

PART I

MANAGING IN AN UNPREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

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CHAPTER 1

BRINGING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

Managing a small design firm can be like running a three-ring circus. Anything can happen at any time. The action is unrelenting, demanding, and unpredictable. To keep it all in motion, many small firm owners work evenings and weekends on a regular basis. It is not unusual for these firm principals to spend their days “fire-fighting,” or scrambling to take advantage of a sudden opportunity.

Take the case of BB Architects. The principal there usually works 60 to 70 hours a week. Often he is in his office until eight or nine at night, he regularly works on weekends, and when he does go home, he takes work with him. He would like to spend more time with his friends and family, but the demands of his six-person practice seem to make that nearly impossible. For example, last week one of his project architects was out sick, and there was no one else but the principal to do the necessary work. At the same time—in addition to the usual work load—a great job opportunity arose which required that a quick proposal be written. This week, a project in construction is demanding immediate attention, the bookkeeper quit, and a major deadline looms. The principal likes his work and is stimulated by the pressure and variety, but feels vaguely like he’s on a treadmill, never advancing, even falling a little more behind each day. Often he’s just tired, and wonders how long he can go on this way.

Many principals in firms with fewer than 20 on staff will describe their work life this way. The work can be incessant and often challenging. Yet, most small firm principals are stimulated by the pressure and enjoy the autonomy, the control, and the opportunity for design expression. Nevertheless, there is often an underlying

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feeling of dissatisfaction and apprehension, working hard, but never sure what the future will bring. Constantly coping with day-to-day demands of projects, contractors, clients, and staff, while also running a business, can take its toll.

PROFIT AND SATISFACTION

Like the design of a custom home, the development of a small design practice presents the opportunity to create a firm that truly reflects the tendencies and proclivities of its owners. The organization doesn't have to be conventional or rigid, but it could be if that was the nature of its leadership. Big firms are like big buildings—they need to be more formal and have well-defined structure to make them function. There's less opportunity for personal choice and personal expression. Small firms are often able to maximize flexibility and creativity as long as they don't get bogged down in a chaotic atmosphere, lacking organizational structures that foster effectiveness.

It seems almost self-evident that the skills firm leaders apply to their work as design professionals can be used to plan the development of their firms. The discipline of organizational design was derived from an understanding that it is possible to design organizations with processes similar to those used to design the built environment. Designing a firm means considering financial goals, purpose, size, optimal structure, and the best possible integration between the social systems and the technical systems of production.

Like all design processes, organizational design requires that design criteria be established. The personality, competencies, interests, proclivities, and aversions of the principals will be the primary source of these design criteria in small firms. External factors such as location, markets, and availability of skilled staff may also play a significant role, perhaps as design constraints. Of the criteria determined by the principals, the most important of these is how success and satisfaction in their work is defined. How important is financial success? How much money is enough? How important is name recognition and design awards? Does success include "doing good" for the local community? Does it include having a happy and cared for staff? How important is fun?

Naturally, satisfaction varies among design professionals and usually includes fair compensation, although that is often near the bottom of the list. Anecdotal evidence shows that many small design firm leaders derive the most satisfaction from working effectively with clients, consultants, and staff to deliver excellent projects. Most enjoy their freedom and the control of their work environment. Few enjoy the business aspects of running their firm and many are challenged by the frequent unexpected occurrences and never-ending demands. Figure 1.1 illustrates the interrelationship between profit and satisfaction in small design firm practice.

Again, based on anecdotal evidence, it is fair to say that in most architecture schools, students are led to believe their careers will reside in Quadrant 4—highly satisfied, but poorly compensated. Not to imply that this is always bad. There are noble organizations and design professionals who manifest this way of working

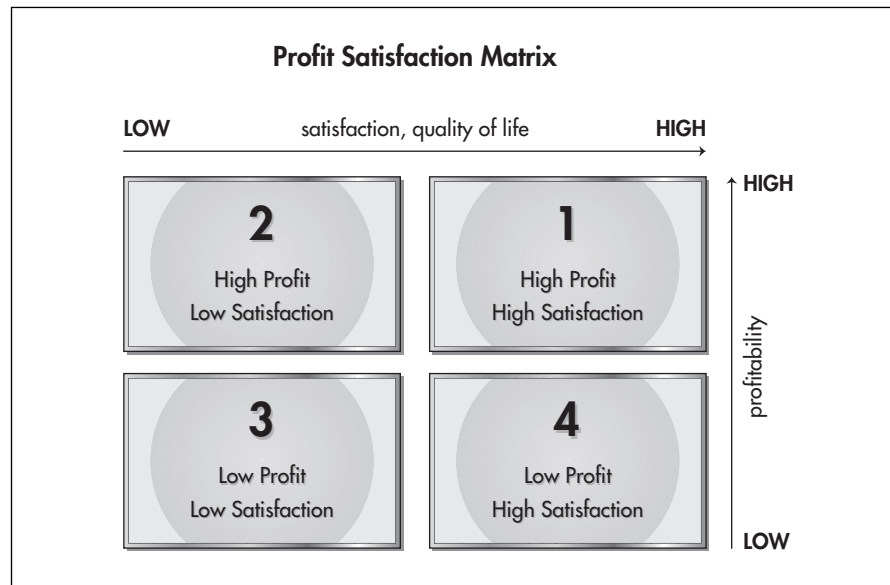


Figure 1.1 Small firm owners experience varying levels of profitability and satisfaction.

without complaint, deriving significant satisfaction without the need for big paychecks. Nevertheless, there are many small design firm owners who undervalue themselves in the marketplace because of this low-pay expectation.

Unfortunately, there are also many design professionals who reside in Quadrant 3, not enjoying their work and not making much money either. This situation is usually a symptom of poor management and perhaps, lack of self-aware leadership—principals (and solo practitioners) who do not “walk their talk.” And, since much of the work architects and designers must do is tedious and routine, it is easy to understand how the work can become unsatisfying. Clearly practicing in Quadrant 3 is not sustainable and action plans for change should be considered.

Quadrant 2 isn't much better. Leaders of firms in this quadrant are making good money but are still dissatisfied. Often these are skilled practitioners who are bored with work that once was interesting but now has become quite ordinary. These firm owners often create successful but somehow limited practices. Another common manifestation of Quadrant 2 are practitioners who lack a work-life balance. Many practitioners give up quality of life in order to make more money. This is as equally unsustainable as Quadrant 3, although it may be harder to recognize.

Most design professionals hope to reside in Quadrant 1—highly satisfied and well compensated. Many accomplish this by staying true to their interests, talents, and passions while acquiring knowledge that is highly valued in the marketplace. Firms that stay grounded in their values and vision as they grow, and create a culture of learning, have a better chance of succeeding in both satisfaction and compensation.

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Organizational design is the means through which small firm leaders can chart a course to Quadrant 1. While the core competencies and dispositions of firm leaders are clearly the primary design criteria, the business model of a design firm is also significant. Being intentional about a business model, and understanding its staffing and managerial implications, is an essential aspect of bringing order out of chaos in small design firm practice.

DESIGN FIRM BUSINESS MODELS

In general, a business model is a plan that articulates what business is being conducted and how the business will make money. Well-known consultant David Meister¹ has identified three business models that are common in professional service firms. Each of these business models can yield growth and profitability, assuming that they are staffed and managed appropriately.

Design Firm Business Models

Efficiency

- We can do it better, faster, cheaper.
- We do projects that are not complex and have many repeatable elements.
- We employ more junior and technical staff.

Experienced

- We know what we are doing.
- We can do unique, complex projects by applying our accrued knowledge.
- We employ a mixed and balanced staff.

Expertise

- We have special knowledge or talent.
- We serve as expert consultants or are design stars.
- We employ mostly highly experienced staff.

Efficiency-Based Firms

The first of these models is known as “Efficiency,” illustrated in Figure 1.2. It describes firms that are focused on fast and less expensive project delivery. These firms often specialize in one project type or a narrow range of services and tend to serve clients that are looking for standard solutions and quick turnarounds. For example, a small architectural firm that serves residential developers might operate effectively within this efficiency model.

Because efficiency firms do projects with a significant amount of routine work, they can be staffed with a large percentage of junior or technical workers. With

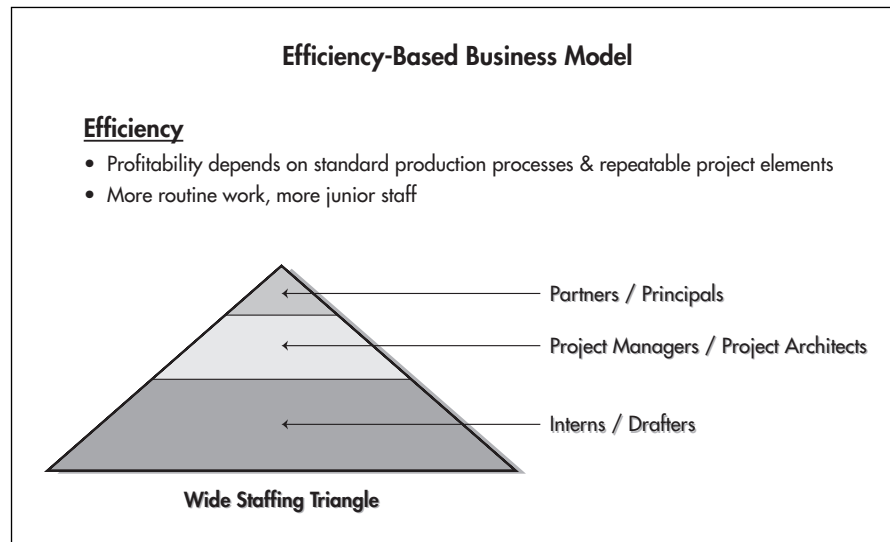


Figure 1.2 Efficiency-based firms rely on repeatable processes.

repeatable elements and standard processes, project delivery can be streamlined. Principals at the top acquire jobs and a small number of well-paid senior staff can organize the work and deal with the nonroutine aspects of the jobs. Profitability is dependent on volume and productivity and is relatively easy to obtain once systems are in place. Because there is more routine work and junior staff, the management style in efficiency firms is likely to be more directive and control based. Sustainable success in these firms requires continuous improvement of work processes and staying current with technology and trends.

CASE STUDY OF AN EFFICIENCY-BASED PRACTICE: SCHACHNE ARCHITECTS & BUILDERS

Stan and Donna Schachne of Schachne Architects & Builders in South Florida run a design-build firm specializing in residential remodeling, new homes, and light commercial projects. They are typical of a large number of small firms that base their practice on the efficiency model. Although the projects often are not routine, they are similar enough that it is possible to apply routine processes to their delivery.

For example, the Schachnes have developed a project delivery process that is repeatable with each new client. Based on the efficiency their process offers, the Schachnes can be unambiguous with their clients about what to expect. This process is clearly outlined on their website for potential clients to review before calling for an initial consultation.

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Educated as an interior designer, Donna is integrally involved during all phases of the design. "She works well with our clients, especially the women, and provides a high level of customized service," according to Stan, a licensed architect and AIA member. The couple typically works together on the schematic design for a project. Once the design concept and budget are approved by the client, Stan and Donna continue to collaborate on interior specifications and preparation of the construction documents. In keeping with the need for an efficiency practice to stay current with project delivery technology, the firm converted to Autodesk® Revit® in 2008 by hiring an expert user to teach Stan. Now, all the efficacy of 3-D modeling can be applied to the delivery of relatively noncomplex residential projects.

Soon after starting their business as a traditional design firm, Stan and Donna recognized the opportunity to offer general contracting services along with design. As explained by Stan: "It seems that in the South Florida market, people just aren't into design. The residential market is mostly developer driven. We found that to design a small addition, we couldn't charge more than a few thousand dollars, yet the construction cost might be over \$200,000. So I thought, 'Why can't I be the contractor?'" The construction part of the business now earns most of the firm's revenue.

As a result, Stan and Donna will often offer their design services as a loss leader, allowing them to demonstrate their competence and gain client trust before a large financial commitment is required. They see their design skills and their integrated approach as a competitive advantage in their market. Through the use of trusted subcontractors under Stan's management, the firm is able to predict and control construction costs, and deliver a high-quality product to their clients. According to Stan, "We prefer doing small jobs because we find that we make more money. Small jobs are easier to control and involve less risk."

Schachne Architects & Builders are a successful efficiency-based firm because they have specialized in noncomplex projects and have honed their project delivery processes to be effective and repeatable. They stay current with technology and trends which enables them to make money through high productivity (many small jobs) rather than high margins.

Experience-Based Firms

When asked, most small firm leaders will describe their firms as operating within the second business model, experienced-based, and most are right, to a greater

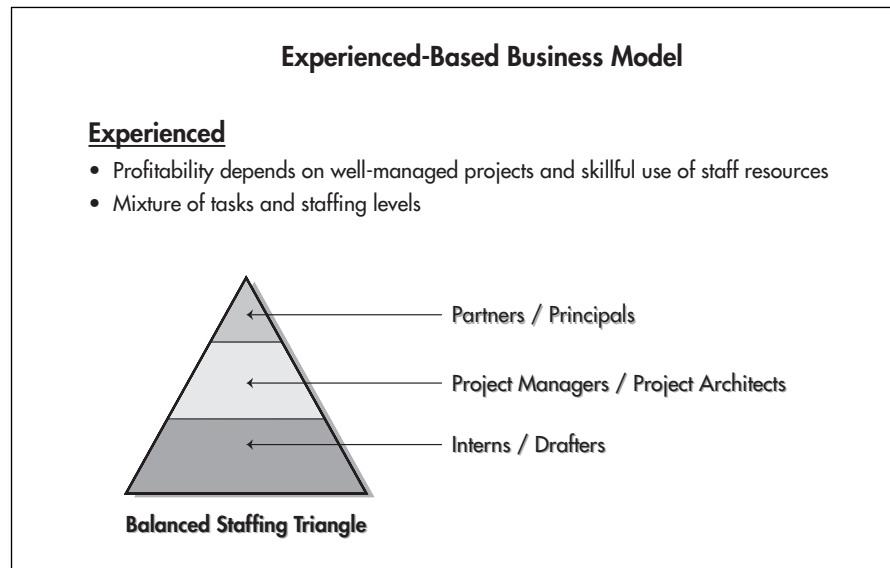


Figure 1.3 Experience-based firms rely on skillful use of staff resources.

or lesser extent. In contrast with efficiency-based firms who have deep experience but engage in routine projects, true experience-based firms are practiced at solving nonroutine and complex design problems. Their “experience” may be in a certain project type, such as public schools or museums, but their core competence is the ability to successfully organize and deliver significant and complicated projects. Experience-based firms, illustrated in Figure 1.3, are also adept at creating and acquiring new knowledge while solving complex problems.

Experience-based firms need a staff that is balanced in terms of professional capabilities. The management challenge for this type of firm is to match the project task to the “pay grade.” Much of a design fee can be wasted if highly paid staff members perform work that could be done by someone less experienced with a lower salary. Studies show that up to half of the tasks that managers (or principals) do could be performed equally well by someone who is paid less. Once the up-front work of mentoring and transferring knowledge is complete, time is freed for the senior staff to do the tasks that only they can do, and opportunity for growth and learning is given to others. This is known as “delegating down” and is often an effective strategy to improve profitability for experience-based firms.

Profitability in these kinds of firms depends on proper staffing, excellence in people and project management, and staying current with trends in design and building science. Experience-based firms are usually both design and service oriented.

CASE STUDY OF AN EXPERIENCE-BASED PRACTICE: XCHANGE ARCHITECTS

Although Derrick Choi's small firm is a startup, it can still be described as an experience-based practice. Educated at Columbia University and Harvard Graduate School of Design, Derrick began his career in a large firm where he soon became involved in airport projects. He went on to become a project manager for aviation design consultants before opening his practice in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 2008. While still at the beginning of his career, Derrick has had significant experience and involvement in complex design projects.

As described on the website of his firm, XChange Architects, Derrick Choi, AIA, LEED-AP, "brings nearly a decade of experience in infrastructure and transportation planning, design and construction. He has been involved in the planning and design of over 20 airports and in 6 countries . . . he is familiar with both managing complex projects of various scales and with navigating through the public and private process." This capacity to manage complex projects is the hallmark of an experience-based firm. While many such firms have a project type focus, such as transportation and infrastructure, these firms have the capacity to apply their experience to a wide range of complex problems.

Like many leaders of experience-based firms, Derrick developed numerous personal contacts during his employment with other organizations. These contacts have generated major assignments for his fledgling firm. Working internationally and in the United States, Derrick continues to be involved in the design and management of complex infrastructure developments, as well as smaller-scale, urban design and architecture projects in the Boston area.

At the time of this writing, XChange Architects is a firm of one. Nevertheless, Derrick is supported by a number of "collaborators," as he calls them, and also has in place strategic alliances with other firms. This enables a flexible and nimble approach to staffing production capacity. Leveraging his experience to create his firm, Derrick is positioned to broaden his knowledge and build a larger firm, or perhaps take the route of deepening/narrowing his knowledge to become a small expertise-based firm.

Expertise-Based Firms

Expertise-based firms, illustrated in Figure 1.4, have service offerings that rest upon deep knowledge and/or exceptional talent. These firms include those headed by

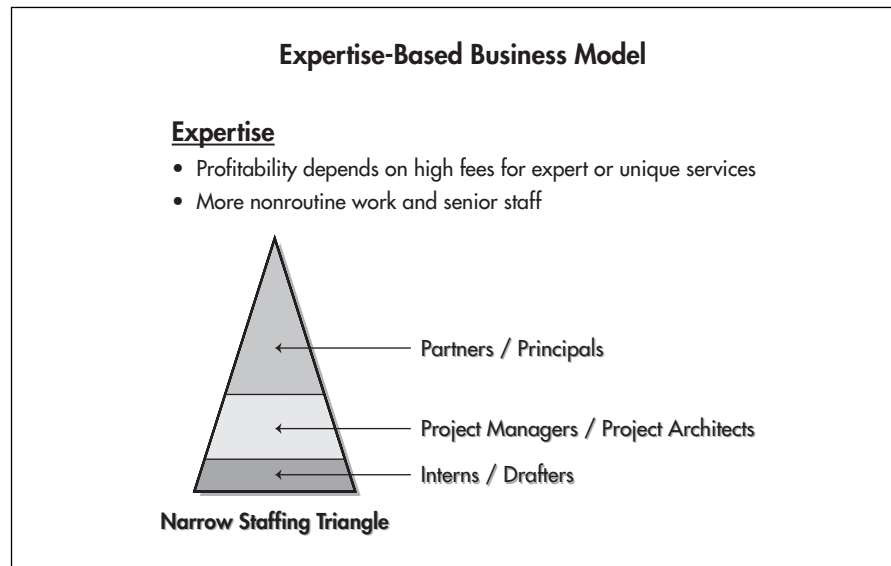


Figure 1.4 Expertise-based firms rely on the principals' deep and specialized knowledge.

“starchitects” with their unique style and abilities. More commonly, expertise firms are specialists in a narrow band of professional knowledge, such as acoustic design or commercial kitchen design.

Expertise-based firms tend to be top-heavy, with a high percentage of very experienced and skilled partners or principals. Often these firms are focused on cutting-edge and innovative applications of their knowledge. Since most of the work is nonroutine and complex, management style is likely to be supportive and democratic. Few middle level and junior staff are needed to complete the work. One- or two-person firms can be very successful using this model since profitability often depends on high hourly rates for services.

CASE STUDY OF AN EXPERTISE-BASED PRACTICE: STUDIO PACIFICA

Karen Braitmayer, FAIA, of Studio Pacifica in Seattle, Washington, provides an exemplary model of an expertise practice. As a lifelong wheelchair user and a licensed architect, she has leveraged her professional training and personal experience into an expertise that serves both her clients and the general public. Karen recounts how she naturally became an informal expert on accessibility early in her career but was reluctant, as a young architect, to define herself solely in this way. By 1993, when she started her firm, she had forged a meaningful identity as a disabled person and had

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become part of an emerging community. Before long Karen was a passionate advocate for accessibility and universal design.

As an activist and dedicated design professional, Karen became involved in numerous volunteer activities relating to accessibility codes and public policy. These include the Washington State Legislative Building Accessibility Advisory Committee, WSBCB Barrier-Free Technical Advisory Group, and many other advisory committees including those established to give input into the design of public projects, such as Sea-Tac Airport and Safeco Field. According to her website, “[Karen] continues to be a key resource for federal, state and local government officials, architects and disability rights advocates across the country. Since 1989 she has participated in the development of codes and standards to ensure that the State Accessibility Code reflects the needs of the citizens of Washington.”

These volunteer activities, while not intended as marketing, have helped Karen grow her practice. She has had the opportunity to meet others who share her passion and has been able to gain expanded knowledge and considerable influence. These activities, along with speaking engagements, involvement with professional organizations, and her personal experience have helped to establish Karen as an undisputed expert in her field. This results in inquiries that she describes as “coming from out of nowhere—referred from someone who knows someone who served on a committee with me.”

Like all design professionals who maintain expertise-based firms, Karen works hard at staying “ahead of the curve” in terms of her professional knowledge. She says that her consulting work forces her to stay involved in the development of construction documents and the application of codes, some of which she has helped to write. Karen is in touch with a large community of friends and colleagues in accessibility and universal design with whom she can discuss any issue that arises. And, with humility, she says, “I take every educational offering about accessibility that I can get myself to. People sometimes wonder at seeing me there, thinking the information would be too basic for me, but I find that there is always something new to learn.”

As a business model, expertise-based firms are likely to operate within a niche and hold specialized knowledge within this narrow arena. Karen believes that a specialization “helps firms stand out in a crowd” and is a good strategy for any type of firm. In contrast with experience-based firms, which are usually generalists capable of handling any complex project, expertise-based firms are usually specialists that handle complex, yet narrow problems.

ANY PROJECT THAT COMES THROUGH THE DOOR

Some small design firm leaders will have a difficult time recognizing their firm in any of the three models presented thus far. They have built their firms on accepting all comers and often prosper from the generalized knowledge they have acquired. The downside of this strategy is that it may limit the depth of professional knowledge acquired over time, leading to fewer opportunities for complex projects. Firms that accept “any project that comes through the door” can become unfocused and spread thin.

Naturally, the core competencies, personal connections, and interests of firm leaders will attract certain clients and projects even if there is no intentionality. At some point in the firm’s life, especially if growth is a goal, a more intentional approach to the firm’s business model will be required. Figure 1.5 illustrates how the business models are formed by the interrelationship between a firm’s level of specialization and its capacity to deliver complex projects.

While Figure 1.5 may imply that business models are static, nothing could be further from the truth. They often change as a firm matures and moves through its lifecycle, beginning with an entrepreneurial period. Firms may begin their lives as efficiency-based firms, gaining market share by offering lower cost services. Over time they may grow to be highly experienced and capable of delivering complex projects, or even develop a deep expertise that is highly valued. Conversely, firms might begin as innovators, experts in new technology or approach, like the early adopters of sustainable design in the 1960s and 1970s. Over time they may find

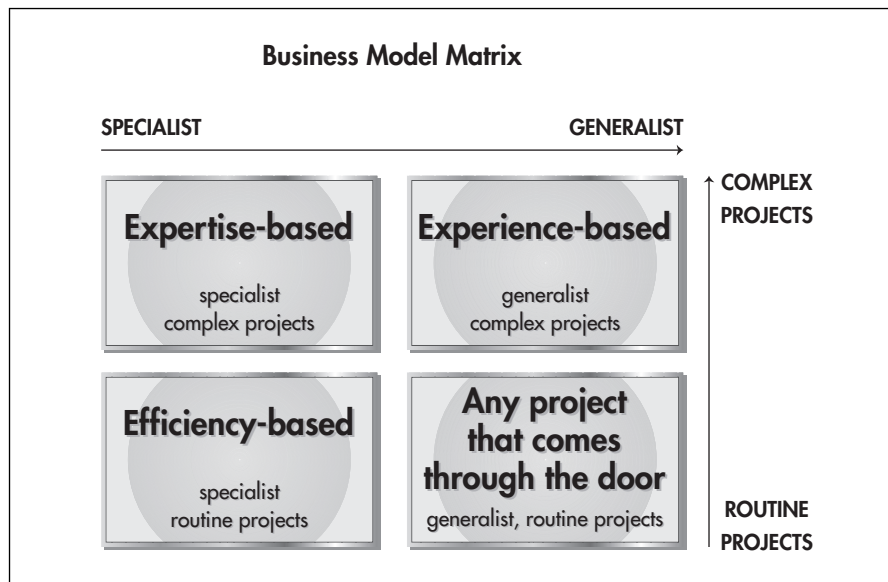


Figure 1.5 Business models for design firms relate to the level of project complexity and specialized knowledge required.

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that others share their expertise and unless they stay ahead of the curve, firms such as these may become experience-based or even efficiency-based.

Once a firm's business model is understood, firm growth and/or sustainable stability become more possible. However, many small firm owners with clear vision and understanding of their business model still fail to create adequate levels of satisfaction and profitability. They become stuck in operational cycles and personal dynamics that seem to self-sabotage efforts to succeed. Until these underlying patterns are understood, goals and visions may be difficult to actualize.

One tool or group of tools for understanding underlying patterns and existing organizational interrelationships is known as "systems thinking." Systems thinking prevents looking at a problem in isolation and requires consideration of the whole context a problem inhabits. Systems thinking teaches that a symptomatic problem is likely to have a complex multitude of origins; not simply sourced from linear cause and effect. Systems thinking also enables organizational patterns to be diagrammed in a way that illustrates the interrelationships between the multiple causative factors of current situations. Since the 1980s, diagrams have been developed, known as systems archetypes,² that illustrate common patterns of organizational behavior.

SMALL FIRM ARCHETYPES

By applying systems thinking, it is possible to diagram common organizational patterns that frequently lead to difficult circumstances in design firms. Three systems archetypes relevant to small firms are presented here. Many small firm leaders may recognize their own firms in the diagrams of the situations described. In the following chapters, each one of these will be explored individually for strategies that neutralize and reverse the destructive patterns. The first is called "Everyone Is Dissatisfied," illustrating a situation where both the partners and the staff feel overworked and underappreciated (Figure 1.6). The second archetype, "Administrative Breakdown," illustrates what can happen when there is underinvestment in administrative processes that causes them to remain ineffective and unimproved over time (Figure 1.7).

The third archetype is titled "Unintentional Enmity" and was adapted from a systems archetype developed by Jennifer Kemeny.³ This archetype illustrates a situation where partners become inadvertent adversaries, despite the obvious benefits they each receive from their partnership. According to Kemeny, this archetype applies to "teams working across functions, joint-ventures between organizations, union-management battles, suppliers and manufacturers, family disputes, and even civil wars."⁴ Clearly, this archetype can also apply to partners running a small design firm together (Figure 1.8).

Archetype One: Everyone Is Dissatisfied

This archetype, illustrated in Figure 1.6, describes a situation where firm leaders are feeling stretched, pressured, and unsatisfied. Although the leaders are often unaware of it, in these firms it is likely that the staff is feeling similarly. Other symptoms

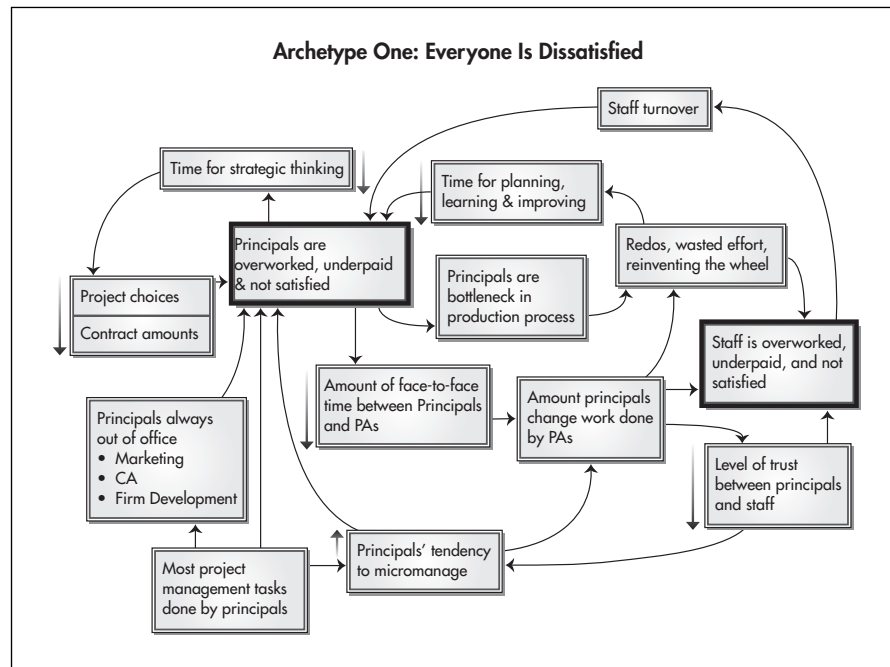


Figure 1.6 Vicious cycles can cause both principals and staff to feel overworked and underpaid.

of this situation may be a low level of trust between staff and leadership, no time for firm development, and an atmosphere of “fire-fighting.”

As shown in Figure 1.6, several vicious circles are in play in this situation. When principals are overstretched and often out of the office, they are likely to be less available to project architects (PAs). When they are less available to PAs, principals can become bottlenecks in the production process causing an increase of waste, the need for redos, and lots of “reinventing the wheel.” This may result in deadline-generated crises or other perceived emergencies leading to less time for strategic thinking, less time for process improvement, and ultimately, even more demands on the principals. It may also result in an increase in the principals’ tendency to micromanage, a decrease in trust between principal and staff, and an increase in dissatisfaction among the staff. Increased dissatisfaction among the staff may lead to increased turnover, which, in turn, increases demands on the principals. These patterns may continue year after year, punctuated by events such as the bitter loss of a key employee or illness due to overwork and stress. Firms that are stuck in this pattern have a difficult time growing, no matter how clear the vision of the firm may be. Sometimes the level of dissatisfaction is not overt or easily perceived, but lies beneath the surface awaiting triggers for eruption or sudden unexpected change. The ways out of this system mostly reside in the realm of project management and self-aware leadership. Archetype One is revisited in Chapter 5: Lifecycle of a Small Firm in the section titled “Getting to the Next Level.”

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Archetype Two: Administrative Breakdown

Many small firm leaders underestimate the impact of administrative effectiveness on the success of their firms. It's easy to give firm development attention to marketing or to acquiring new design or technical capability. However, the ability to translate firm capacity into steady cash flow and the ability to have a stable and productive work environment often depends on the effectiveness of administrative functions.

In small firms, administrative functions include reception, marketing support, bookkeeping, benefits administration, project management support, executive support to principals, and general office management. The accompanying sidebar list of tasks is impressive and it is certainly not complete. Considering the importance of the tasks, many small firm leaders underinvest in administrative technology and personnel. While drawing technology is continually upgraded, administrative software is often left unchanged and can become severely out of date. When additional professional staff is hired, administrative staff is often expected to handle more work in the same amount of time, frequently with software that requires constant work-arounds and manual posting.

Administrative Functions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Reception<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Phone■ Email■ Walk-ins■ Greeting guests/clients■ Marketing Support<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Proposal preparation■ Tracking proposals■ Tracking contacts and follow-ups■ Bookkeeping<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Invoicing■ Accounts payables■ Payroll■ Project tracking■ Financial reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Benefits Administration<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Healthcare■ Paid time off■ Vacation schedule■ Project Management Support<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Project startup support■ Project budget tracking■ Utilization rate tracking■ Executive Support to Principals<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Appointments■ Miscellaneous clerical■ General Office Management<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Office equipment and technology■ Supplies

Because administrative work is usually not billable, and represents a significant percentage of overhead expense in a small firm, it is understandable that investment might be delayed. While there may be some short-term benefit to that strategy, Figure 1.7 shows what can happen in the long term when administrative processes break down.

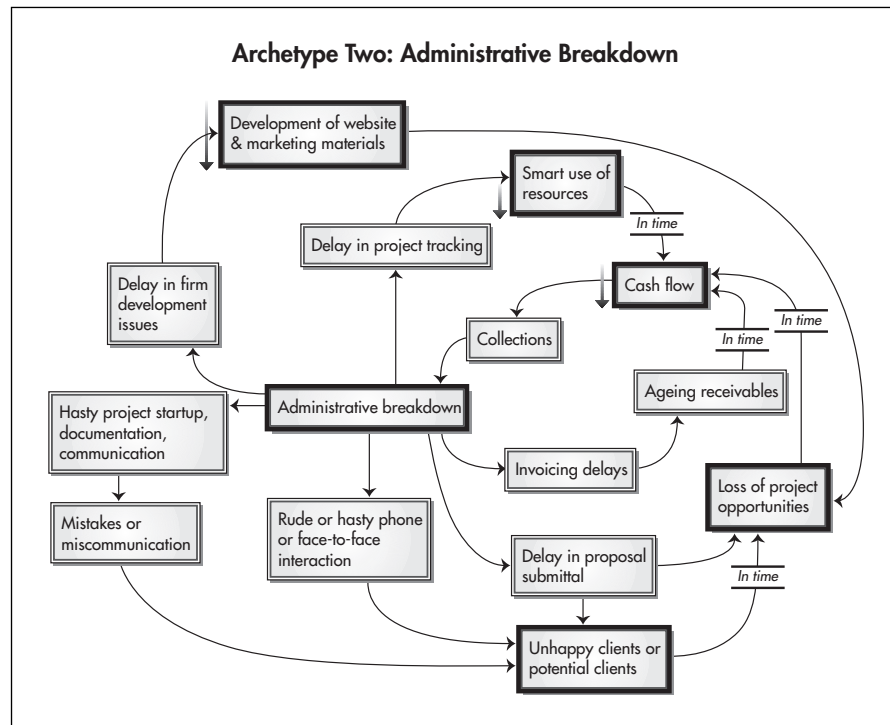


Figure 1.7 Breakdown of administrative functions can impact cash flow, project acquisition, and client service.

Archetype Two shows that when administrative processes are ineffective there are three significant effects over time: a drop in cash flow due to late invoicing and project tracking; unhappy clients or potential clients due to mistakes or an atmosphere of fire-fighting; and loss of potential projects due to delays in submitting proposals or lack of marketing development. It's clear to see that firm development and firm growth can be significantly inhibited by a breakdown in administrative processes.

Figure 1.7 also illustrates that administrative work must be done and, as a result, if there is not adequate administrative support, the firm partners will end up doing some or most of these tasks. The partners' time will be counted in overhead at a higher rate than an administrator's hours and may also represent a significant loss in time spent on billable work, project acquisition, or firm development. It is easy to see that having capable and adequate administrative support is crucial to profitability and overall firm success.

The general ratio of professional staff to administrative support in design firms is about five to one, according to the Society for Design Administration (SDA). This refers to full-time equivalencies so administrative hours will include some of the partners' time, the professional staffs' time, and the time of external consultants. This

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means that once a firm grows to six or seven, a full-time administrator will likely be needed. Firms that are ten to twelve will probably need two full-time administrators and firms from fifteen to twenty will probably need two administrators plus some external support, such as a payroll service or a marketing consultant. Small firms of all sizes will benefit from the use of performance management software, a topic fully discussed in Chapter Three. Also see Chapter Three for an analysis of how the situation depicted in Archetype Two can be reversed.

Archetype Three: Unintentional Enmity

The third archetype of small firm practice centers on firm leadership. Often composed of two or three partners, the relationship between the partners can have a significant effect on both profitability and career contentment. This archetype, shown in Figure 1.8, is about partners who have much to benefit from their association and are committed to the success of their partnership. Even though loyal to the partnership, each partner continues to act in ways that promote their individual style, competencies, and interests. Without intention to harm, these actions

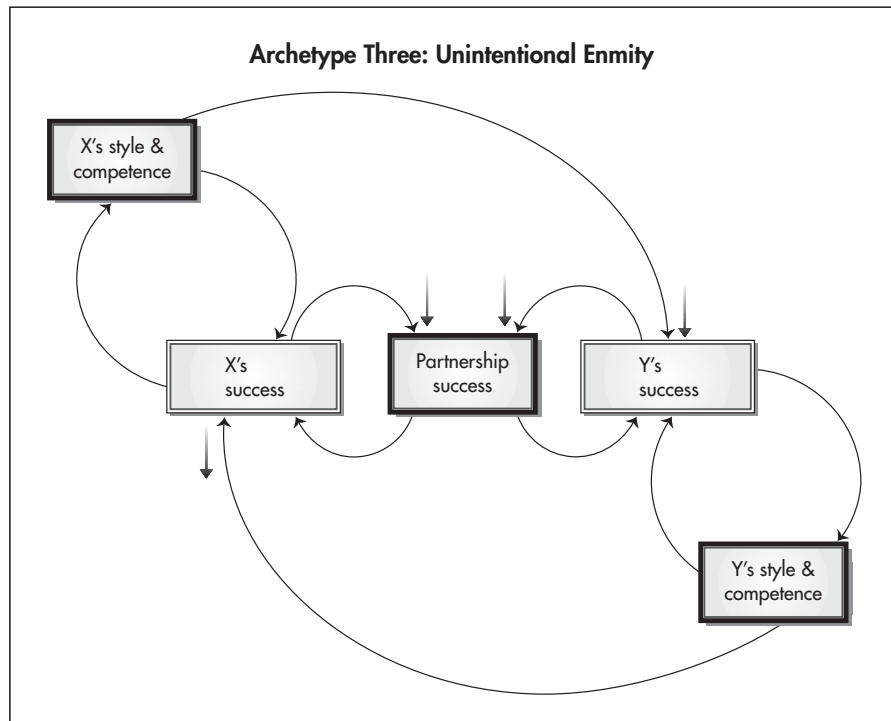


Figure 1.8 Partners with ample motivation to get along still might unintentionally sabotage each other.

somehow obstruct the success of the other partner and ultimately diminish the success of the partnership.

In partnerships of two firm owners, this dynamic is especially destructive when it plays out in the form of interpersonal relationships. Take the case of BC and DW, partners in a firm of 15. With differing professional experience and personality styles, BC and DW have built a successful generalist firm, emphasizing their ability to do projects of all sizes. They each benefit significantly from the strengths of the other, each attracting clients from differing market sectors and each highly capable of delivering projects, although with differing styles.

The same personality differences that benefit the partnership also make it extremely difficult for them to work together productively. BC is introverted, yet expressive of his emotions, occasionally having impulsive outbursts. He tends toward a directive tone with the staff and could not be described as warm. Nevertheless, BC is introspective, willing to pursue personal growth and willing to engage in difficult conversations. BC explains that his outbursts are meaningless and they help him concentrate.

DW, on the other hand, is extroverted and personable. He manages through being well-liked and is highly supportive to the staff. However open he may seem, DW is very emotionally withholding. He abhors confrontation and tends to bury his feelings while building resentment inside. DW believes that endless conversations are counterproductive and it's best just to go on and let events determine the course of things.

Each partner is very disturbed by the behavior of the other and feels that it diminishes their ability to be effective. Each is building a case against the other, noting examples that validate their stance and are becoming more competitive and hostile each day. Despite the fact that they benefit substantially from their partnership, it is likely to be short-lived. This is an example of the "Unintentional Enmity" archetype in action. The nature of partnerships in small firms and how this situation might be reversed or prevented is discussed in Chapter 4, Leadership Matters.

ENDNOTES

1. David Meister, *Managing Professional Service Firms*, Free Press Paperbacks, NY, 1993.
2. Daniel H. Kim, *Systems Thinking Tools*, Pegasus Communications Inc., Cambridge, MA, 1994.
3. Jennifer Kemeny, "Accidental Adversaries," *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith, eds., Doubleday, NY, 1994, p. 145.
4. Ibid.

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