Dear AIASFV Chapter Member,

I understand that the Chinese character for crisis is the combination of 2 dissonant concepts: danger and opportunity, like the two ends of a magnet. In English, the word crisis has a bleaker definition, as a time of difficulty, trouble or danger. Nothing about opportunity. This year so far has been packed full of every variety of crises. However, there is also opportunity out there, and that is what I’d like to emphasize today, looking for and finding the opportunities. Let’s take a page from the Chinese etymology and focus through the fog of our crescendo of crises to the myriad opportunities presented if we set our minds to defog our vision and discover them, those opportunities.

It is reasonable to say that the phrase CRISIS CENTRAL can be applied to this year. At home and abroad, in our professional world, the impact of COVID IS EVERYWHERE: building department shutdowns, delays and shuttering, client fears and concerns, project halts, anything that we see in the news seems to dramatically impact how and what we work on. My 85-year-old Dad says we’re going to hell in a hand basket. Some AIA members I’ve talked to have been able to weather the storm, some are concerned about how to keep the lights on. Everyone is aware of work that is going away permanently or being furloughed to unknown points in the future or switched to virtual tools that we may not have in our toolbox, at least not yet.

Yes, there is a ton of bad news out there. So, to counteract that, I’ve collected from our membership suggestions that they have or are using to pivot to new opportunities. Some of them have turned surprising let-downs into tremendous opportunities that they’ve shared with us. Most are free, some have minimal fees, and all are accessible from your locked down, quarantined zombie-apocalypse bunker. I hope this summary helps you and those around you that are suffering through these crises.

**What you can do**

As Architects, we are comfortable with evaluating, planning, and designing. Now is a perfect time to do that for ourselves personally and for our offices.

**Relevant Articles**

Whether you are a solo practitioner or represent a firm, these articles have some interesting insights that are worth considering:


**Update your training**

Now is the perfect time to update your software knowledge, and there are plenty of online resources from YouTube to package specific programs. For instance, my favorite online class for Rhino and Grasshopper is Rhino for Architects Masterclass. Contact Dusan at how2rhino@gmail.com.

**Consider these software packages:**

- Revit
- Rhino & Grasshopper
- Sketchup
- InDesign
- Enscape Rendering
- After Effects
- Excel
- Bluebeam
Expand your credentials
I have personally been prepping for my contractor’s license; it is much easier as an architect than I thought it would be. My resource on that is https://contractorexamschools.com

Have you been planning on completing any of these? Now is the time!

CASp
Well
NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification)
EDAC (Evidence-based Design Accreditation and Certification for Healthcare Design)
LEED AP (Various grades)
Green Globe Professional
PMP (Project Management Professional)

Get involved in public advocacy issues for architects such as:
AIA SFV committees. Contact the chapter office to find out where the needs are; there are plenty!
California Building Standards Commission (influence code dialogue in our state)
International Building Code Council (influence code dialogue in our nation)

Update Your Resume
Take a hard look at your resume. What you do or don’t include will depend on what position(s) you want to apply for, which might leave you with multiple resumes. Make sure you talk about your experience and capitalization of projects. Look at other resumes and 3rd party services for examples. If you are going to talk to headhunters, they are also a good sounding board. I’ve listed some further down.

Update your Marketing and Business Development Packages for Yourself and/or Your Company
Now is the perfect time to update your resume. What haven’t you shown? Are there new opportunities or formats for you to consider?

resume
bio sheet
head shot
press releases
publications
digital brochures
portfolio of works
brag sheets (Professional & Personal)
project List (including year built, construction cost and your role/capacity

Update your digital / social footprint
Review, update or create your network of professional & social contacts. Cast as broad a net as you can. Look for social sites that you were not aware of. To start with, look at these:
Linked In
ULI (Urban Land Institute)
Alignable
Connect with professional members you know of. If for nothing else, start with AIASFV members (hint: look for their contact and yours on the chapter site: http://www.aiasfv.org/member-list/).

**Adopt a practice of always adapting**
Some of the members that are working told me the work they have is because in previous crises, they realized they needed to diversify their portfolios. Consider leveraging what you know with other building types. Consider aligning or combining with other practices or professionals. Eliminate “that will never work” from your vocabulary and replace it with “how could we make that work?” One member told me in reflecting on their success in shifting from layoff to new jobs in new: “Be Facile; don’t be afraid”.

**Interview preparation and headhunters**
Firms really like experience, confidence, and personality. Potential hiring firms will ask how would you handle staff, how your direction aligns with theirs, your goals, and many other questions will be asked of you, and you want to be ready with good responses. There are lists of interview questions on the internet, which are not always updated or right for your situation, which leads to headhunters. Their success depends on knowing the market needs and priorities. Here is a list of headhunters that some of our members have been successful with:

These firms are well-connected in our industry here in California and elsewhere
Rick Fivekiller: (505) 473-3498; email: erfivek@msn.com
Nancy Horne: NDH Search Worldwide: (323) 464-6494; email: Nancy.horne@ndhsearch.com
Cybercoders.com – very active/aggressive

Here are a few more that I was told about that might be worth investigating:
Hanna &amp; Associates
The Bachrach Group (Healthcare)
52x Consulting

What the Chapter is doing

**Newsletter resources:**
Each newsletter has resources that are worth reviewing and considering: events, contacts and more. If you come across information that may be helpful – or if you are good at writing and can keep an article pithy and short, submit these to the chapter office.

**Job Board:**
The chapter reaches out to firms of all sizes to post their openings on our website. If you are looking for work, please consider adding your resume to our Job Board: http://www.aiasfv.org/job-openings-2/.

It is also worth going directly to firms you are aware of. For instance, Gensler keeps a current list of career options with them on their website: https://www.gensler.com/careers
Roundtable on Governmental Affairs:
The chapter is planning a working roundtable to discuss and outline the difficulty of getting projects through the City of Los Angeles. We plan to follow the roundtable by meeting with City officials to discuss roadblocks and opportunities; our next step would be a working session with City officials to assist in streamlining the process. Watch for the invitation and join us in this problem-solving process!

[See revisions in paragraph above.]

Maintaining your membership during the downturn:
If you are directly impacted by the current situation, reach out to Desiree Gemigniani, our Executive Director. There are options available to maintain your membership.

What AIA National is doing

Courses and Webinars on Surviving down times and the pandemic
AIAU (https://aiau.aia.org/) is continually updating its site with new courses regarding the impacts of the pandemic – and are free to AIA members, including:


I hope you will find these resources as helpful as I have. A huge thank you to the people who passed along their suggestions and information above. We are all in this together. Let’s stay connected, pool our resources, find new ways to survive – and ultimately thrive.

Best,

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