Managing Quality in Architecture

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Integrating BIM, Risk & Design Process

Book review: Value Redesigned: New Models for professional practice, by Kyle Davy & Susan L. Harris

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The names of Clayton Christensen, Arie de Gues, Ronald Heifetz, Peter Senge and Stephen Shapiro won't ring bells with the great majority of readers. However, these thinkers – and others – have been laying the intellectual groundwork for a solution to the mental trap that professional consultants have found themselves in.

More recently, two people in our industry, helped by a brilliant and dedicated group of two dozen volunteers, have taken the work of these pioneers and extracted from it a landmark set of guidelines for rethinking, and re-engineering, the way we practice. These two people, Kyle Davy, AIA, and Susan L. Harris, PhD, in 2005 published a book on their research: *Value Redesigned: New Models for Professional Practice* (Greenway Communications).

This is a valuable and timely contribution to the practice of architecture at a critical juncture in its long, proud history. I won't attempt a précis of their work; just introduce you to it and urge you to read and think about their conclusions if improving your professional position is part of your goal-set.

That doesn't mean you'll find it an easy read. Davy and Harris take you on a journey through unfamiliar territory, where the practice landmarks you know have disappeared.

This journey starts with reasons why change in the way we practice is needed, considers the characteristics of a 'living firm' as described by de Gues, the marketing of value vs. time, the ecology of business models, and explores the gap between stakeholder expectations and current professional mind-sets.

Then the woods gets thicker, with a walk through the new social complexities of organizational ecosystems and the new technological complexities of value networks. They help you through this forest with some guidelines on how to shift your mind and lift your awareness; your perspective; in order to first catch up, and then get ahead in your understanding of the issues.

You are now at the quarter-point, and enter a discussion of *domains*, and how to update them (architecture is a domain); followed by some guidelines for business model innovation, including ecology of firms, the 'experience' economy, finally coming to a discussion of Heifetz' three 'types' of work.

Davy and Harris call these three types *technical, collaborative* and *transformative*. Technical work, the traditional mainstay of architecture, is 'selling hours': technical solutions to client problems where leadership is not required.

Collaborative work is that where leadership is required; Davy and Harris posit that our failure to meet the challenges of this type are directly responsible for a loss of influence and the increasing commoditization of design services.

Transformative work means that the clients need not just project leadership, but bigger-picture organizational help and leadership, to guide them through difficult, rapidly changing environments – more like redesigning the *client* than the project.

Now that you've got a handle on your future work options, the authors march you into thinking about organizational ecosystems and how to become a 'keystone species' – an idea we once took for granted but is now a distant memory. Then it's on to explore value networks and technology s-curves, disruptive technologies, and technical innovation and creativity (with a discussion of Gehry's Bilbao Museum as an example).

We're at the halfway point, with thoughts on how to develop new social and leadership capacities and lead innovation next, followed by some much-needed awareness development, to take us to the archway of learning how to transform your practice should you by now believe you have no alternative but to do so.

Shall I go on, or has this exhausted you already, just cruising past the chapter headings? I will. Next comes a look at the breakthrough work of Daniel Goleman and others on emotional intelligence, and how that relates to design, an in-depth look at the intricacies of collaborative work, and a thorough exploration of transformative work in client systems.

Lastly, Davy and Harris consider what all these opportunities mean for creating value for clients, how to price that value, and how to sell services within that model.