newcomer at the same time” (Six and Sorge 2008, 872). These findings could lead to the hypothesis that the public compliment that the clients gave to Raynor helped build both the firm’s trust and self-confidence. These compliments combined with Raynor’s president’s comment about the benefit of working with friends show

that the clients and architects have mutual positive regard for each other. Trust and mutual positive regard are two of the markers of high-quality connections, such connections have been shown to “enhance the capacity to cooperate within and across units” (Dutton 2003a, 13).

It is also noteworthy that this casual conversation and compliments were despite the flaws that Raynor had with their slides being turned haphazardly. In a more formal interview, a technological glitch like this would present a barrier to conversation that might be difficult to get over and might be something that the client remembered and attributed to, say the firm’s organizational skills, making the firm less attractable as a hiring option. It seems that technological glitches are not as important when the two groups have high-quality connections.

The last thing that had not been observed in a prior interview was that Raynor had knowledge about the project that the owner’s representative did not yet have, since the representative was not present at their pre-proposal meeting. Raynor’s president acknowledged the owner’s representative and complimented Client Purple for having a representative with the president’s comment that “many times we’ll sit across from people who want to do a building without this guy in the room. That’s a recipe for disaster.” This was the only individual Raynor’s president had not met before and the compliment helped bridge the gap and tie the owner’s representative in to the more informal conversation.

Finally, Raynor started the pre-proposal meeting by acknowledging that they did not know about the product allowed Raynor to “start with the realization that we don’t know all that we need to know” (Dutton 2003a, 38) and express genuine interest during the meeting in the valuable, “relevant, rare and non-substitutable” information that the client shared. In other words, they were able to spend this time developing high-quality connections with the client.

## 7.6: Mini-Case 6

### 7.6.1: Mini-Case 6: Narrative

Client Red was a small public museum that had invited five architecture firms including Raynor to pursue a project to renovate and expand their current space.<sup>116</sup> The project began prior to the start date for fieldwork with Raynor. However, the relationship the project's principal-in-charge had with Client Red's executive director was mentioned several times throughout the meetings observed for the project. At one point, others on the team joked that this Client Red employee was Raynor's "plant" since they would hire Raynor above all other firms. Raynor was pursuing this particular project with MEP, structural, and civil engineering firms, a construction company, and a cost estimating company. They were also working with an exhibit company as their primary consultant since the request document stated "If your firm does not include in-house exhibit design capabilities, your submission should propose a partner firm or firms that would be engaged to do initial exhibit design work." There was no mention of a tour or meeting in the request document, but at an early meeting one of the exhibit employees mentioned going to a pre-proposal meeting with another exhibit employee and the principal-in-charge where they "got to spend about 2 hours with the guy in charge of exhibit curation and the guy in charge of all the asset collection."<sup>117</sup>

Just a few days after fieldwork with Raynor began, the principal-in-charge came to tell marketing that they had been shortlisted and were invited for an interview. The original list of

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<sup>116</sup> These 5 firms remained anonymous to Raynor throughout the pursuit.

<sup>117</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 8/1/16 of meeting with two exhibit company employees, and Raynor's business developer, two architects, and marketing employee about Client Red.



five firms had been narrowed down to three. Raynor and one of the other architecture firms were working with the same MEP engineering firm.<sup>118</sup> Raynor was told that Client Red was “blown away by the proposal” and that the architectural team had “great credentials” and had proposed a creative design that was “impressive” but there was one exception

“One serious concern that the committee had, that they need us to address [...] was [the exhibit company], didn’t think they had enough museum experience. They knew them from trade shows but that’s it so I think [the exhibit company]’s gotta to spend a big chunk of our presentation showing that museum experience” - Principal-in-charge  
“Do they have it?” - marketing employee  
“They do.” - Principal-in-charge

Several days after Raynor heard about being shortlisted there was a joint meeting between Raynor and the exhibit consultant, who had been informed of the client’s concern. The exhibit company’s vice president of business development began the meeting by mentioning they were

“Hoping to get a little more insight into what that means, do they mean they’re concerned about our ability to develop a strategy and content for a museum, to build museum exhibits, to understand what the specific needs of those types of clients are or is it the ongoing service, is it all 3 things just so we can really focus”  
“It’s probably, you know like, museum experience, like overall, I would think” - One of Raynor’s designers  
“Yea, you don’t do museums” - Raynor’s marketing employee  
“We provided them with so many examples of combined work that we did together that they didn’t notice that [consulting company] is part of it as well” - exhibit company vice president of business development  
“It’s probably I didn’t make it clear enough to everyone on our teaming effort on the project so, um, but we can make that very clear to them in the presentation that hey, you know, we have \this relationship, yea, it’s combined so” - Raynor’s marketing employee

In addition to addressing the client’s concern this meeting was spent discussing what the

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<sup>118</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 8/8/16 of meeting with five exhibit company employees, and Raynor’s architect, business developer, and marketing employee about Client Red.

interview and interview presentation would look like so they could start putting it together. Towards the beginning of the meeting one of Raynor's designers made a comparison to the marketing employee's vision of the presentation, "so it's kind of like that one PDF that we looked at in the very beginning, remember, like the [Client Pink project] kind of example, start with that again." The designer continued to refer to this Client Pink project that Raynor won with the same exhibit company and then exhibit company's chief creative officer (CCO) began referring to the same project. Raynor and the exhibit company were told by the client after their win on this particular Client Pink project that

"it wasn't handled like every other architectural firm, it was handled as a creative solution that was ultimately totally intertwined and I don't know why that recipe would be, want to be any different even if they're not asking for it, right. I don't know if they know what they're asking for" - CCO

"it sounded like before when we sent out the RFP they wanted it a little more separate" - Raynor's designer

"there's no guarantees that we're both going to end up [...] a team" - marketing employee  
"right and I, and I actually, I actually think it's a bad strategy. They, they might be saying keep them separate because in all in all, like, in a very remedial mindset they might be like yea, there's exhibits and there's architecture and I think where we stood tall and where we stood really strong in [Client Pink] was that we said no, no, no, no, no, why would this be two separate things, this is one overall experience, right?" - CCO

Raynor employees agree with only one potential caveat: the principal-in-charge, who is not at this particular meeting "may have a different opinion".

Once this meeting ended, the exhibit company left the room and Raynor employees discussed the meeting. The marketing employee once again mentioned "Be mindful of them not taking over the whole process. We're still the lead on this. It's a different format than [Client Pink] [...] it sucks cause we like working with [the exhibit company] but we have to show our leadership and how we stand on our own and our own processes." At the next meeting between Raynor and the exhibit company, the client's concern was brought up again by the principal-in-

charge who did not attend the previous meeting. This time the exhibit company mentioned three ways to address the concern: “In our business section there are some examples of our work that we’re accidentally left off of”, “There’s some additional permanent installation work that we’re thinking about highlighting”, and they can bring up “Investment that [exhibit company] has been making over the last few years of auditing world class museums”. After the meeting the marketing employee remarked informally in frustration to a business developer “they don’t think about the client, they only think about themselves [...] they do not give a shit what the client wants, they don’t give a shit”.

The time for the interview finally came and in their presentation the exhibit company referred to themselves several times as “experience makers”. Their list of previous clients includes several pavilions, a brick and mortar experience, a flagship store and an aquarium exhibit. During the interview presentation Raynor and the exhibit company answered an equal number of questions but after the presentation the exhibit company answered eighty eight percent of the questions and Raynor only answered nineteen percent of the questions.<sup>119</sup> One of the questions after the presentation highlighted the same client concern one last time,

“Can you speak to your experience doing other types of settings that are museum-like like that? I have to say a lot of my concerns I’m familiar with [exhibit company], I’ve worked with you before. I know you do lots and lots of tradeshow but I don’t see as many museums, so talk about how you would address that.”

The exhibit company spoke about the company’s history and ended with “I don’t think we can say oh, we’ve done this museum, we did this museum, we did this museum.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> These percentages are calculated based on the fact that all questions could be answered by both Raynor and the exhibit company.

<sup>120</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 8/16/16 of Client Red’s interview.

		Raynor with Client Red	
Start-Up	Strategic Planning & Positioning	Raynor had previous relationship with one of clients	
	Need for Change &	small museum to renovate and expand current space	
	Functional Programming	Enough initial programming conducted to give architecture firms instructions on design to create	
	External Consultants	N/A	
Project Pursuit	Lead Finding	Raynor had previous relationship with one of clients	
	Creating Request Document and Inviting Firms	Likely created by museum. Included addendum #2 (Visioning and Future Direction) and #3 (Expansion and Renovation Requirements). 5 total competing firms	
	Pursuit	Go / No-Go	Go determined informally based on relationship Raynor had with client
		Tour and/or Meeting	Meeting led by guy in charge of exhibit curation and guy in charge of asset collection attended by Raynor's principal-in-charge and employee from exhibit company prior to this researcher's start at Raynor
		Response Strategy	Raynor created project team with exhibit company as primary consultant and secondary consultants with MEP, structural, and civil engineering firms, a construction company, and a cost estimating company
		Creating Response Document	Not observed by researcher; Design required
		Shortlisting	Shortlisted along with 2 other competitors, with one provision: client company did not know exhibit company Raynor had teamed with
		Preparing Presentation	Few run-throughs of presentation
		Interview	Attended by Raynor and all consultants. Questions after presentation primarily asked to and answered by exhibit company
			N/A
Project Win / Loss		Loss	
Initiation	Negotiations, Fees,	N/A	
Service Delivery	Architectural Programming	N/A	
	Conceptual Design		
	Schematic Design		
	Design Development		
	Construction		

*Figure 29: Client Engagement Process with Raynor and Client Red*

### 7.6.2: Mini-Case 6: Analysis

This mini-case is different from the others because it's the only mini-case where the architecture firm is partnering with a consultant company with such a large role in the client's project. Raynor's decision to "go" this project seemed to have been validated by the client's response to their proposal that the architectural team had "great credentials" and had proposed a creative design that was "impressive". The concern the client raised about the exhibit company was big. From the very beginning Raynor's marketing employee questioned the exhibit company's museum experience, and was justified in doing so. The principal-in-charge, on the other hand, believed the exhibit company had the experience and was not at the first meeting to redirect the team when it became apparent that the principal-in-charge was incorrect and the exhibit company did not have museum experience. The meeting began with the exhibit company mentioning the plan and the marketing employee repeating, this time stating in a matter of fact way, "you don't have museum experience." In this statement, "a communicative demand for the affirmation or denial of a proposition is placed upon a respondent." The respondent, in this case the exhibit company, "has the information that would enable him to satisfy the demand." In other words, the exhibit company knows whether or not they have the museum experience. In this case they don't, but if they tell the truth then they risk the architecture firm selecting a different exhibit company partner in pursuing this project, which they don't want to do. This is an example of the respondent perceiving "that affirming the proposition demanded-telling the literal truth-would be costly to him." If the exhibit company lied to Raynor and the client company then they risk potential lawsuits, corporate scandal, and/or a loss of networking ties. These risks of lying are also "costly to him" (Bowers, Elliott, and Desmond 1977, 238).

This set of circumstances that Bowers, Elliott and Desmond are describing, circumstances for devious messages, end with “the respondent perceives that it would be to his advantage for the demander to believe the false proposition” (Bowers, Elliott, and Desmond 1977, 238). The exhibit company can not complete this set of circumstances. Beginning the meeting with this accusation was not supportive communication, or

“expressing yourself in a way that allows the other person to hear you. It means being careful to express views and opinions in ways that minimize defensiveness on the part of others and maximizes their clarity about where you stand and how they can constructively respond” (Dutton 2003a, 40).

Instead, the accusation put the exhibit company immediately on the defensive.

The exhibit company’s initial defensive reaction was a self-protective response: the client must not have noticed that they did many of the projects together. This allowed the vice president of business development to “take less personal responsibility” and attribute “outcomes to external factors” (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003, 1371). It was also a typical example of defensive voice in which individuals are “expressing ideas that shift attention elsewhere based on fear” (Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003, 1363). The marketing employee admitted that they didn’t make the joint experience clear enough and the VP of business development stuck to this same self-protective response as a diversion until the Client Pink project was mentioned several times.

At this point the exhibit company’s only position was that of distortion, or “manipulation of the true information through exaggeration, minimization, and equivocation, such that a listener would not know all relevant aspects of the truth or would logically misinterpret the information provided” (McCornack 1992, 2). The CCO recounted the success of their joint pursuit of Client Pink with the comment that “I don’t know why that recipe would be, want to be any different even if they’re not asking for it, right. I don’t know if they know what they’re asking for.” The outcome the exhibit company and Raynor experienced with Client Pink was

successful therefore it must always be successful. If the client asked for anything different they were coming from a place of ignorance, the CCO continued, “I can’t believe for a second they want not integrated people.” The idea that the exhibit company and the architecture firm should be kept separate is, as the CCO explained “a bad strategy” coming from a “remedial mindset.” This manipulates the true information such that the listener doesn’t know all aspects of the truth: no one in the room knows the client well and many clients often don’t know a lot about the design process.

When the CCO was finished with this explanation of why they should take a different position, Raynor employees responded with silence. It is difficult to figure out how to perceive this silence until the Architect responds, “no, I agree.” This signals that the distortion worked. It is unclear how the other architectural employees perceive the distortion until they too respond verbally, the second Architect’s verbal response is a little more questionable. This employee initially defers to the Principal in Charge, who has no voice because they didn’t attend the meeting, before also agreeing. Marketer remains silent and the combination of silence and agreement allows the CCO to reframe the group’s preconceptions to a new understanding of how they should respond to the client’s concerns.

After the meeting the marketing employee warned the other project team members to “be mindful of them not taking over the whole process. We’re still the lead on this. It’s a different format than [Client Pink].” At the next meeting the principal-in-charge asked the exhibit company about the client’s concerns once again and was satisfied with their answer. Without a better response to the client’s concerns, the project team continued on with their approach similar to Client Pink, the marketing employee’s warning was ignored and they left the meeting even more frustrated than after the first meeting. This frustration was shared privately with another Raynor employee. Studies have shown that relationships in which individuals can express

frustration have more emotional carrying capacity than ones that don't. Emotional carrying capacity

“describes a relationship's capacity level for carrying both positive and negative emotions. Higher quality relationships have a greater emotional carrying capacity, suggesting they can handle the processing of more varied emotional information between two people” (Carmeli and Gittell 2009, 83).

In this case the private frustration shows that the marketing employee has a higher quality relationship with Raynor's business developer than with the exhibit consulting company. It also shows the marketing employee's “fear of harmful reactions” (Carmeli and Gittell 2009, 85) if they do express frustration around the exhibit company.

The exhibit company is forced to admit the truth at the interview, they can't list museums they've done. Not only has Raynor not been able to address the primary concern Client Red expressed about the exhibit company after they were shortlisted, but they also gave Client Red an interview presentation that tied them even closer to this exhibit company that Client Red expressed concerns about, decreasing their chances of being hired.

## **7.7: Conclusions**

The previous chapter mentioned the ways in which the organizational culture of each firm manifested in the roles that individuals played throughout the client engagement process. Gilbert had a more individualized small group culture, Raynor had a more top-heavy hierarchy, and Holler's formal culture was reinstalled with a large number of individuals occupying given roles. This chapter showed how organizational culture enabled architects to create positive connections with their clients and how organizational culture is manifested in motivations, assumptions, and individual roles throughout the client engagement process. Some of these



assumptions are created through the history, socialization, and culture of the overall profession as it relates to client engagement, which were outlined in chapters two and three. For example, the assumption that clients and architects speak the same language, think the same way, have the same desires, or have the same expertise as we saw with Gilbert and Client Yellow. In this chapter there was one other assumption that architects hold as a profession at large. In Client Green's project Gilbert's employees voiced that contractors are only interested in "executing a set of shop drawings"<sup>121</sup> and therefore not interested in creativity. To create positive connections while engaging with clients, architects should not only think about the social categories that individuals belong to and tailor conversations to the individual, but also acknowledge the social categories that they belong to in conversing with others. If these assumptions are not acknowledged, there may be greater difficulty with taking the perspective of others and establishing positive connections, which may lead to clients having less desirability to collaborate with the architects on the project at hand.

This chapter also brought up other assumptions about the client engagement process. Many of these assumptions were specific to the organizational culture of each firm. For example, Raynor's president mentioned several assumptions in conversation with Client Purple: contractors are good owner's representatives, without owner's representatives' projects end in a disaster, and projects are better with friends. These reflect Raynor's values of keeping a casual atmosphere with specific individuals in charge to keep everything running smoothly. Whereas one of Gilbert's assumptions, potentially with both Client Green and Yellow were that small firms can, or possibly should, be ignored as competitors.

Some of the assumptions could be found with aspects of the client engagement process

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<sup>121</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/9/15 of meeting between Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, project manager, landscape architect, marketing employee, and electrical engineer about Client Green.

that were left out in practice. None of the mini-cases in this chapter had, as Holler's documents noted, a meeting dedicated to determining the go / no-go decision, nor did they review the go / no-go questionnaire.<sup>122</sup> Instead the first meeting that each of the firms had in these mini-cases was the kick-off meeting for creating the response document. The go / no-go decision was often made very quickly. Even though the percentage of winning firms that met clients prior to the request documents going out was so high, at 81%, firms often pursued clients they had never met. When pursuing entirely new clients, architects needed to rely on their assumptions more than their mutual knowledge of the clients, and it was more difficult to take the perspective of their clients than if they had known them from before the request document going out. One possible reason for this go / no-go process to be much shorter than the documentation suggested is that it might have been based on different motivations than the architects had in pursuing the client.

Gilbert pursued the fewest repeat clients of all of the case studies, and therefore both of the mini-cases for this firm were with new clients. It is possible that this was a reflection of their recently experienced potential bankruptcy and may have therefore lost several of their repeat clients. However, Gilbert's motivation for pursuing clients did not seem to be necessarily in profits or monetary gain. As noted in the previous chapter, they did several things for clients and others in the building industry for free and seemed particularly interested in pursuing clients who were passionate about their new space in a creative way that interested Gilbert's architects. They were not the only firm to pursue clients who they did not know. Holler pursued the most repeat clients of all of the firms during this research. Holler was willing to pursue a project like Client Blue's that had a well-known name and large budget, even though they knew they were

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<sup>122</sup> It is possible that the questionnaire was reviewed privately for each of these but it was not referred to verbally at any point in time.

the underdog and taking a financial risk. In all three of these mini-case examples, it is possible that Gilbert and Holler realized the extent to which these networking connections would assist them in future projects or possibly the size of these firms allows them to take more risks. Simply going after particular projects, even if chances of winning are slim, might be a good way to introduce a firm and their interest to a client. If the relationship is maintained despite the project loss, next time that client puts out a request document the firm would likely be invited to submit and have better chance of winning. Architects may have realized that these other motivations for pursuit were not reflected in the go / no-go questionnaires and assumed they did not need to conduct them, or there are several other assumptions that may have been made about the go / no-go process.

Some of the assumptions clients held were discovered in issues that were brought up repeatedly in internal meetings but never in client interviews. One of the go / no-go questions notes “who are the competitors” but does not expand further. This leaves many dangling questions. Should architecture firms pursue projects where competitors are more or less like them? Raynor and Holler’s mini-cases were all against competitors similar to them whereas Gilbert’s competitors for these two mini-cases were very different from them. If architecture firms should ideally be pursuing projects where competitors are more similar, then when Gilbert learned that both Holler and Raynor had dropped out of pursuit with Client Green should this have impacted their desire to continue pursuing the project? Or should they, as the business developer noted afterwards, have said something about how different they were from their competitors? Marketing literature, even that presented in architecture journals, often notes that “firms must set themselves apart” (J. F. Kolleeny and Linn 2001). Yet architecture firms did not note the differences between them and their competitors in front of clients. Gilbert’s workplace principal answered that this wasn’t something they should do. It is, however, something that the

architecture firms often discussed during internal meetings.

Another thing that was often discussed in internal meetings was what projects should be included in the interview presentation and why. In situations like Client Blue's where the number of projects was not limited, the reasons for including certain projects over others in proposals and interview presentations was discussed less but it was still a topic of discussion. But this was never mentioned in interviews. Architecture firms instead presented projects without giving a reason as to why they thought they were similar, which led Client Blue to ask why they were presented together. This question was not always asked by clients but it would seem to be information that would always be useful to them. In the case of Client Yellow one of the projects that Gilbert presented was for Client Pink, one of Client Yellow's customers.<sup>123</sup> With a little research this information could have been included in Gilbert's presentation to the client, in showing that they were paying attention to Client Yellow enough to know who their customers were could have emphasized Gilbert's interest in working with Client Yellow.

Aside from the ways architects' assumptions affected the client engagement process, there were many examples throughout this chapter of how individuals' roles affected the process. Unlike Holler's CEO's comment that "they're not going to hire based on who shows,"<sup>124</sup> one of Gilbert's employees noted that "We get criticized when we don't bring certain engineers to certain projects for various [reasons]."<sup>125</sup> Also the project team that came to the interviews did seem to have an impact on the architecture firm's ability to take the perspective of their clients

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<sup>123</sup> At the interview one of the clients gestured to another client during the interview, the researcher noted this gesture and later looked to see if there was any connection between the client and the project that was being presented by Gilbert and found that it was their customer's project that Gilbert was presenting. Without this research this connection between Client Yellow and the project presented would not have been clear.

<sup>124</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 4/27/16 of five employees from the construction company and Holler's two marketing employees, CEO, electrical engineer, technology director, project manager, and two architects about Client Orange.

<sup>125</sup> Quote from audio recording taken on 12/3/15 of Gilbert's design director, workplace principal, workplace marketing employee, and landscape architect about Client Green.

both with Client Orange and with other clients. If there was only one individual in the group that had the most interactions with the client prior to the project pursuit, that individual's absence in early meetings could make the group rely on more assumptions than direct knowledge of the client and therefore make it difficult for them to take the perspective of the client or tailor the presentation to the client, as we saw with Client Red. The Client Orange project presented in this chapter was also fairly similar, with the CEO being the individual with the most interactions. The inclusion or exclusion of a single individual or role seems to have a large impact on the group's ability to take the perspective of the client, as discussed in chapter 5 and 6. Some architectural employees occupy roles that will only ever be invited to the pursuit right before the interview and often this was determined by the organizational culture of a specific firm.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusions**

This dissertation seeks to develop an understanding of client engagement through the lens of culture. It studies culture of professional practice at large and in particular at three specific Michigan-based architecture firms: Gilbert, Holler and Raynor and arrived at a model for the client engagement process. This model begins with strategic planning and positioning for architecture firms. While the process for a client company begins with the idea for architectural change, which determines the business case for responding to this idea and whether or not it is feasible. The client company conducts functional programming, which is included in a written request document to select architecture firms. Architects respond to this request document through the project pursuit process, and attempt to create positive connections and take the perspective of their clients. These positive connections may help the architecture firm get hired or start a relationship with the client in which they will be hired on a future project. Positive connections may also lead to some other outcome depending on the motivations of the architecture firm. When this client engagement process does lead to the firm being hired by the client, the two begin the phase of service delivery with architectural programming. This process is affected by the organizational culture of each individual firm's motivations, assumptions, beliefs, and the roles its employees play throughout this process. These cultural artifacts are, in turn, affected by the historical context, socialization, and culture of the profession at large. For architects in practice, it is important to understand this background and cultural elements to create a more "successful" client engagement process, in whatever capacity success may be determined for their individual firms.

This dissertation addresses four research sub-questions. First, how is organizational culture of these firms manifested in their visible artifacts and organizational structure? This question was answered in Chapter Five by analyzing the organizational structure of each firm in terms of their studio structure, meeting types, and formal as well as informal hierarchy of individual roles including the role of gender. Some of these structures could be seen in the firm's visible artifacts such as their organizational charts, and floorplans. The chapter also looked at other visible artifacts of each firm in terms of their office locations, technologies, manner of dress. As architecture firms, the clients and building types each firm served as well as services they provided also led to visible artifacts in terms of architectural drawings and structures. These visible artifacts and organizational structures portrayed some of the underlying basic assumptions of the three firms. Raynor had a single corporate culture that valued inclusion and individuality through an informal environment. Holler was a small unit within a larger corporate culture that valued privacy and status through a formal environment. Gilbert was also a small group of people within a large corporate culture that valued independence and longevity through a largely informal environment. The documents collected by each firm were also visible artifacts but these were analyzed further with research sub-questions 2 and 3.

The second subquestion is, how is organizational culture manifested in motivations, assumptions, and individual roles throughout the client engagement process? This research sub-question was answered in Chapters 6 and 7. The documents analyzed in Chapter 6 showed that firms motivations were tangible things, such as money. Analyzing these alongside ethnographic observations of the firms showed that firms were actually motivated by positive connections. In addition to the firms' motivations, they were also impacted by the roles that individuals played at the firm. Incorporating or leaving out certain roles in the client engagement process impacts the number of handoffs that client experiences, with knowledge about the client typically lost with

each handoff. It also impacts the positive connections employees at the firm have developed as a team pursuing the same project with the same knowledge developed about the client and how to approach the client. Assumptions are also abundant throughout the process, both about the client and what is assumed of this individual as well as others in the potential project team such as external consultants.

The third subquestion is what cultural factors affect the firms through the different stages of the client engagement process? This question was answered in Chapter Six with a detailed description of each of the different stages of the technical process. There were several cultural factors that affected each of these different stages. Some of these were factors could be seen in the history of architecture, presented in Chapter Two, such as discrete marketing, and a focus on architectural programming as the only form of programming. Other cultural factors included the firms motivations, assumptions and roles that were addressed with the second research question.

Finally, the fourth and final subquestion is how can organizational culture enable architects to create positive connections with their clients? This question was answered in Chapter Seven. Gilbert's recent near-bankruptcy forced them to interact with many new clients, such as Clients Green and Yellow. Based partially on the interactions between Gilbert and these clients, Chapter Seven concluded that architects need to think about the social categories that individuals belong to and tailor conversations to them. The firm's small studio structure meant that employees in each of these small studios had developed strong positive connections with one another. However, these employees had not developed strong connections with individuals in other studios, such as the project manager.

Holler's formal culture and value on high status made it more challenging to create positive connections with other employees at the firm. With Client Orange, the high status of the CEO and the large number of times this individual had interacted with the client in the past gave



this individual an authoritative voice over others in the project team. Rather than sharing knowledge with others in the team, this individual kept that knowledge hidden as a bargaining factor to make up for not knowing much about the project. High status also affected Client Blue. Holler's client engagement process began with a meeting of high status individuals who largely would not be playing any other role in the process, and then quickly divided into break out groups leaving one individual to make many decisions about the presentation and response document. In the case of Client Blue this was left to the workplace studio leader. It was entirely up to this individual what projects were presented, what completed project the client viewed, and how information was shared (in an interactive presentation).

Raynor's informal united corporate culture made it easier for them to create positive connections with other employees at the firm. When, as with Client Purple, one employee knew the clients better than other employees, that employee was motivated to share their understanding of the client in as much detail as possible to their colleagues through details in conversation as well as ensuring the other employees could interact personally with the clients in a pre-proposal meeting. This tactic only fell through when the employee with the most interactions with the client did not have time to meet with their colleagues and provide them with details on the client.

Research sub-questions 2 and 3 will be addressed further in this concluding chapter showing the implications of these firms' cultural factors, motivations, assumptions and beliefs in two primary themes. The first theme is the client engagement process. What is the relationship between the client engagement process and the design process? How might the client engagement process be altered? What are the motivations of key roles during the client engagement process? And how does client engagement affect the different programs created during the process? The second theme is that of the role of architects. How has their role changed over time? How do the beliefs around the role of architects affect the ways in which

architects market themselves? These two themes are examined alongside literature from several design studies researchers and conclude with questions with implications for future research.

Each of these questions posed is about a culture, which serves

“the secondary function of stabilizing much of the internal and external environment for the group, and since that stability is sought as a defense against the anxiety which comes with uncertainty and confusion, these deeper parts of the culture either do not change or change only very slowly” (Schein 1984, 10).

The chapter concludes with a brief synthesis of contributions and limitations of the dissertation.

## **8.1: Client Engagement Process**

The definition of design as “whenever someone makes plans about the future environment” (Cuff 1991, 61) has several implications for this dissertation and potential future research. First, it suggests that anything the client does in the start-up phase, when they are not yet interacting with the architect, is design. One of the things that the client does in the start-up phase is interact with external consultants, be they a real estate developer, external programming consultant, owner’s representative, etc. If the client is interacting with these individuals to make plans about the future environment or designing, are these external consultants also designing? More research would need to be done to answer this question.

Second, it suggests that whatever the architect does from the start-up phase through construction is design. On the surface this seems obvious, no matter whether Cuff’s definition of design is used or a more traditional definition that sees design as something that produces a visual document of some sort, be it a drawing, model, floorplan, etc. This dissertation showed several examples in Chapter Seven with Clients Orange, Purple, and Red of architects needing to design early on and submit these designs in their response documents to the client. Request

documents that ask for designs often contain a “proposal property rights” section acknowledging in some way that all proposals submitted are “property of the client” and the client “shall own all ideas, documents and materials developed or prepared in response to this [request document].”<sup>126</sup> This clause acknowledges the ways in which architects impact the client’s plans of the future environment, regardless of whether that architect is hired. This leads this researcher to wonder why the stages of the client engagement process have thus far never been included in the design process.

Historically the two processes were one and the same. In competitions like that for the Philadelphia Library Company, clients put advertisements in the newspapers that included specifics about the design they wanted to see and “architects” were paid for the designs they submitted in response. The architect never created an interview presentation, and the documents created throughout the client engagement process were aggregated into one document. It was up to the master mechanic to construct the building from this one document. Even though the first stages to be historically added to the architect’s process were these early stages of pre-response meetings and interviews, it seems that at some point these steps along with architectural marketing were cut out of the design process and the process considered complete. It was long debated whether architectural programming should be included in the design process and anything prior was largely ignored.

One potential reason for the separation of what this dissertation calls client engagement process from the design process is that architects have long since tried to stay away from business. Throughout history, as Chapter Two showed with Ware’s two versions of the architectural curriculum, architecture has been seen as both an art and something more, possibly

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<sup>126</sup> Quote from Holler request document.

a conglomeration of art, science and business. Those who view architecture as an art have looked down upon those who view it as a business. Is it possible to create a good piece of art while also meeting client's demands and budget? Is it possible to run a large architecture firm that lasts for over a century, as both Gilbert and Holler have, and still produce architecture that is worthy of being considered an art? Some of these questions have been answered in depth by individuals like Aaron Cayer. This dissertation only briefly touched upon this topic, showing that while these large architecture firms appear on the surface to be motivated entirely by profits, they are also motivated by creativity, inspiration, passion, and positive connections. Future studies could be conducted to tie this dissertation to that of Cayer or others who have written about communities of practice.

What impact does this separation between art and business have on the client engagement process? It is possible that despite the design that is done early on, architects associated the start-up, project pursuit, and initiation stages with business and profit rather than art and therefore wished to separate themselves. It is also possible that the service delivery stage has been called the "design process" for methodological reasons. Those writing about the design process could largely be what anthropologists would call insiders rather than outsiders. As insiders they may, like Holler's employees who are not in the leadership committee, not be exposed to these early stages and simply have chosen to write about the stages they were personally exposed to. They may also have believed that they were excluded from these stages because they are stages of business rather than design. These questions will need to be explored in future studies.

This belief that architecture is an art, not a business also seemed to have implications for the individual steps of the client engagement process. The step of strategic planning and positioning was only observed formally at Holler. Gilbert had some conversations around this stage but the workplace associate principal pointed out how each individual at the firm seemed to

have a different understanding of how to sell the firm, which seemed to imply a lack of marketing plan, which would have been created in the strategic planning step. These steps were not observed at Raynor. It is possible that these firms did not spend much time in strategic planning and positioning because this was seen as a step associated more with business rather than art and therefore rather unnecessary. Despite the fact that the go / no-go step was the only step that all three firms had formal documents and questionnaires for, these documents were never used in practice because they were created in such a way as to favor profit and business over creativity and art.

Architects often assume that clients are only motivated by profit. This dissertation showed that while this may be true in formal documents, in practice clients are also motivated by positive connections with architects. Architects can create these positive connections with clients through interacting during the positioning stage, requesting face-to-face pre-response meetings or tours, tailoring interview presentations, and perspective-taking during interviews. Enabling positive connections to take place within the architecture firm, through open floorplans, decreased hierarchy both formally in organizational charts and informally in how people relate to others in the workplace, and interacting with employees in fun informal ways can also impact the firm's ability to create positive connections with clients. Gilbert's design director's corrosive connection with Gilbert's project manager may have negatively impacted their interviews with Clients Green and Yellow, for example.

Other assumptions that architects held also impacted the client engagement process. Some of these assumptions were regarding specific roles of external consultants. Raynor's president expressed gratitude that Client Purple had an owner's representative involved as early as the during the interview. On the other hand, Gilbert's design director was not convinced that having civil engineers involved in interviews was helpful. As Gilbert's structural engineer

pointed out, sometimes clients wanted to see these individuals and sometimes they did not. Other assumptions held by architects were carried over from what they had been taught in school. One such assumption was outlined by the AIA Task Force was that “Creative energy only comes from the pressure of deadlines” (Koch et al. 2002). In school this assumption can be seen in students pushed to meet stringent deadlines and always working up until the last possible moment. In practice architects work on response documents and interview presentations right up until the last moment.

In addition to the ways in which the client engagement process is impacted by the assumptions that architects and clients hold, this dissertation is also impacted by the assumptions that this researcher holds. The primary assumption that has been made thus far about the client engagement process is that it is unique to architects. However, this may in fact not be true. It may be that each external consultant the client hires goes through the same stages of the project pursuit phase as the architect from the go / no-go step through to the project win / loss. Or these stages could be applicable to other types of service industries. Customer engagement as defined by marketing researchers in the introduction to this dissertation seems to imply that this was a context-specific process but from an ethnography of three Michigan architecture firms it is rather unclear the types of individuals or industries that this specific process could be applied to. It is clear, however, that these stages, as those in the design process, “may be taken in a different order or at the same time” (Peña and Parshall 2012, 27). The clients in Chapter Seven, for example, all skipped the go / no-go phase entirely. It may be that in addition to the organizational culture of the firms affecting the client engagement process, that it is also impacted by the culture of the client company and this is why there are some minor differences. For example, Clients Yellow and Blue both added a step after the interview but these were not the same additional step. Client Yellow used this time to request references from the architecture

firms, while Client Blue requested a tour of a previously completed project by each of the firms that had been interviewed. These are just a few of the assumptions that this researcher has that may have impacted how they view the client engagement process.

## **8.2: Motivations in terms of Programming**

The motivation of each individual role also affects the different types of programs created in the client engagement process. The facility manager is motivated by the desire to fulfill their roles in front of top management so as to keep their job. Their program document is likely to highlight the desires of top management. Facility management researcher, Kathy Roper reiterates this:

“Typically interviewed are the CEO, chairman of the board, all senior vice presidents, the budget director, and the vice presidents of affected units. Their comments must be treated individually, no matter who gathers them. If those interviewed express concerns or state strong positions, the issues must be addressed (not necessarily validated) and the results conveyed to the individuals. When you ask questions of this group, you also must deal with the answers. Gathering requirements from operating staff depends on two basic issues. If standards are in place, less programming needs to be done. Normally, interviewing every employee is unnecessary. In large companies a 10 percent sample, assuming that you get a representative cross section of staff, is more than adequate” (Roper, Cotts, and Payant 2014, 218).

As was seen with Gilbert’s one workplace client who hired a special programmer, the special programmer is paid to create the most thorough program document possible. They are more likely to create a program document that involves interviewing everyone at the company rather than a 10 percent sample. The architect is paid to create a building, which involves working with the facility manager and top management. Therefore, their program document is likely to reflect the desires of these individuals, just like the facility manager’s program document. This would

suggest that the special programmer would be more likely to create a program document that reflects the needs of all of its occupants than the facility manager or architect. However, it would also suggest that an architect or facility manager would likely redo any program document created by the special programmer. Some functional programming is always necessary to obtain an understanding of the overall scope of work the architectural project entails. Similarly, it is the hypothesis of this researcher that some architectural programming is always necessary so that the architect can gain an understanding of the overall scope of work. Regardless of whether or not a special programmer or architect was hired for earlier stages of the design process, some work needs to be done so the new individual can gain a new understanding. A larger study is necessary to determine if this hypothesis is accurate. Future work on special programming would also need to be conducted to determine whether these distinctions in motivations are accurate, whether or not they impact the frequency with which special programmers are hired, and determine the impact these distinct program documents have on the users of the buildings.

The master plan program is often created by an outsider, like an architect. This program helps to determine the feasibility of a project and “many times the program alone may be the final document if it demonstrates that the project is not feasible” (Kumlin 1995, 26). Since the architect is motivated by the desire to design, it would suggest that a master plan proving that the project is not feasible would not be in the interest of the architect. How does the architect’s motivation to design affect their ability to determine the feasibility of the project? Are master plan programs created by architects more likely to be deemed feasible than master plan programs created by others (such as facility managers)? A larger study, with access to the relevant materials, is needed to answer these questions.



### 8.3: Role of Architects and Marketing

In addition to the different types of programs, Kumlin presented several critiques of the client engagement process. The first was a complaint against the AIA and others in the building industry who over time “chipped away at the role of the architect” (Kumlin 1995, 4). Kumlin’s complaint about the AIA was launched at a study that was published about programming in 1969, which said “The fact that different people use the term architectural programming to mean different concepts is, of course, confusing. However, as long as client and architect alike realize the problem, they can take care to be sure they are talking about the same subject” (Evans, Wheeler, and American Institute of Architects. 1969, 10). This, according to Kumlin,

“Has actually forced most architects to offer programming services at no cost to the client. [...] This may have been the first unwitting example of the AIA’s instructions to architects to retreat from the leadership position of all aspects of the construction process to the present day position of just one of the participants - rather than discovering a new and needed service and telling architects to do it, the discovery results in the denial of the service” (Kumlin 1995, 4).

There are several issues with this argument. In 1969 programming was not a “new” service, it was initially conducted by clients as it continues to be to this day. Programming was also not “discovered” by the AIA, architecture firms like CRS and Rossetti were already conducting programming when this study was published. If architects want to be compensated for conducting programming they need to be able to distinguish their programming from the programming already conducted by the client. Otherwise the client may believe they are being asked to pay for something they already completed, or being asked to pay for something that is not as valuable as what they already did.

Additionally, the role of the architect was not “chipped away at” but rather added to throughout history. In the first American architectural competition architects were paid only for

their designs which were then given to “master mechanics” to construct (Landau 1989, 54). The client engagement process was just a one-time request formed by the client followed by a one-time response from the architect. Over time this client engagement process expanded.

Architects adopted the role of the “master mechanic” and the responsibility of constructing the building. Clients began to interview architects before hiring them, and architects slowly accepted advertising, which grew to marketing and business development. Architects also adopted the client’s role of creating the program document, and the term “programming” along with it. All of these changes, outlined in Chapter Two, culminated in the detailed client engagement process that was in Chapter Six.

Despite the historical inaccuracies that the role of architects was chipped away at, the sentiment still holds and has been reworded by other design studies researchers. In the words of Thomas Fisher, others in the building industry have “taken a lot of turf that the profession [of architects] might have staked out for itself” (Fisher 2000, 99). This loss of turf has “produced a lot of bad buildings, but it has resulted in architects adding less value and so commanding lower fees and less respect” (Fisher 2000, 93).<sup>127</sup>

Earlier in the text, Fisher notes that the value of architecture lies with the public that has an “unwillingness or inability to put a value on a building user’s happiness, a community’s aesthetic pleasure, or the accommodation of future generations” (Fisher 2000, 31). If architects believed that value lies with the public they might not bother with marketing, or “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association n.d.). Most architecture firms do, as has been seen throughout this dissertation,

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<sup>127</sup> The reason that architects command lower fees is steeped in the history of professional practice and outside the scope of this research, since the focus of this dissertation was not on finances.

participate in marketing. They seem to take what Weld Coxe would call a “strong idea, practice-centered business approach” in which “marketing is generally unplanned, relies almost entirely on reputation developed via books and/or articles, professional society awards, entry in premier design competitions, frequent speeches and often a faculty appointment. Marketing staff, if any, responds only to inquiries” (Coxe et al. 1986, 57). This approach is noted by several design studies researchers. In 1947, Clinton Cowgill noted that “clients will come” to the firm once it has built a reputation (Cowgill and Small 1947, 8). Dana Cuff mentioned that one of the architecture firms she observed said “we don’t go out searching for work - it just walks in the door (Cuff 1991, 105). Even fictional character Howard Roark claimed “I don’t propose to force or be forced. Those who want me will come to me” (Rand 1993, 26).<sup>128</sup>

Architects using a “strong idea, practice-centered business approach” to marketing pursue clients. With pursuit, it is the client’s responsibility to determine when they have a need for change that could result in the hiring of an architect, to create the vision or program for this space in a request document, and to tell architects what they want to hear from an interview presentation. Architects could instead take one of Coxe Weld’s other approaches to marketing. They could engage with clients throughout the client engagement process. Some architects, like the associate workplace principal at Gilbert do take this approach. Gilbert’s associate workplace principal was involved in helping a company engage with a real estate developer to find a new space to move into, helping a second company determine the feasibility of a project prior to hiring a general contractor and starting design, and in a third example helping a real estate developer find a client for their building. However, all of these examples were frowned upon by

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<sup>128</sup> When the researcher interviewed Chicago-based architect Stanley Tigerman as part of the Professional Practice course in fall of 2012, he explained proudly and defiantly that “We don’t go out and hustle clients.” Instead, “what you really want is clients to come to you based on your reputation.”

other employees at Gilbert who complained that the associate principal shouldn't be doing these things because they were work for which the firm would not be compensated. It was likely also frowned upon because this approach to marketing went against the cultural practices of the architectural industry as well as Gilbert's individual architecture firm. Might this cultural practice to use the "strong idea, practice-centered business approach" above all others be backed by the belief that the value of architecture lies with the public rather than the architecture firms? If so, what could be done to encourage them to try other marketing approaches? Are there other firms who rely more strongly on one of Weld Coxe's five other approaches to marketing? How do they interact with this potential underlying cultural belief? What are the beliefs that architects hold about the value of the field? A more comprehensive study of marketing practice at more firms is needed to answer these questions.

#### **8.4: Overall Research Limitations**

Because the primary contributions of this research were a matter of breadth, the limitations of this research are a matter of depth. More could be written on the architectural history of programming, as well as the implications that service marketing and customer engagement have for the field of architecture. In depth studies could be conducted on functional programming, and perspective-taking in architecture, or any number of other positive organizational scholarship topics in architecture.

There are also a wide variety of methodological limitations to this research. There was a temporal limitation due to the relatively short amount of time that was spent with each firm that led to the researcher's focus on the client engagement process rather than the design process in general. Over this rather short period of time there was only one workplace client who employed

a special programmer, and the number of project wins was extremely limited. The research that was conducted could have used videography rather than audio recordings. Videotaping, as was noted in Chapter Four, enables one to collect more data. An examination of body language in videotaping might allow for a better understanding of the ways in which architects engage with clients. Research also could have been conducted by embedding in client companies, real estate companies, or others in the building industry. This research could have revealed more about the client's steps in the client engagement process.

Different methodological tactics could have enabled the researcher to observe smaller architecture firms and perform a more in-depth view of the organizational culture of the case studies that were observed. As organizational studies researcher Edgar Schein comments "If we are to decipher a given organization's culture, we must use a complex interview, observation, and joint-inquiry approach in which selected members of the group work with the outsider to uncover the unconscious assumptions that are hypothesized to be the essence of the culture" (Schein 1984, 14).

Additional case studies might allow for this researcher to establish more general conclusions. It is likely that firms like Holler may present more challenges than those like Gilbert or Raynor in creating positive connections with their clients. Researchers in the field of positive organizational scholarship have noted that "High-quality connections thrive in contexts of mutuality. Thus another indicator that an organization is well suited for building high quality connections is limited layers and hierarchy" (Dutton 2003a, 147). This may be the case if a firm has a simple organizational chart, like Raynor's, rather than a complex one, like Holler's, or in a firm with fewer studios. The design layout of the firm also affects the employees ability to create high-quality connections: "if people are separated not only by physical partitions and space but by symbolic displays - uniforms, office size and location, type and quality of furniture

- that communicate messages of distinctions in status and power, it may become more challenging to build connections between people” (Dutton 2003a, 160). Holler had many more physical partitions, a much larger office, and many more locations than either Gilbert or Raynor.

The data collected could have been analyzed using quantitative methods that could have allowed for a greater use of the approximately one thousand hours of audio recordings that were collected, rather than the focus on only two of the clients at each of the three architecture firms.

### **8.5: Contributions of This Research**

This dissertation research uses the organizational culture from three case studies as a lens through which to view the client engagement process. This research makes several contributions. First, it ties together research from fields of literature that are not traditionally combined. These fields include organizational studies, anthropology, customer engagement, service marketing, facility management, positive organizational scholarship, design studies, and architectural history. Other studies tend to focus on only one of these fields. Native architectural researchers focus on the process as seen from their view, beginning with architectural programming, “studying down” as a single architect. They do not tend to “study up” and focus on the process of the entire architecture firm, beginning with marketing and business development and moving on to architectural programming. They also do not tend to take the perspective of a client with regards to this process and see the client’s steps. The combinations of organizational and design studies literatures have prompted a discussion around the implications of created roles in theory. These are just a few examples of how this dissertation combines literature of disparate fields.

Contributions of this research have also been made to several of these individual fields.

There are implications for positive organizational scholarship in connecting the research that has been done in this field to clients and perspective-taking in groups rather than between two individuals. This research expands customer engagement literature by beginning with the first idea of the customer rather than once the customer is hired. Design studies literature is altered by incorporating literature on architectural programming with research on project pursuits. Finally, practically, contributions have been made to architects in suggesting approaches architects could be taking in engaging with clients and getting hired through creating positive connections.

As a study that focuses on breadth of many fields, rather than depth, it is possible that few of the ideas presented in this study may be new but all are original in that they arose from this study. Similar to those reading Tally's Corner, the book by anthropologist Elliott Liebow, "someone will find merit in one or another of the ideas [...] and test them systematically for their validity and range of applicability" (Liebow 1967, 17).

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Holler.docx**

Who I am:

My name is Darby Morris and I am a third year PhD student at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Design Studies. I received my master's degree in social sciences from the University of Chicago and my bachelor's degree from Denison University. Though my background is primarily in anthropology, I took classes in architecture at NC State University and spent time observing Tigerman McCurry architects for my masters' thesis.

What I want to do:

My research looks at relationships between architects and their clients from the time the client first interacts with the architect through the programming phase of the design process. My research question is: What are the enablers and barriers of architect to client relationships during the early stages of design? I am defining these terms as follows. An enabler is anything that helps create relationships between the architect and client. A barrier is anything that harms this relationship. In order to identify these enablers and barriers, it is important for me to observe both successful and failed relationships. In other words, both relationships in which the client agrees to work with Holler throughout the entire project, and relationships in which the client decides for whatever reason to not work with Holler.

To complete my thesis, I plan to conduct ethnographic research with several architecture firms. This field research will entail working with Holler for a minimum of three months to shadow employees involved in these stages of the client relationship. I am also interested in utilizing my training as an anthropologist to interview employees about their interactions with clients. If possible I would like to maintain my status as an outsider in order to allow for me to interact and interview the clients as well.

What is the benefit to you:

As a PhD student I am an employee of the University of Michigan and there is no need to pay me for my research.

Beyond this initial benefit, any other benefit will need to be determined by Holler. It is my personal desire that this project not just benefit me but benefit Holler, and future architects. During our meeting today Holler's CEO and I discussed the four surveys that Holler is currently working with in order to determine customer satisfaction throughout the design process. These include the debriefing, kickoff, interim and post project surveys / interviews. One potential benefit that I could bring to Holler would be a more in depth understanding of customer



satisfaction during these early stages, especially during the debriefing and kickoff time frames.

## Appendix B: Letter from Holler to Client Company.docx

Client Name,

Holler has been speaking with a PhD student about being a part of her research and would like your permission to have her join us. To tell you a bit about her J. Darby Morris is a PhD student at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. She is conducting a study that focuses on how architects interact with their clients during the early stages of the design process. As such we believe Client Company to be the perfect project for her to follow.

Her research is conducted primarily through observation and therefore she will not be a participant of the design project in any way. From February 1<sup>st</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup> she will be shadowing our firm full time. She has chosen to align herself with the firm in order to observe the overall business culture and communications of architects and compare this with interactions with clients. As an integral part of shadowing the firm she will be sitting in on any and all meetings of this specific project. In addition to observing meetings, she would like to have access to the various forms of communication that we use in the management of the project. This would include proposals, contracts, agendas, schedules, meeting minutes, emails, and other project communications. She will also be conducting surveys throughout the design process and in-depth interviews with several employees of our architecture firm after the early stages of design have been completed.

As a student at the University, she is compensated through grants and fellowships associated with the University and not through our firm. All data obtained from participants and observations will be kept confidential and anonymous. No participant names, images, project names, or names of specific companies will be used in her research. She has signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement with Holler and is happy to also sign one with your company if you so desire. Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and anonymous. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely. Holler is one of three firms she will be observing over a total of nine months, with three months dedicated to each firm. Her overall study will thus be a comparative one of how each of these firms interacts with their clients. We are very pleased to support this kind of research. We expect that insights from her work will be of significant benefit to our firm, the profession and to architects' clients in general. We also expect that Holler and Client Company will benefit from the observation and the research in the further development of the project and its implementation.

If you have any questions regarding Darby's study, you may contact her at (919) 943-3777 or [jendarby@umich.edu](mailto:jendarby@umich.edu). Otherwise, we would be pleased to provide you with any additional information you might like. We hope that Client Company will see the potential benefit of this kind of research and agree to have Darby on to observe the design project with you.

Thank you very much,

## Appendix C: Letter from Gilbert Workplace Studio Principal to Associate Workplace Principal

[Gilbert associate workplace principal],

This is yet a bit rough, but as we approach [Client Company] for their participation in Darby's project, we should have a shared understanding of how she will work, and offer something written to [Client] for him to socialize with his executives and gain their approval to open their project to this study.

Let's chat about this as a draft for that purpose. Since we are beginning the programming of the project soon and are engaged in project planning discussion with [Client] now, and since Darby will begin with us next Monday, it would be important to get [Client Company's] concurrence by the end of this week.

[Gilbert CEO], Darby – Please offer your own comments on this draft, also.

[Gilbert workplace studio principal]

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[Client],

A PhD student in the anthropology program at the University of Michigan, J. Darby Morris, is studying the communications and interactions between architects and their clients.<sup>1</sup> She has asked us if she could spend some time in our office and in our projects to observe how we work. We were very pleased with her interest in our firm and our work, and we have agreed to have her sit with us in our office for the next three months.

A principal objective of hers is to observe the interactions between us and our clients in the early days of a project. We thought that our project with [Client] would be perfect in this regard. We, of course, will need [Client's] concurrence.

This is how we would characterize her work:

- She will sit in our offices full time for the next 3 months. She will not do work on any projects and she is not being compensated by us. She will merely observe the flow and characteristics of communications in our office.

- She would like to be part of any and all meetings on the project. She will be an observer, in the background, and not a participant. She would sit in our internal meetings and any meetings, conference calls, or workshops with you and your team.

<sup>1</sup> Since the researcher had mentioned her background as an anthropologist, the workplace studio principal initially believed she was in the anthropology department. This was clarified in the response email.

- In addition to sitting in on meetings, she would like to have access to the various forms of communication that we use in the management of the project. This would include proposals, contracts, agendas, schedules, meeting minutes, emails, and other project communications.

- She may from time to time observe the interactions on other projects, as well.

- We will have a Non-Disclosure Agreement with her protecting the confidentiality of our practice and our clients' information.

We are very pleased to support this kind of research, which is very rare in our profession. We expect that insights from her work will be of significant benefit to the profession and to

architects' clients, in general. We also expect that [Gilbert] and [Client] will benefit from the observation and the research in the further development of the project and its implementation. We will be pleased to provide you any additional information you'd like, and hope that [Client] will see the potential benefit of this kind of research and agree to Darby's participation in our project with you.

- [Gilbert workplace studio principal]

## **Appendix D: Architecture Firm Confidentiality Agreement**

I, Jennifer Morris, acknowledge that as a result of my relationship with architecture firm, I will have access to and will gain (i) knowledge of certain plans, processes, designs, developments, techniques, procedures, specifications, financial information such as costing and pricing data, business strategies, and practices and ideas developed or utilized by architecture firm in the practice of its authorized professions and in the management and operation of its business affairs and (ii) information concerning the identity of past, current and prospective clients and prospects of architecture firm and their needs, plans and preferences with respect to services offered or provided by architecture firm, all of which knowledge and information is essential to the future of architecture firm and accordingly, deemed to be competitively sensitive information constituting trade secrets and confidential information of architecture firm.

Architecture firm understands that the information collected while at architecture firm will be used to aid in original research conclusions for a University dissertation. I agree to make available to architecture firm progress and presentation materials as requested and disclose the manner in which architecture firm will be portrayed in such dissertation.

Therefore, in consideration of my relationship with architecture firm and in further consideration of the position of trust and responsibility assumed, I agree that I will not, except as required in the conduct of architecture firm's business or as authorized by one of architecture firm's Officers in writing, disclose to others, use for my benefit or the benefits of any third party, or otherwise appropriate, copy, reproduce or make notes on any trade secrets, confidential information or any other knowledge or information, except for information which is or has become public knowledge by means other than violation of this agreement. Information which has been shared with one or more clients, contractors, consultants, suppliers or other persons in the course of architecture firm's business and in furtherance of such business or the interests of one or more clients shall not by that reason alone be deemed to have become public knowledge.

I further agree to comply with any and all procedures that architecture firm may adopt from time to time to preserve the confidentiality of tangible items relating to the above-specified materials such as, but not limited to, drawings, memos or manuals. The absence of any legend indicating its confidential nature on any item relating to the specified material will not give rise to any inference whatsoever that the information contained therein or derived therefrom is not a trade secret and/or confidential.

Upon termination of my relationship with architecture firm for whatever reason and irrespective of whether the termination is voluntary, I will (i) deliver to architecture firm all records, data, memoranda, models, manuals, notes, USB drives and any other materials of any nature that are in their possession or control and that relate to confidential matters, to the extent it was the property of architecture firm prior to this relationship, and (ii) retain in the strictest confidence the trade secrets and confidential information until such information has been made generally available to persons engaged in a professional practice or business similar to any conducted by or contemplated by architecture firm other than by breach of this agreement. Because any actual or threatened breach of this Agreement would cause irreparable harm to architecture firm for which the payment of monetary damages would be an insufficient remedy, I further agree that architecture firm is entitled to both a temporary restraining order and a preliminary and permanent injunction from any court of competent jurisdiction to halt any such actual or threatened breach. To the extent allowed by law, I waive any requirement of prior notice or hearing before issuance of a restraining order or preliminary injunction prohibiting or halting any violation of this Agreement, and I agree to pay all reasonable costs and attorney fees incurred by architecture firm to compel my compliance with this Agreement and to obtain relief from a court of competent jurisdiction to halt a breach of this Agreement to the extent such fees are collectible.

## Appendix E: Holler NDA

### NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement ("Agreement") is made and enter to by and between J. Darby Morris ("Morris"), whose address is \_\_\_\_\_, and Holler whose address is [...]. The Agreement shall become effective immediately upon its execution by both parties hereto.

The intent of this Agreement is to facilitate the disclosure of certain information by Holler to Morris to enable Morris to advance and continue certain academic studies regarding various aspects of communications between architects and their clients. Such academic studies are being undertaken in connection with Morris's pursuit of an advanced academic degree at the University of Michigan School of Architecture, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Holler has agreed to assist Morris in this academic endeavor by allowing Morris access to various verbal and written communications involving Holler and its clients on various design and construction projects in which Holler is involved.

The following defines and sets forth the agreed terms and conditions governing the confidentiality of material, information and data which may be furnished by Holler to Morris or of which Morris may otherwise obtain knowledge through communications with Holler. In consideration for Holler allowing Morris access to certain confidential information regarding Holler's business affairs, Morris agrees to abide by the terms and conditions set forth herein.

**Confidential Information:** Insofar as it is difficult to separate confidential information from that which is not, all information made available by Holler to Morris in connection any investigation or study which Morris may undertake in communicating with Holler for the purpose described herein, which information may be provided either verbally or in writing (including electronic information), shall be deemed to be Confidential Information. Such Confidential Information shall include, but not necessarily limited to, any and all financial, legal, technical, commercial or other information concerning the business or operations of Holler or that of any client of Holler, along with any information which in any way involves or relates to any past or current Holler architectural and/or engineering project in which Holler has provided or is providing any professional services to its clients.

**Non-Disclosure:** In consideration for Holler furnishing Confidential Information to Morris, for the purpose described herein, Morris agrees that all such Confidential Information shall remain confidential and the content of any such Confidential Information shall not be disclosed to any third person or entity without the advance written approval of Holler. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Holler acknowledges and agrees that Morris may prepare and disclose summaries, compilations and aggregations of information, based on the content of such Confidential Information without the advance approval of Holler, provided that any such summaries, compilations or aggregations do not disclose in any way the identity of any Holler client or project or information which is directly and identifiably attributable to any Holler client. Morris shall make use of the Confidential Information solely for the purpose described herein. Morris shall not use any such Confidential Information for personal profit or any pecuniary gain, but solely for the purpose of completing certain academic studies, as described above.

Exclusions: Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Agreement, the parties acknowledge that Confidential Information, as defined herein, shall not include any information which:

- (a) is or becomes publicly known due to release of such information by Holler or any client owning such information; or
- (b) is already known to Morris prior to disclosure by Holler or any Holler client; or
- (c) is disclosed to Morris by a third party having a legal right to do so; or
- (d) is expressly approved for release or disclosure by written authorization of Holler or any Holler client owning such information.

Ownership: All Confidential Information, unless otherwise specified in writing, shall remain the property of Holler and/or the Holler consultant or client owning such information and shall be used by Morris only for the purpose described herein.

Effective Period: All terms and provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect through the completion of Morris's academic studies, as described herein, and for a period of three (3) years thereafter.

Governing Law: This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan. Morris acknowledges that any breach of this Agreement, including the wrongful or unauthorized disclosure of Confidential Information, could cause irreparable damage to Holler and/or its clients. Accordingly, Morris further acknowledges that Holler may be entitled to equitable relief, which may include injunctive relief, afforded by a court of competent jurisdiction, in the event of any breach of this Agreement or wrongful or unauthorized disclosure of Confidential Information.

Entire Agreement: This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to its subject matter, and all prior agreements, negotiations and discussions are deemed to be merged herein. This Agreement may be modified only by further written agreement, executed by each of the parties hereto. The parties hereby accept and confirm all terms and conditions set forth in this Agreement. This Agreement has been executed by the parties the day and year first above written.

Holler, architecture firm

Darby Morris, an individual

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix F: Designated Office Space Occupancy Agreement (Holler)

THIS AGREEMENT is made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, by and between Holler, a Michigan corporation (“Holler”) and Darby Morris (“Morris”), an individual.

WHEREAS, Morris desires to conduct research on architectural firms (“Research”) and Holler is willing to allow Morris to conduct said research on its Premises, and allow Morris to occupy Holler’s Designated Office Space (as defined below) and to have access to Designated Office Equipment (as defined below) in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

WHEREAS, Morris agrees to occupy the Designated Office Space and to accept access to Designated Office Equipment provided by Holler in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, the parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

1. OCCUPANCY OF DESIGNATED OFFICE SPACE. Holler agrees to allow Morris to occupy and Morris agrees to occupy designated office space on Holler’s premises in accordance with the terms of this Agreement (“Designated Office Space”). The location and area of the Designated Office Space shall be established by Holler and is solely within Holler’s discretion. During the term of this Agreement, Holler may, in its sole and absolute discretion, designate to Morris different office space. All use of the Designated Office Equipment and network systems by Morris shall be for research purposes only and shall be in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. During the term of this Agreement, Holler may, in its sole and absolute discretion, designate to Morris such other or different Office Equipment as it may determine. Morris may not remove any of the Designated Office Equipment from Holler’s premises.
2. REMOVAL OF MORRIS. Holler may, at any time, demand the removal of Morris from the Designated Office Space and/or Holler’s premises.
3. [HOLLER’S] RIGHT TO REGULATE USE OF ITS PHONE AND MAIL SYSTEMS. The following protocol shall define the appropriate and permissible parameters for use of Holler’s phone and mail systems (“Systems”) for Research. The term “electronic communication systems” refers to all electronic mail (“e-mail”), voice mail, computer, server, fax, and internet systems. The term “non-electronic communication systems” refers to all U.S. mail, private carrier letters and parcels, and written inter-office communications.
  - a. Use of Systems. Morris agrees to use these Systems only in a manner consistent with accepted standards of business conduct and that access to the internet shall be made only from authorized connection points, as established by Holler in its sole discretion.
  - b. Holler Right to Access/No Right to Privacy. Because the electronic and non-electronic communications systems (“Systems”) are to be used only for business purposes specifically related to Holler’s projects, Holler expressly reserves the right to access, review, replay, copy, disclose, delete, and/or dispose of all messages that are sent, received or stored in/on the Systems. Holler may also, in its sole discretion, disclose the contents of the Systems to third parties, either inside or outside of Holler. By using Holler’s Systems, Morris consents to Holler’s right to access, review, replay, copy, disclose, delete and/or dispose of the contents of all communications (including parcels) of Morris on Holler’s premises in accordance with this Agreement. While Morris may make incidental use of the Systems to transmit personal messages, such messages will be treated no differently than other messages, which may be accessed, reviewed, replayed, copied, disclosed, deleted, and/or disposed of by Holler as stated above. Further, Holler reserves the right to charge Morris for the personal use of U.S. mail, private carrier services, and fax, telephone, internet, and other computerized communications. Morris

understands and agrees that the Systems are treated as a shared file system, with publicly available documents and phone messages. Morris understands and agrees that messages sent, received, and/or stored in/on the Systems will be available for review by Holler for any and all purposes. Consequently, Morris agrees not to use the Systems to transmit information or messages that she may wish to keep private.

- c. Prohibited Uses of Systems. Holler's Systems are to be used only in a manner that is consistent with accepted standards of business conduct. The following is a non-exhaustive list of unacceptable, prohibited uses:
    - i. Use of the Systems to engage in any unlawful activity, enterprise, or scheme;
    - ii. The unauthorized revealing or publicizing of any Project information without Holler's express consent;
    - iii. Use of the Systems in any manner, including transmission of any material, which violates any U.S. or state laws or is unacceptable in Holler's sole discretion, including, but not limited to, defamatory, obscene, offensive, or harassing information, information that discloses personal data without authorization, copyrighted material, or material that would be protected as a trade secret under applicable state law. This also includes visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, or otherwise objectionable material;
    - iv. Use of the Systems for personal business, including but not limited to, online shopping, gambling, banking, or the use of chat rooms or forums on the internet;
    - v. Uploading, downloading, or otherwise transmitting commercial software or copyrighted material in violation of copyright laws. Unless otherwise noted, all shareware software should be considered copyrighted work and subject to the same use prohibitions as other copyrighted material as stated above. Morris agrees that its employees shall not download and install software on computers provided by Holler and shall not download and install software on any computer brought onto Holler's premises and/or into the Designated Office Space unless expressly authorized by Holler;
    - vi. Intentionally interfering with the normal operation of any of the Systems. This includes but is not limited to the introduction of computer viruses, sustained high volume network traffic which substantially hinders others in the use of the Systems, or abusive use of any of the Systems; and
    - vii. Using a modem to access the internet. Alternative Internet Service Provider connections (AOL, MSN, CompuServe, etc.) to Holler's internal network are not permitted unless expressly authorized by Holler and properly protected by appropriate network security devices, as determined by Holler in its sole discretion. Holler reserves the right to report any suspected illegal activities associated with the use of its Systems to the appropriate authorities.
  - d. Use of Designated Office Equipment. The Designated Office Equipment is essential to accomplishing job duties and is difficult to replace. When using the Designated Office Equipment, Morris agrees to exercise reasonable care and to follow all operating instructions and safety standards and guidelines, as applicable. Morris shall immediately notify Holler if any Designated Office Equipment appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Morris understands and agrees that the computers provided by Holler under this Agreement and any data located on those computers may not be removed from Holler's premises.
  - e. Unauthorized Copying of Software. Holler does not condone the illegal duplication of software. Accordingly, Morris agrees to use the software only in accordance with the software publisher's license agreement.
4. Harassment. Holler intends to provide a work environment that is pleasant, professional, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses that might interfere with work performance. Harassment of any sort, whether verbal, physical, or visual, will not be tolerated.
    - a. Workplace Violence. Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to acts or threats of

physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion. Acts or threats of violence also include conduct that is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the work environment at Holler, or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or more employees. Workplace violence will not be tolerated.

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Hitting or shoving an individual.
  - ii. Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or property with harm.
  - iii. Intentional destruction or threatening to destroy Holler property and/or the Designated Office Equipment or the property of any Morris or Holler employee.
  - iv. Making harassing or threatening phone calls or transmitting electronic messages of a threatening or violent nature.
  - v. Harassing surveillance or stalking (following or watching someone).
  - vi. Unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of firearms or weapons.
- b. Prohibition of Weapons. Morris agrees and understands that she is prohibited from carrying a handgun, firearm, knife, explosives, or other weapon of any kind, regardless of whether she is licensed to carry the weapon or not, onto any Holler premises, the Designated Office Space, and/or any client sites.
5. Drug & Alcohol Use. Holler prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by anyone on Holler's premises, the Designated Office Space, and/or client sites or as a part of Holler's activities. Holler reserves the right to search and inspect Morris and all areas of Holler's premises for the maintenance of a safe workplace.
  6. Smoking. Smoking is prohibited throughout Holler facilities, including but not limited to the Designated Office Space.
  7. Search & Seizure. Morris agrees that any of her belongings brought onto Holler's premises, into the Designated Office Space, and/or client sites, may be subject to search and the seizure of drugs, alcohol, or weapons. Desks, lockers, and other storage devices on Holler's premises, including within the Designated Office Space, and their contents, may be inspected at any time.
  8. Safety & Accident Reporting. Morris agrees that she is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities.
  9. Solicitation. Morris understands and agrees that persons not employed by Holler shall not solicit or distribute literature on Holler's premises or within the Designated Office Space at any time for any purpose.
  10. Personal Appearance. Morris understands and agrees that she is expected to dress and groom in accordance with accepted social and business standards.
  11. Indemnification. Morris agrees that she is responsible for and agrees to indemnify Holler for any violations of this Agreement by Morris.
  12. Assignment and Binding Effect. This Agreement shall not be assigned by Morris. This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of and be enforceable by Holler and its successors and assigns, if permitted.
  13. Modification of Agreement. This Agreement may be modified by the parties hereto only by a written supplemental agreement executed by the parties.
  14. Governing Law. This Agreement has been executed and delivered in the State of Michigan, and its interpretation, validity and performance shall be construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan, without regard to conflicts of laws principles.
  15. Entire Agreement. This Agreement contains the entire contract of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all agreements and understandings between the parties, oral or written, concerning the subject matter hereof. In the event any provision hereof is deemed to be illegal or unenforceable, such provision shall be deleted to the extent of such illegality or unenforceability, but such deletion shall not invalidate the remainder of this Agreement, which shall continue in full force. This Agreement has been executed by the parties the day and year first above written.

Holler, architecture firm

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_

Darby Morris, an individual

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Explanation of Research (Raynor)

As an anthropologist, it is our job to observe things as they are naturally and work with what we find. Ideally my work will not be invasive to those I am observing; instead I wish to see how they go about their normal business. Hopefully by the end of my three months with [Raynor], I will blend in to the background as employees will have gotten used to my presence within the firm. My research question changes based on what I find in each firm, currently it is: How do three Michigan architecture firms understand and meet the needs of their workplace clients during predesign?

Culture has a big impact on the answer to this question. So I have decided to embed myself into three different firms observing their daily work for at least three months. At each firm there are three primary groups that I will be observing: business development, marketing and designers / architects. Observations will be taken of internal meetings (within the architecture firm). These meetings can be project-based and may take place in conference rooms, or may be much more informal between two individuals at someone's desk. Internal meetings may also include non-project based meetings that speak to the culture of the firm such as lunch and learns, design charettes or any other meeting that a large portion of staff is invited to. Observations will also be taken of external meetings involving both architects and clients. The more meetings I attend the better as it allows me to learn quickly, take in everything as it happens rather than hearing accounts from others, and find the answer to my research question. Every meeting has the potential to impact the project greatly.

In addition to observations, I will also be collecting documents as architects and clients often rely on these to communicate. My project is interested in being able to make arguments that can be compared across firms so I am not interested in specifics (i.e. images, client names, employee names, project names and places). Since I am constantly learning about projects and meeting different individuals, it is highly likely that I will end up observing meetings that ultimately do not meet my goals, or may not meet all of my goals at once. Sometimes I will realize the mistake immediately, other times I may decide to stay for the meeting as I have a lot to learn. In order to understand programming at [Raynor] it may be necessary for me to observe projects in other practices outside of workplace. However, I hope that most of my time will be spent on workplace projects and that observation of non-workplace projects will be at a minimum.

It is my hope that [Raynor] gets as much from me as I expect to get from [Raynor]. As I mentioned, I may be able to provide feedback to customer satisfaction surveys, or there may be other things that you are working through and would like feedback on and a greater understanding of how they impact your clients.

## Current Leaders

### Strategic Marketing By Design

🕒 16 hours    👥 Classroom    👤 30 participants maximum

Upon completion of this session, you will be able to:

- Position us to win work for the firm.
- Develop a pursuit strategy for an opportunity.
- Listen effectively to understand the client's needs and objectives.
- Communicate a message that reinforces our differentiators.

*Target Audience:* Directors, Practice Leaders, Studio Leaders, Project Managers

*Prerequisites:* None

---

### Strategic Marketing By Design: Coach's Guide

🕒 8 hours    👥 Classroom    👤 12 participants maximum

Upon completion of this session, you will be able to:

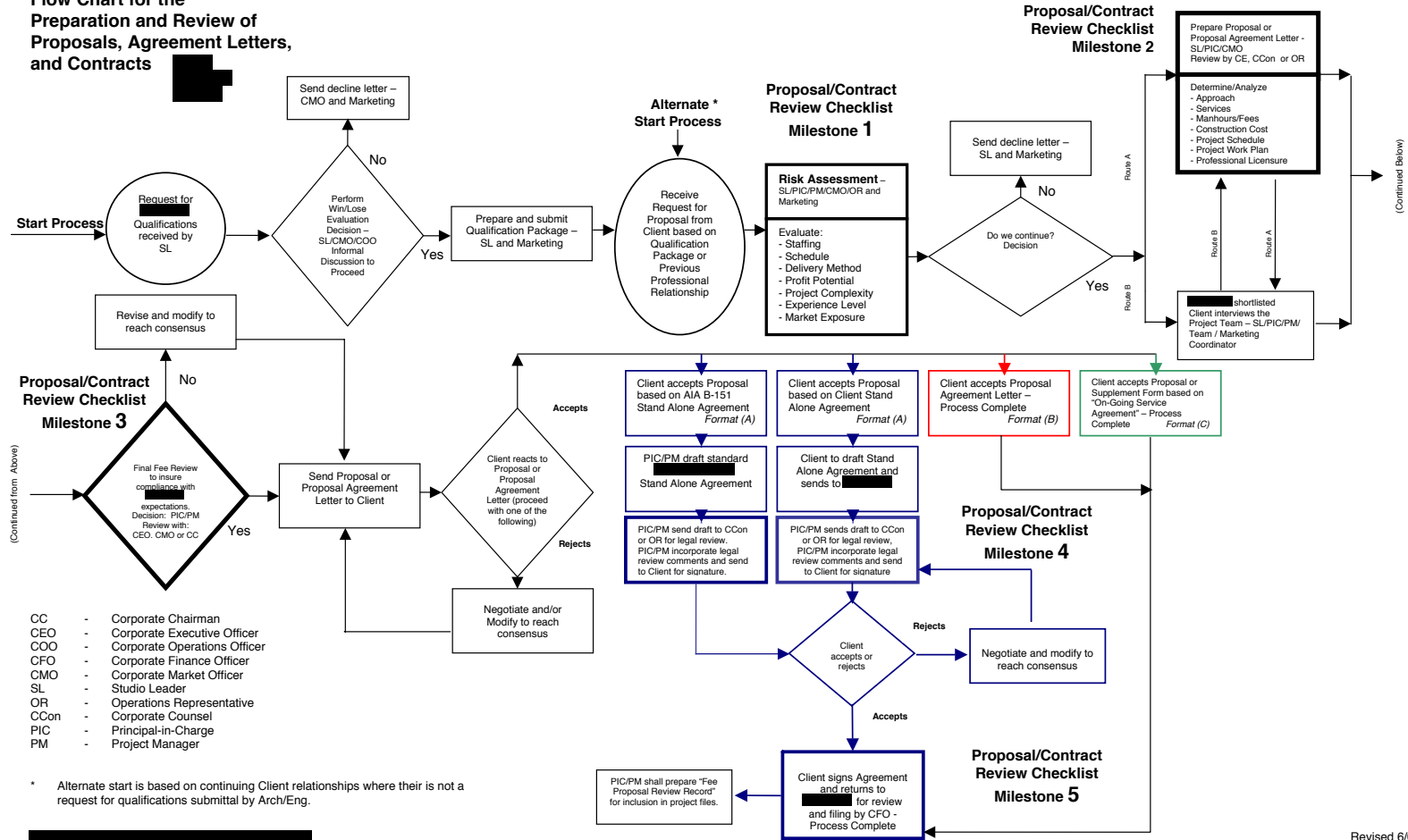
- Improve the success rate of our proposal/interview process.
- Set quality expectations for interviews.
- Guide speakers in developing relevant content and their message.
- Provide appropriate constructive feedback.
- Provide the client's perspective to the team.
- Motivate the team.

*Target Audience:* Business Development & Marketing team members

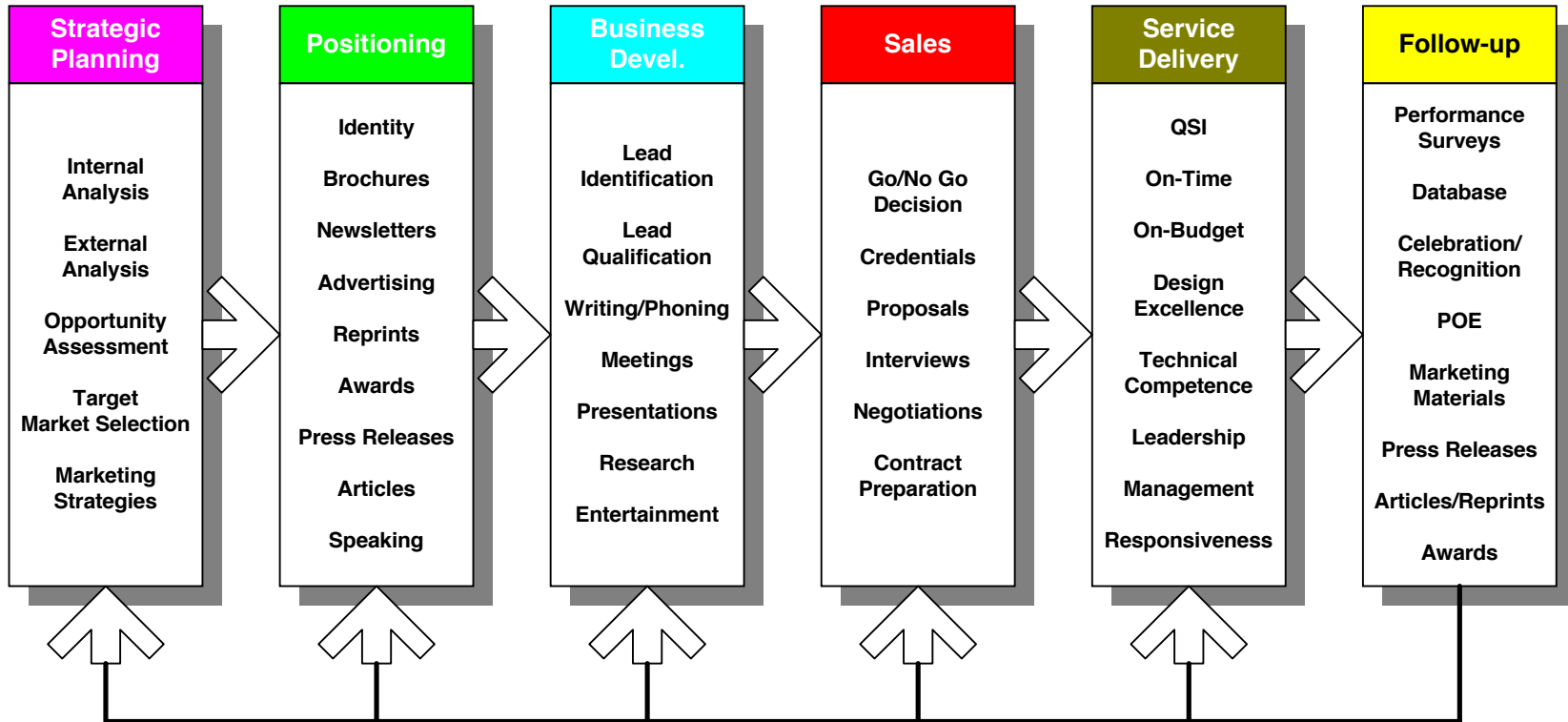
*Prerequisites:* None

## Appendix I: Gilbert Documents of Client Engagement Process

### Flow Chart for the Preparation and Review of Proposals, Agreement Letters, and Contracts

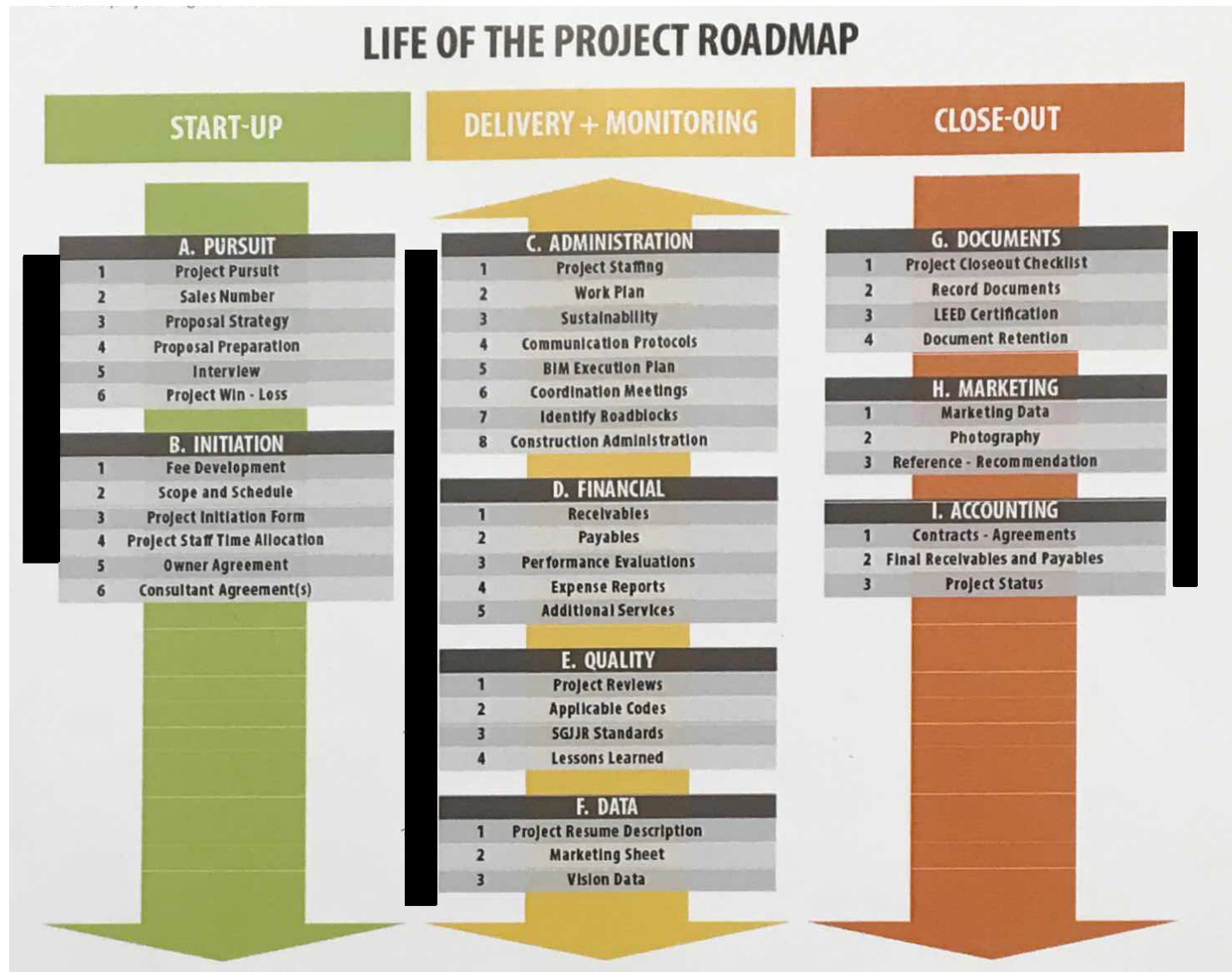


## Marketing Macro Process





Appendix J: Holler Documents of Client Engagement Process



process

# The Ideal Process

## ideal rfq/rfp schedule



rfq/rfp received

Day 2

go/no-go

Day 3

kick-off

Days 3-6

break-out groups/  
content gathering

Days 7-10

draft review(s)

Day 11

final draft review

Day 12

final edits

Day 13

production & delivery



due date

Appendix K: Pages from Gilbert's Client's Program Document

[REDACTED] INTERVIEW GUIDE		
Company	[REDACTED]	
Name	[REDACTED]	
Title	V-P	
How many occupants work in your room	1	
What is the function(s) of your room?	OFFICE	
How many clients does your room need to accommodate?	—	
How many guests does your room need to accommodate?	2-3	
What furniture is needed in your room and in what quantities?		
Furniture	Yes / No	Quantities
Desk	N	
Table	N	
Task Chairs	N	
Guest Chairs	Y	
Lounge Chairs	"	
Sofas	"	
Client work space	N	
Assistant work space	N	
Storage needs	N	
Sound proofing	N	
Audio / Sound Needs	N	
Audio / Visual Needs	N	
Furniture	Yes / No	Quantities

## Summary of [REDACTED] Department Interviews

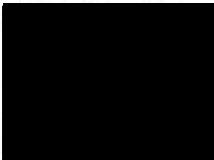
Over the past few weeks, [REDACTED] has conducted interviews with all individuals in all companies and departments in the building. There are 5 companies within the campus – [REDACTED]. We asked each company or division what they would like changed about their workspace and there were several common themes, which are listed below.

### Most Common Requests:

- Want to see daylight and outside, whether it be through a window, skylight, common spaces. Garage door like restaurants was requested by many. Still want to be close to outdoors in winter so glass garage door would allow view
- Storage for coats and boots in each office
- Personal file cabinet/drawers at desk
- Meeting space for teams and clients
- A lot of interest has been expressed in the outdoor spaces
- Spaces for clients to make personal phone calls or conduct work while waiting on departments
- No fluorescent lighting!
- Bathrooms are below standard
- Refrigerators in offices/department space
- Printers/Copiers in department space
- Desks that are able to raise for higher seating/standing
- Most common design styles - industrial, mid-century, natural materials
- Most common outdoor requests – walking path, seating with tables, grill, multiple views to outside
- Temperature control – too cold, too hot, no air circulation
- Most want to face clients and don't like them looking over their shoulders
- Desk/task lighting needed. Most areas are too dark.
- Electrical – correct computer connections, more outlets

We have included meeting notes from each area below, and we have questionnaires from most individuals on what they need in their own areas.

The following company officers need to be located close together:



[REDACTED] needs to complete the interview form.

## Appendix L: Gilbert's New Go / No-Go Form

v7.4 (Cumulative Update 3)

Dashboard Navigator Kona Search Options Help

### Opportunities

Save New Delete Opportunity Print Merge Email Photo List View Help

<No Opportunity selected>

General **Go / No Go** Location Team Clients/Co./Contacts Sustainability Activities Project Codes Marketing Campaigns Estimated Revenue

Go/No-Go Criteria	NEGATIVE 0 - 3	NEUTRAL 4 - 6	POSITIVE 7 - 10
1. Does the client know [redacted]?	Unknown to this client.	Known to client, not fully cultivated.	Well developed working relationship.
2. Is this the first you heard of this project?	Did not know about RFP; unprepared.	Project known and team is up-to-date.	Good favorable intelligence; met with client regarding project.
3. Does the project fit within our strategic plan?	Did not fit within our plan.	Fits within strategic plan, but does not meet all objectives.	Completely fits with strategic plan; meets all major objectives.
4. Does this opportunity promote us as a design firm?	Little design opportunity or may harm design reputation.	Design opportunity is limited.	Provides good design opportunity.
5. What is our overall technical capability?	Not qualified; weak.	Capable; understand the problem and can respond.	Demonstrated ability to exceed every requirement.
6. Can we provide proof of relevant experience?	No relevant experience.	Relevant experience; but not "same as" client project.	Relevant experience including 2 'same as' projects.
7. Can we provide proof of qualified staff?	Limited in-house staff available.	Good in-house staff available.	Best in-house staff available with credentials to back it up.
8. Do we meet or exceed client requirements?	Unclear understanding of problems; do not know client needs.	Understand problems/client needs and can respond.	Can demonstrate that we understand client needs.
9. Who are our competitors?	Competitor is strongly favored or unknown.	Open competition with no strong favorite.	Favored our sure to make shortlist.
10. Is the project a good geographic fit?	Poor geographic match.	Geographic presence or knowledge; has little or no relevance.	Strong geographic presence, location a strong advantage.
11. How does cost of pursuit fit within marketing budget?	Very expensive pursuit; cost to outcome (11-15%).	Cost of pursuit to possible income is average (5-10%).	Inexpensive pursuit; cost to possible income (1-4%)
12. Can the project be profitable?	Poor profit potential; marginal future potential.	Questionable profit potential; possible future client relationship.	Excellent profit potential; excellent opportunity for future work.
13. What is our pricing competitiveness?	Must cut corners, cost share, open to financial loss.	Reasonable and competitive; reasonable risks.	Honest, credible price within known limits, acceptable risks.
14. Does this help build strategic alliance?	Harms existing alliances, forces hard choices among partners.	Neither strengthens or weakens existing alliances.	Building new strategic alliances; strengthens existing alliance.
15. Can we commit resources to the proposal effort?	Limited resources; proposal cannot be tailored.	Good resources; key sections can be tailored.	Full commitment from studio; highly custom response.
Go/No-Go GRAND TOTAL	Press save button on top to calculate Total		

# Proposal/Contract Review Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

The [redacted] Principal-in-Charge (or Project Director) is responsible for implementing, monitoring and completing this Proposal/Contract Review Process. Detailed procedures for this process can be found on [redacted] in the Technical Operating Manual under the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Proposals, Agreement Letters and Contracts." Processing of this Checklist is required for all Owner Agreements and Supplements to Ongoing Services Agreements, but may be waived by the local Managing Principal for Agreements valued at less than \$ [redacted]. Review by Corporate Counsel is strongly recommended for Owner and/or Consultant Agreements containing clauses that impose excessive, unusable or questionable risk or liability regardless of the fee amount. Additional Service Modifications may be exempt from the process where a prime Agreement is already in place for services of similar scope and fee amount.

Copies of all fully executed Agreements, including Owner, Consultant, Surveyor or Geotechnical Agreements, Supplements and Additional Service Modifications, regardless of fee amount, are to be sent to Accounting for hard copy filing in the applicable Billing Folder and scanning for electronic filing in the Project Folder on [redacted]. This fully executed Checklist is to be attached to the related hard copy Agreement, Supplement or Additional Service Modification when sent to Accounting.

Distribute the completed checklist to: Accounting and a copy to the applicable office Managing Principal.

<b>Client or Consultant:</b> _____	<b>Principal-in-Charge:</b> _____
<b>Project Name:</b> _____	<b>Project No:</b> _____ <b>PM:</b> _____

**Milestone 1 / Risk Assessment (Go / No Go)**     **Completed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client Credibility</li> <li>• Client Compatibility</li> <li>• Project Viability</li> <li>• Liability / Risk Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Complexity</li> <li>• Studio Goals</li> <li>• Experience Level</li> <li>• Marketing Exposure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Win Strategy</li> <li>• Profit Potential</li> <li>• Cost of Pursuit</li> <li>• Consider Professional Services Provider Selection Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Delivery Method</li> <li>• Contract Requirements</li> <li>• Professional Licensure</li> </ul>

Studio Leader \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Completed\*** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

CEO or President \_\_\_\_\_

\*Required for Competitions, Design/Build, International pursuits or pursuits with deferred fees

**Milestone 2 / Proposal and Fee Analysis**     **Completed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal Complexity</li> <li>• Scope of Work</li> <li>• Breadth of Services</li> <li>• Fee / Hours Analysis</li> <li>• Sustainability Level / BIM / IPD Requirements</li> <li>• Consider Major Consultant / Supplier Agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Work Plan</li> <li>• Staffing Availability</li> <li>• Project Schedule</li> <li>• Peer Review Need</li> </ul>
---	--

Managing Principal / Designee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Milestone 3 / Final Fee Approval**     **Completed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with Overall Firm Goals and Expectations</li> <li>• Consider Major Consultant / Supplier Agreements</li> </ul>
---

Corporate Leader / Managing Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Milestone 4 / Final Contract Approval**     **Completed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Language / Terms</li> <li>• Insurability</li> <li>• Coordination with Proposal Parameters</li> <li>• Consultant / Supplier Agreements Set</li> <li>• Supplements</li> </ul>
--

Principal-in-Charge \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Milestone 5 / Financial Review and Filing**     **Completed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist Complete</li> <li>• Original Contract Signed &amp; Delivered</li> <li>• Overview with Corporate Finance</li> <li>• Consultant / Supplier Agreements</li> <li>• Update "PM Tools" Database</li> <li>• HED Approximate Net Fee =</li> </ul>	<p>\$ _____</p>
--	-----------------

Corporate Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix M: Go / No-Go Documents from Holler and Raynor

### Holler

The infographic is presented on a background that looks like a film strip. It is divided into two main sections by vertical orange lines. The left section is titled 'STEP 1 go/no-go' and features a scale of justice icon. The right section is titled 'STEP 2 kick-off meeting' and features a location pin icon. Each section contains a description, goals, players involved, rules, and discussion topics.

**STEP 1**  
 **go/no-go**

*A go/no-go is a strategic discussion to decide whether or not to pursue a particular project.*

**Goals:**  
Make a strategic go/no-go decision.  
Identify Pursuit Champion.  
Identify preliminary internal and external team.

**Players Involved:**  
Studio Leader, Business Development, Marketing Manager, and Pursuit Champion.

**Rules:**  
Devote the first 10 minutes to reading the RFQ/P, as well as asking questions.  
Complete go/no-go score.  
No laptops or task mastering; it's all about the conversation!  
No assigning tasks and due dates.

**Discussion Topics:**  
Opportunity background, client history, etc.  
Gauge interest, identify limitations, and understand amount of passion.  
Why should we pursue?

**STEP 2**  
 **kick-off meeting**

*A kick-off meeting sets the stage for the pursuit. It is the time to identify the needs of a pursuit and assign tasks.*

**Goals:**  
Clearly communicate assignments and due dates to establish accountability.  
Foster a team approach.  
Set the proposal team up to win the project.

**Players Involved:**  
Studio Leader, Pursuit Champion, Marketing Coordinator, and Project Manager or Project Architect must attend. Business Development, Project-Type Expert, and Marketing Manager attend as needed.

**Discussion Topics:**  
Repeat project brief and client background and why we are pursuing.  
Marketing Coordinator distributes a proposal checklist and timeline for the proposal.  
Team discusses and confirms assignments and due dates.  
Name client point-of-contact. This person will submit questions, ensure our people attend site walk-throughs, etc.  
Brainstorm launch documents.

THE PURSUIT

## Go/No-Go Process

# What it takes to win

*9 things guaranteed to work*

- 1** Did we meet with the client before the RFP was published?  
*If not, forget it; 81% of winning teams met with the client before the RFP was published.*
- 2** How many months in advance did we meet with them?  
*Winners average was 7 months.*
- 3** How many meetings did we have prior to the RFP?  
*Winners average was 5 meetings.*
- 4** With whom in the client's organization did we meet?  
*81% of the winners had met with senior executives and 65% with department managers.*
- 5** Who from our firm attended the meetings?  
*Winners had principals attend 81% of the time.*
- 6** What percentage of the selection committee did we meet with prior to the RFP?  
*Winners average was 75% of selection committee.*
- 7** Did anyone from our firm develop a relationship with anyone involved in the project from the client's organization? (relationship defined as first name basis)  
*Winners had relationships 89% of the time.*
- 8** Who in our firm had the relationship (above)?  
*Winners had principals with relationships 81% of the time.*
- 9** Did we develop an advocate (someone who speaks on our behalf at crucial times) on the selection committee prior to the RFP?  
*Winners had advocates 71% of the time.*

Source: *SMPS Marketer*, December 2009



Raynor

## Go / No Go Decision Matrix

Proposal Factors	Decision Criteria						Estimated Rating	
	Negative		Neutral		Positive		Competitors A B	
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1 Client Contact and Rapport	Unknown or virtually unknown to client		Known to client, but not well known		Well-developed relationship with client		4	
2 Marketing Intelligence	Did not expect RFP; project info limited to solicitation		Anticipated RFP; have collected adequate info		Distinct insights into client needs and expectations		2	
3 Competitive Advantage	Competitor is strongly favored		Open competition with no apparent favorite		Our firm is favored position for contract award		4	
4 Qualification and Experience	Marginally qualified, limited or no relevant experience		Adequately qualified, but no real edge over competitors		Technically superior to most competitors		1	
5 Project Team Availability	Needed team members are too busy		Needed team members have adequate availability		Very strong proposed team with good availability		3	
6 Profit Potential	Unlikely to make targeted profit on this project		Can meet profit goals if well managed		High likelihood to meet or exceed targeted profit		3	
7 Pricing Sensitivity	Selection primarily driven by price; commodity purchase		Client to balance price and qualifications in selection		Will select most qualified, then negotiate price		3	
8 Cost to Respond	High proposal costs relative to odds of winning		Proposal costs appropriate relative to odds		Excellent ROI; cost very appropriate for the odds		2	
9 Consistency with Marketing Plan	Opportunity not consistent with state marketing goals		Opportunity fits within our state marketing goals		Opportunity cannot be passed up relative to our goals		4	
10 Odds of Winning	0-30% chance of winning		30-60% chance of winning		60-90% chance of winning		5	
<b>Total Score</b> (sum of 10 proposal factor ratings)							33	
<b>Overall Rating</b> (total score divided by 10)							3.3	
Comments:							DECISION: <input type="checkbox"/> GO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO GO	

Overall rating should be at least a 4 to submit a proposal.

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