

Look Out!

Many discussions right now among the leaders of firms involve daily tactics. Can our pipeline feed our staff this month? Are our expenses in line with our cash flow? What projects are we chasing right now and when will they close?

This is a necessity. Times are tight. This is also a good habit to continue when more plentiful times return – we should *always* be minding our business and keeping an eye on key metrics. But we should also be pausing regularly to look out into the future too. We should not lose our focus on the big picture and how that may be impacting our firms.

Firm leaders need to be tuned into trends that could be game changers for their firms. How?

- Read materials from outside of your industry – and outside your clients' industries. It is a big world out there – the built environment exists to design and construct the infrastructure that supports that big world!
- Hang around big picture thinkers. I just joined an organization called the World Future Society, the world's largest organization devoted to the future's exploration (www.wfs.org). It is a tremendous resource for publications and conferences focused on looking out.
- Gather your firm leaders regularly to discuss the big picture and how your firm should be preparing for trends in technology, demographics and live styles. Bring in experts to help you.

As a special report from the World Future Society, states, "Foresight is a secret ingredient of success, because without foresight we cannot prepare for the future." (from *The Art of Foresight*) Spending time in the nitty gritty of today is certainly important to maintaining the health of our businesses today, but spending time looking out is essential to maintaining the health of our businesses tomorrow too.