

SPEKTRA GLOBAL

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MasterBuilder

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ARCHITECTURE

The Land Aquisition
Process in GHANA

UPCLOSE
with the Architecture Duo

FACTORY BUILDINGS

START WITH WHY
-Simon Sinek





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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



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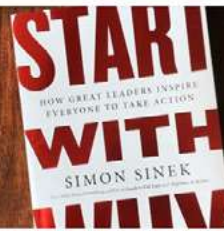
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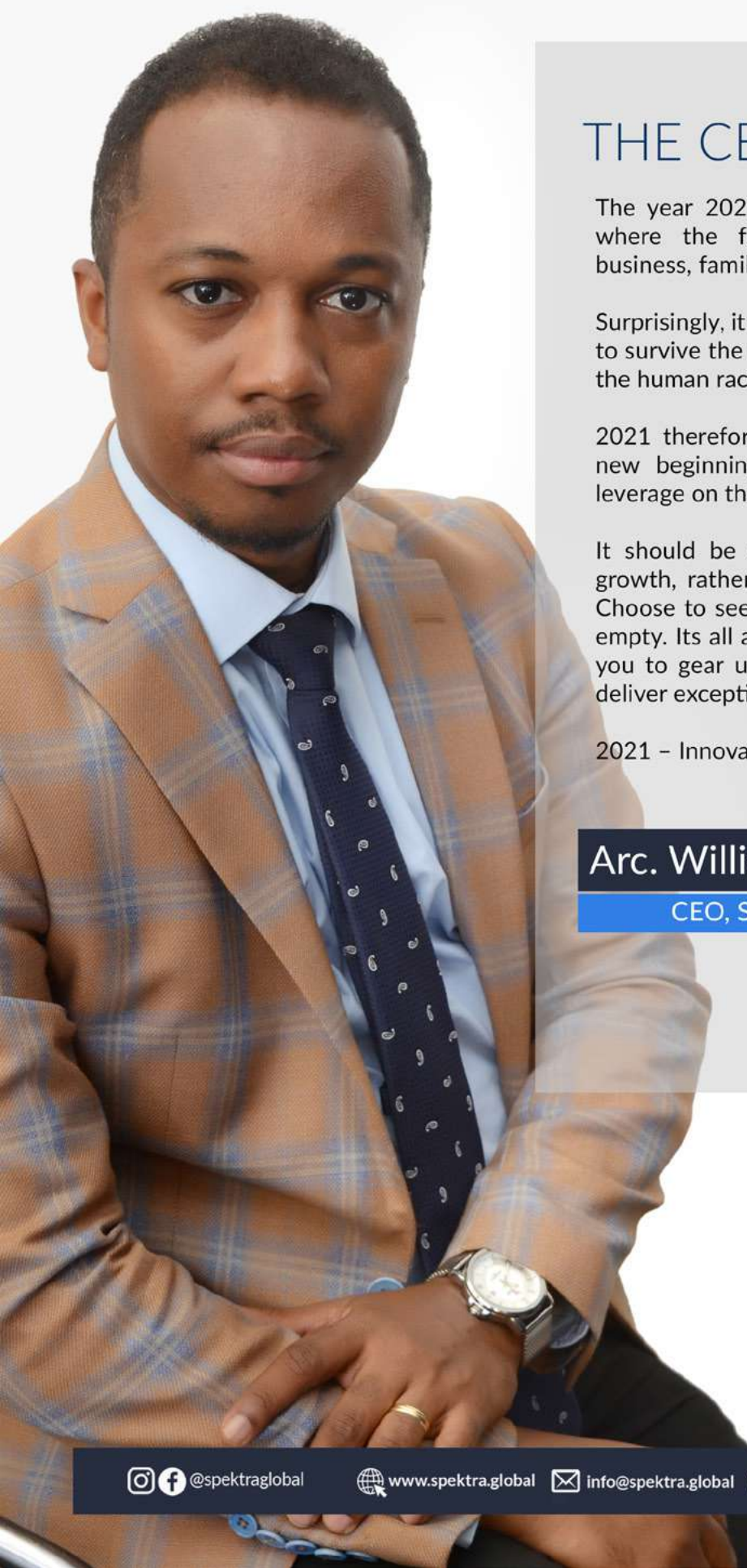
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THE CEO'S THOUGHT

The year 2020 was a turbulent year. A period where the foundations were shaken across business, families and nations.

Surprisingly, it was also a year of quick adaptation to survive the disruption. It showed how resilient the human race is.

2021 therefore, should be viewed as a year of new beginnings and a year of innovation to leverage on the disruption to grow.

It should be seen as an opportunity for new growth, rather than a recovery from disruption. Choose to see the glass half full rather than half empty. Its all about your perception. I encourage you to gear up, be invigorated and innovate to deliver exceptional value!

2021 – Innovate. Grow. Deliver

Arc. William Evans Halm

CEO, Spektra Global Ltd.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Welcome to the Master Builder, a new and insightful magazine by Spektra Global that aims to enlighten our audience on the built environment, sharing practical ideas in architecture, interior design, construction, engineering, landscape and real estate, helping to demystify the intricacies of shelter that affects the way we live, work, play and worship.

The master builder, the head of a building project has the ability to envision magnificent structures in his mind and weave it together with crude materials, processes from first principles and technology, to birth edifices endowed with strength, beauty, finesse and harmony.

This annual magazine is to give you windows into the workings of the master builders so that you also can live well as far as the basic human need of shelter is concerned.

In this maiden edition, we have curated very exciting content for you to equip you in your endeavor to create edifices of your own. Being Master builders at Spektra, we have given you architecture, interior design, city development content with real-life examples and inspiration to help you achieve more.

We are happy to be with you.

Live loved

Karen Halm
Architect | Entrepreneur | Public Speaker

HOW TO DRIVE LONG-TERM SUCCESS IN TURBULANT TIMES

Business is all about seizing chances. Many entrepreneurs will pass on incredible opportunities when the going gets rough, leaving all the benefits to the few who grab and persist. In reality, studies show that awareness of opportunity and creativity are stronger determinants of start-up success in difficult economic times than in periods of economic prosperity. Furthermore, research shows that the innovation of the product and service opportunities captured and launched during poor economic times by start-ups is substantially greater than the solutions launched in a stable economy. Here are three main considerations that start-ups can adopt in turbulent times to drive long-term success.

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY AND NECESSITY:

New ventures motivated by necessity are when businessmen choose entrepreneurship during poor market conditions to supplement, compliment or replace another company or a job. Unlike necessity start-ups, research suggests that in uncertain times, opportunity-driven businesses are more likely to innovate and succeed.

FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SUCCESS:

By prioritizing customer engagement, developing your solution slowly, even if you are just servicing a few customers due to a sluggish economy, helps you to nail down the center of your product and build on solid foundations the next phases. This way, you'll have a proven product ready for scale by the time the market catches up.

FOCUS ON CUSTOMER RETENTION:

During a harsh economic situation, development declines. The aim is to sustain market growth in parallel with investing in ventures with long-term returns.

Since keeping a customer is cheaper than obtaining new ones, ensuring customer success is essential to the success of your short and long-term start-up. It's a good time to take a hard look at what makes your start-up successful, so you can reflect on what specifically leads to your ability to execute and remove distractions from your value proposition. Be patient above all. A differentiator is longevity.

Angie Hicks compiled the following list of potential ways in which these small business service professionals may need to improve their marketing and business practices to provide their valuable services.

FOCUS ON THE OUTSIDE:

Consider focusing on home or business ventures that require little or no direct interaction, such as exterior ventures, where possible.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT:

Minimize physical contact with your customers. You might want to also consider adding a simple chat or video option to your website to facilitate clear communications.

COMBINE PROJECTS:

If you're talking to a customer for one project, check to see if they have other pressing tasks, which you could complete in the same timeframe.

SANITIZE BEFORE AND AFTER WORK:

As a professional service provider, you should take careful steps to clean and sanitize before, during and after in-home services. In particular, be sure to disinfect the expected work area and commonly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and light switches

LOOK AHEAD:

We are going to come out of this crisis, hopefully sooner than we all think. You hopefully will have customers with pent up demand for a variety of projects. Use this time to create network connections with other contractors or professionals you might be able to utilize in the near future to meet this customer demand.

Source:

Riani, A., 2020. How To Drive Long-Term Start-up Success In Turbulent Times. [online] Forbes.

Schroeder, B. (2020, April 14). Angie's List Cofounder Serves Up Advice to Small Business Home Service Providers On Weathering The Coronavirus Storm.

Business impact of COVID-19 on real estate & what to do

Daniel, we will have to hold on regarding discussions on this project because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will pick it up again when all of this normalizes". That was a director of a company telling me over the phone the need to adopt a wait and see before putting pen to paper.

"Well, thank you very much Mr. Covid-19, congratulations for stalling and hurting what would have been a great deal!" The rippling effects of this virus has been sharp, jobs and contracts lost, businesses on hold, loss of revenue and income streams and I am sure there are several others out there who have had to bear the brunt of this corona virus/covid- 19 pandemic as well.

Are you are broker, mortgagor, tenant, landlord, developer? Then you are the one I am speaking to. The good book however says not to despair, so what are the practical steps we can take to overcome the situation. Impact on real estate developers It is open secret that real estate developers access project funding from banks and financial institutions with most selling off plan (selling while construction is yet to start or development still under construction) in the hope that these sales and by extension revenue or cash inflows will be sustained once project is on course and on time. Time clearly is absolutely crucial as this pandemic has thrown or disrupted completely the project schedules.

Buyers are adopting a wait and see attitude, meaning they are less inclined to invest when they are uncertain of delivery of the project; material suppliers are also less likely to supply with usual credit lines because of same uncertainty. With construction not classified as an essential service, labour or site hands to undertake the construction will be unavailable due to full or partial lockdowns throwing construction timelines out of sync

And as for property viewings which require physical presence, they have dropped significantly as prospects a distancing as much as possible. If you are a developer, what can you do? Well, in Ghana and unlike France where the impact of covid-19 has been fully recognised as an act of nature or force majeure, you are still bound and obliged to fulfil your contract.

The only good thing is that, some institutions are putting a human face in the midst of the pandemic, hence you can at this point appeal or renegotiate the contract terms and request for a moratorium or grace period pending normalization. If the appeal doesn't suffice and you are most likely not able to argue force majeure, speak to your lawyers to explore the possibility of frustration of the contract clause. The lawyers can best advice, it's not all gloom, not just yet. Impact on landlords and tenants and by tenants here, I don't mean only residential tenants but also commercial tenants.

If you are a residential tenant and are self-employed, your situation is direr as the impact or specifically, cessation of cash inflows will hamper your ability to renew leases or rents. Same applies to commercial entities who may even be locked in longer term leases and who though needing periodic renewals may find themselves tied down with such a drastic toll or slow sales,. Even worse are the businesses that have been affected by the lock- down and are simply unable to do regular business due to the shutdown.

In some countries, like the UAE, landlords are being sensitive to the situation and giving a 3 month reprieve while in New York there is an eviction moratorium too. In Ghana however, I am yet to come across any such measure and hence it's not only the tenants that suffer but the landlords as well whose potential income stream will most likely be curtailed. So, what do both parties do even while there is growing uncertainty as to restoration of normal times. In these times, the soundest approach is to avoid being legalist and rather employing negotiation as much as possible by seeking moratoriums and rental concessions.

It is also recommended that you pick up for review that lease agreement again, to check if by any chance, there is any insurance cover with respect to specific policies like General Liability, Business Interruption or Crisis Management insurance etc. In sum, these aren't normal times and definitely not the "I know my rights" times. These times call for calmer heads and constant review and renegotiations of contractual terms and conditions by all parties in the real estate supply chain. Are you with me?

2021 New Beginnings

Requirements for a New Office

REQUIREMENTS FOR A NEW OFFICE

Criteria

- Can you afford it?
- Does it have insurance?
- Is it big enough for everyone without anyone being uncomfortable?
- Would it accommodate all the manager's personal space?
- Does it have rooms you can use for business meetings and conference?
- Is there room if you decide to expand in the future?
- Does the space have air conditioning, or central heating? If it doesn't, installation will cost you more."
- Does it have a kitchen?
- Does it have bathrooms? Showers?
- Is it close to amenities (shops, gyms, saloons, hairdressers, bus and tube stations)?"
- Is it comfortable for clients to visit?
- Is it a relatively safe area? Are the streets lit well? Is it close to busy streets? Is there hired security in the vicinity?
- Does it have available parking space? Can you store bikes securely?
- Are there enough power sockets?

OFFICE RELOCATION PROCESS

Priliminary

- Finalize lease for new location
- Notify present landlord of termination date
- Advise staff of date and location of move
- Engage designer for new premises
- Create a master change-of-address list

Pre-Move (General)

- Reserve elevators and loading docks for moving day
- Bid and award moving contract
- Bid and award telephone and computer cabling
- Inventory existing furniture
- Code furniture and equipment on a colour-coded floor plan
- Audit keys
- Order any new office furniture and equipment
- Order new stationery
- File change-of-address forms with post office and forward mail
- Check your insurance coverage for the move
- Obtain the Certificate of Occupancy and any other required permits or licenses
- Advise suppliers (telephone, bottled water, coffee service) of new address
- Alert photocopier contractor

- Decide on security procedures for the move
- Mail moving notices
- Banks and financial institutions
- Clients and customers
- Professional organizations
- Credit accounts and credit cards
- Insurance companies
- Accounts receivable and payable
- Newspaper and magazine subscriptions
- Telephone company and internet service provider
- Prospects and special services
- Hold a meeting at new premises three weeks prior to move. Bring in all parties involved (design/construction/mover/cabling company/information technology specialist) to ensure all details are covered and all responsibilities clear
- Change locks/access codes on new premises as close to moving day as possible to secure access
- Schedule public relations effort, including plans for news releases and an "office warming" party
- Arrange for listing on lobby directory of new building
- Arrange for post-move cleaning

Pre-Move (Internal)

- Organize a "staff moving committee" if appropriate and delegate responsibilities
- Schedule and prepare agenda for your employee move orientation meeting
- Finalize seating plan and identify each location
- Prepare labels for moving furniture and boxes to new locations
- Assign move supervisors in each department
- Develop a master relocation project schedule
- Schedule and implement a clean-up program (purge files, dispose of trash)"
- Schedule staff for unpacking, including stocking supply cabinets, storerooms, file rooms, and removing tags from all furniture and equipment.
- Arrange for off-site storage of old files
- Pack contents of all filing cabinets and desks, ensuring everything is properly labeled
- Arrange for staff to tour new premises a few weeks prior to move
- Schedule post-move training for security, fire, and life safety procedures at the new facility
- Distribute access cards and keys for new premises

Moving Day

- Arrange with the building manager to have the air conditioning on during the move
- Remove computer equipment (server) and phone system prior to arrival of movers and commence reinstallation at new site
- Draft an emergency contact list for vendors such as elevator maintenance, building management, utilities, telecommunications and moving company

Post Move

- Install and test telephone system
- Distribute new phone list and map showing the locations of departments
- Install and test all computers
- Do a detailed walk-through of the premises and report any damage to moving company
- Transfer your insurance to the new location
- Obtain Certificates of Insurance from your insurance company
- Confirm termination of old leases
- Collect parking passes, security cards and keys for the old facility.
- Confirm the return of any deposits held by the landlord for these items
- Audit final invoices against contracts
- Complete and file all warranty information for all new furniture and equipment
- Update fixed asset accounting system for any new furniture and equipment purchased
- Confirm the change-of-address corrections made
- Schedule press release and client announcement

Factory Buildings

10 SUCCESS CONSIDERATIONS

01

NATURE OF MANUFACTURING PROCESS

This is the main determinant of plant buildings. The design varies with the type of product to be manufactured and the equipment required for the process. The floor load, head space, bay size, type of structure, etc., all depend on this factor.

02

FLEXIBILITY

The flexibility of a factory building allows the owner to easily change his product should he find something more profitable. He/she certainly cannot build another building. The flexibility therefore keeps the building from becoming whites maintaining the same operating efficiency even if there is a change in product, process or equipment.

03

MATERIAL HANDLING

The building should be design in a way that makes material handling very easy. This is essential because it reduces manufacturing cycle time, avoids production bottlenecks and reduces material handling cost.

04

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The size of the factory building depends upon space requirements for the process flow, storage of materials, location and operation of machines, movement of employees, etc. The ceiling height, for example, depends on the type of equipment used and so on.

05

PLANT PROTECTION

Considering the high value of such investments, the factory should be so designed that there is adequate protection from fire, theft, accidents, vandalism, forces of nature, etc.

06

AESTHETICS

An attractive, well designed factory promotes community goodwill. A pleasant workplace boosts the morale of the employees. And positively impacts their health and well-being. An elegant factory building adds to the pride and prestige of the organization whites projecting the progressive outlook of the

07

LIGHTING & VENTILATION

Lighting is one of the most important environmental factors which increases productivity, reduces accidents, reduces spoilage and consequent rework, increases employee well-being due to less strain on the eye.

Ventilation is basically the removal of stale air from the building. Without this, there will be bad smell concentration of carbon-dioxide, humidity and high temperatures. Inadequate ventilation results in discomfort and fatigue with a resultant reduction in output.

08

FUTURE EXPANSION

The possibility of future expansion should be kept in view especially due to the rapid growth of manufacturing businesses on the continent. The direction of the expansion should however be established from the onset: length-wise or breadth-wise or vertically.

09

EMPLOYEE FACILITIES

Good employee facilities are incentives to the employees of an organization. The factory building should therefore make provision for adequate and decent washrooms, cafeterias, staff lounges, housing, etc. this will help the company to attract and retain their best staff

10

MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

Waste management, emergency power, fire suppression, compressed air, mechanical circulation, etc., should also be considered in the factory building. The systems design for must be such that certifications are easy to acquire.

AfCFTA and the African Business: Blessing or Curse?

- Diversification also calls for different approaches to design problems. This is just what Africa needs to get out of the sinking sand of conservative business ideas that do not work anymore.

Such diversification could rebrand the vernacular architecture and African styles of architecture that is slowly dying out and give it a more modernist touch



Growth & Expansion

- Architectural firms can now spread their influence in foreign lands and work with clients in Member States.
- Local firms can go international by establishing their firms in Member States. This would even create more space for employment of young architects.
- The enhancement of digitalization will go a long way to make business faster and simpler. Businesses can have online.

- There can be collaboration with other firms within the Trade Area to uptake large-scale infrastructural projects instead of relying on similar firms abroad



Diversification

- AfCFTA does not come with removal of trade taxes but promises to cut internal trade taxes by a whopping 90%. Many building materials are ordered from the Western world at outrageous costs simply because of the tax implications of trading internally. The cut will drastically improve trade among Member States.



- Diversification also calls for different approaches to design problems. This is just what Africa needs to get out of the sinking sand of conservative business ideas that do not work anymore.

Such diversification could rebrand the vernacular architecture and African styles of architecture that is slowly dying out and give it a more modernist touch

Tourism

- Architecture is utilized as a basic instrument to stimulate the tourism development.

Through the buildings we put up and the environments we design, we have the ability to reshape how Africa and African businesses would like in the near future.



- AfCFTA will make Africa one economic country, making it the 8th largest economy in the world. This is fertile grounds for both local and foreign investment.
- Through the buildings we put up and the environments we design, we have the ability to reshape how Africa and African businesses would like in the near future

Wherein Lies The Curse?

After exploring the endless socio-economic possibilities the AfCFTA will bring, it becomes difficult to imagine what could possibly go wrong.

- Member States are going to face a transition period in which they may undergo adjustment costs. This is because sharp falls in tariff revenues may have



- A tougher competitive environment may threaten small-scale businesses because they would have higher trading costs than bigger companies and consequently face financial challenges to compete with greater firms.
- Last but not least, trade liberalization, on its own, does not lead to lower poverty levels in the absence of developing a financial sector, rising education levels and strong governance structure

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 Piatkowska, K.K. (2012). Economy and architecture. The role of architecture in process of building the economic potential of space. Humanities and Social Sciences Review, Vol.1, No. 2, 2012, pp. 549-555.



Leadership & Direction!

MOSES T. COFIE

Managing Consultant, Leaders & Mentors.

A critical task of every leader, is to articulate the vision (goal, target, objective, etc.) so clearly that it is not lost on any of their team members. Unless the team members have a common understanding of the exact destination, they could work at cross purposes.

'Who is a leader?' I recently asked the junior staff of an organization. Their responses were varied, and they sought to describe rather than define a leader; he is confident; he knows his stuff; he's a doer; he's a team player; a problem-solver; an encourager; he's bold; a good listener; he is firm and fair; he's proactive and purposeful; he is results-oriented; he takes ownership for whatever task he is given; he plans ahead; he organizes; he delegates; he takes decisions; he communicates effectively; he is resourceful; he holds people accountable; he is willing to learn; he grows people; he is focussed, and he takes charge.

While their answers did not address my question directly, they provided a generous list of the qualities and attributes that help make an effective leader. Why?

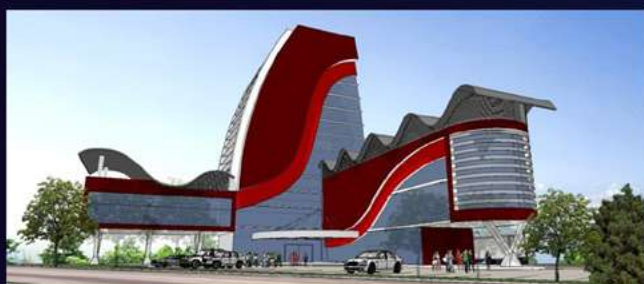
Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal.

It is about developing people and helping them reach their full potential. Inherent in these definitions and the qualities listed, is an implicit assumption that there is a destination we are heading to. Every meaningful venture has a destination, the attainment of which marks success. It may be to obtain a degree, finish reading a book, organise an event successfully, achieve a sales target, learn a new vocation, start a small business, learn a new skill, find a solution to a problem, etc.

If your leader fails to communicate that destination, you have a duty to ask, so that your diligence and hard work are not counter-productive.

EVALUATING A REAL ESTATE PROPERTY BEFORE MAKING THE INVESTMENT

Any form of investment in a Real Estate property is never a cheap one. It is always a high capital investment venture. It does not matter your mode of payment - low monthly deductions on a mortgage, low interest loan, outright purchase, or joint venture - at the end of it all it is capital intensive.



Wiley Towers – a mixed-use design by Spektra Global

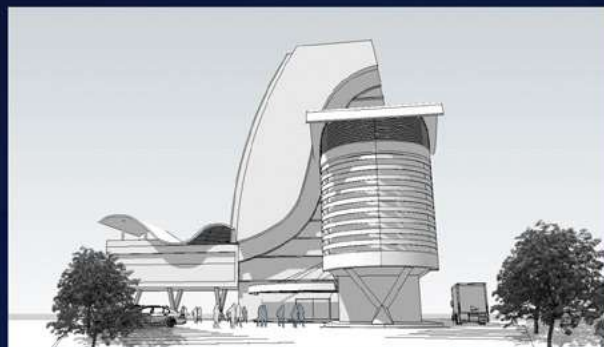
For this reason, many people are able to buy or build just one house in their life time, only a few businesses even own the properties in which they house their headquarters as over 80% opt to rent. Others, both individuals and businesses never own any property at all.

If you, as an individual, business owner or company choose to own a property, then please do not ignore the following:

GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

The mistake many people make is avoiding the most essential item - getting professional assistance. In an attempt to "save" money by avoiding the fees for the service, which they do not realise is only a very small percentage of the entire cost of the property, sometimes as low as 1% - they end up being a penny wise and a pound foolish.

This is because they get saddled with properties that drain the life out of their finances with very high running costs, inability to attract adequate revenue, excessive modifications required and so on. So, before you take such a bold step on as individual or a business ensure you have a professional who will help you in evaluating the property under consideration. If you are a business get a team of consultants (architects, engineers, quantity surveyors) who will represent your interests and ensure you get a good deal. And yes, you need this even if you are building and you've entrusted the project to a good contractor. Somebody has to look out for you.



These figures show a mixed-use development (Wiley Towers) sketch we did at Spektra Global for a client at the feasibility stage. It helped the investor see more clearly both the visual and financial implications of his vision very early in the process. This helped that team take more prudent choices regarding the investment.

A good architect can assemble the best team to help you. If you are buying a home, do well to get a professional to evaluate the property you purchase. By this I mean not just a property/real estate broker, a good architect is your best bet.

CLARIFY YOUR OBJECTIVE

Why are you considering this property?

What exactly are hoping to achieve?

Is it a personal need or want?

Is it for your own consumption or it is an investment that is expected to yield returns monthly or annually?

EXACTLY WHAT PROBLEM ARE YOU TRYING TO SOLVE?

- putting idle cash to use?
- providing a roof over your head?
- Lacking advantage of a financing opportunity?
- Generating a new stream of income?
- Creating an asset such as monkey's fist to attract more value?
- Protecting an already owned asset?

Whatever your intentions are, be clear on it and actually write each of them down. This will form the basis with which the architect and his team will help you. Their job is to help you accomplish that objective.

Also, do well to communicate each detail as in, the time frame within which you would want this transaction completed, the budget allocated for the venture and other stakeholders whose interest must be considered to ensure the success of this acquisition.

EVALUATE THE DESIGN

Yes you may have a team of consultants crossing the T's and dotting the I's for you. But it will be great if you are armed with some simple things to look out for when evaluating the design of a real estate property before purchase or construction

Functionality

Layout - this must make sense and enhance productivity and the lives of the end-users

Architectural science - does it satisfy the conditions for the region in which its meant for? Example, if it's in Africa, how tropical is it? how does it solve problems such as high temperatures, solar ingress, humidity, regional architecture, etc.?

Structural integrity and feasibility - how feasible is it for the building to stand and within what reasonable costs? What construction methodology was proposed? Does it display any "archi-engineering" prowess? Is the expertise available in the region or it has to be imported?

Safety of end-users - in case of fire, earthquake, etc is there an effective means of escape?

Form and aesthetic appeal - is it beautiful? Does the form of what has been created suit the problem it set out to solve? Is it fit for purpose?

Environmental impact - what is it going to cost "mother earth" for this structure to be put up? What interventions have the designers put in place to mitigate any adverse effects and/or enhance it? what is the green cover ratio? etc.



Regionalism and Architecture

Regionalism in architecture is the practice of designing buildings in such a manner that it is reflective of the context and customs of the people in which it is located.

Throughout the history of architecture, different societies have used what they had available and invented indigenous ways to build their accommodation for living, working, playing or worship.

It is usually dependent on Mother Nature, that is, without electricity and other man-made or artificial components to protect humanity from the elements of the environment.

Regionalism in architecture represents the culture of the people, their politics, family dynamics, religion, societal organization and climate. Architecturally it helps in identity creation so that the building itself speaks to the geography,

Regionalism in architecture is the practice of designing buildings in such a manner that it is reflective of the context and customs of the people in which it is located.

Throughout the history of architecture, different societies have used what they had available and invented indigenous ways to build their accommodation for living, working, playing or worship.

It is usually dependent on Mother Nature, that is, without electricity and other man-made or artificial components to protect humanity from the elements of the environment.

With globalization and urbanization however, regionalism is getting more and difficult to achieve so that commercial buildings especially are looking more identical and “international”, devoid of identity and culture.

Successful regionalism is attained in design by appropriate climate response, the choice of building materials, symbolism and cultural integration into the project.



It is this regional architecture that we at Spektra Global sought to achieve in the GIA as well as the Afro chic house (see page 36)

The GIA is a Multi-storey office complex with two level basement parking, a banking hall, restaurant and a rooftop terrace. The peak sunny hours of the day informed the design of the solar shading elements used to shade the exposed facade. It also emphasizes the "Afro Chic" concept by using local kente to create patterns. In responding to green architecture, all Sustainable measures were not overlooked such as, harvesting of rainwater, natural cross, Ventilation, daylighting and the use of solar energy. The concept carries gardens on its terraces which contribute to the cooling of the interior spaces



STREET ART

An Expression of the Soul

Art is beautiful. Art is life. The only problem is in the hustle and bustle of life and living in the city, 80% of us live it. We drive past the various expressions of the soul, only to restore when it's too dark to see even if we had the time or the presence of the mind. The artistic expression of a people as a gaping window to their minds, state of the nation, experiences of families, hopes and aspirations. Street art in Ghana has become an indispensable hue on the urban fabric. All around the capital and beyond we see flashes of colorful murals and paintings all conspicuously drawing attention of passersby. So much so that on an annual basis there is an entire festival dedicated to street art and the urban color. It has become an indispensable part of our culture. A universal language not owned by one ethnic group or nation but a common universal language of freedom and self-expression



Figure 5. Artist perspective, (www.pinterest.dk/pin) 2018

The trend of street art in Ghana begun with artists looking to make some money off their craft in and around the capital and tourist hot spots. With time, street art evolved from solely a money making venture to self-expression.

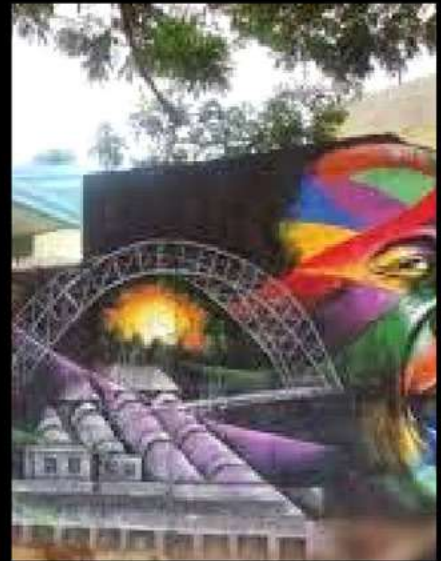
Medicine for Disillusionment

The annual Chale Wote art festival which takes place in the heart of Accra, serves as an arena for exhibiting contemporary African, African-American and Caribbean art. Unappealing surfaces such as concrete bridges, street walls and fencing, become a source of delight, uplifting the spirits of the participants. Artists get to vent any frustrations and visitors also get to forget their worries, even for a brief moment.



The social commentary

Street art, like all other arts is used as tools to make statements about the artist's environment and exposure and even in some cases used to personify the status quo. The image above was created by Brazilian graffiti artist, Alexandre Keto while in Ghana conveying his perception of his environment.



Political art

Street art is also used to make political statements and express a political point of views. Street art sometimes conveys the artist political leanings, historic or controversial figures in Ghana's history all to send an ultimate message to observers. Like many other things politics, also has its shade in the urban hue. Artist express their affections for individuals and parties using their street art. These images come with their own myriad of meaning sometimes to mock, promote and in some cases convey total objection for a person, party or group

Economic barometer

Street art has always existed in one form or another however, with the growth of the middle and upper class in Ghana street artist can now afford to use more expensive paints, sprays and mediums to facilitate their art. Street art vibrancy and intricacy can be used as an unorthodox barometer to visualize the rise of the middle and upper classes in a society.



What does art mean to you?

Are you simply dashing through life without catching your breath to enjoy the little pleasures or even express your deep seated desires? Is there any artistic expression in the way you live, work and play?

For us in Spektra, Art is a cherished tool used to enrich each space, making our clients sigh in relief and enjoy the pleasures life has to offer.

Author

SELORM HORTOR

(Architect, Design Department, Spektra Global)

BOOK SUMMERY

Book Summery on LOSING MY VIRGINITY

AUTHOR: SIR RICHARD BRANSON

Richard Branson was born in the 50s. He was lucky – he was born in a family that taught him to test and push the limits of what is possible.

As a result, he developed a sense of adventure from an early age.

When he was eleven, his mother asked him to visit their relatives who lived really far. He was supposed to go on a bike and with no directions.

Why? Because she wanted to teach him orientation and wanted him to be strong.

The next day Branson returned, by he was not greeted like he did something big.

He was merely given another task.

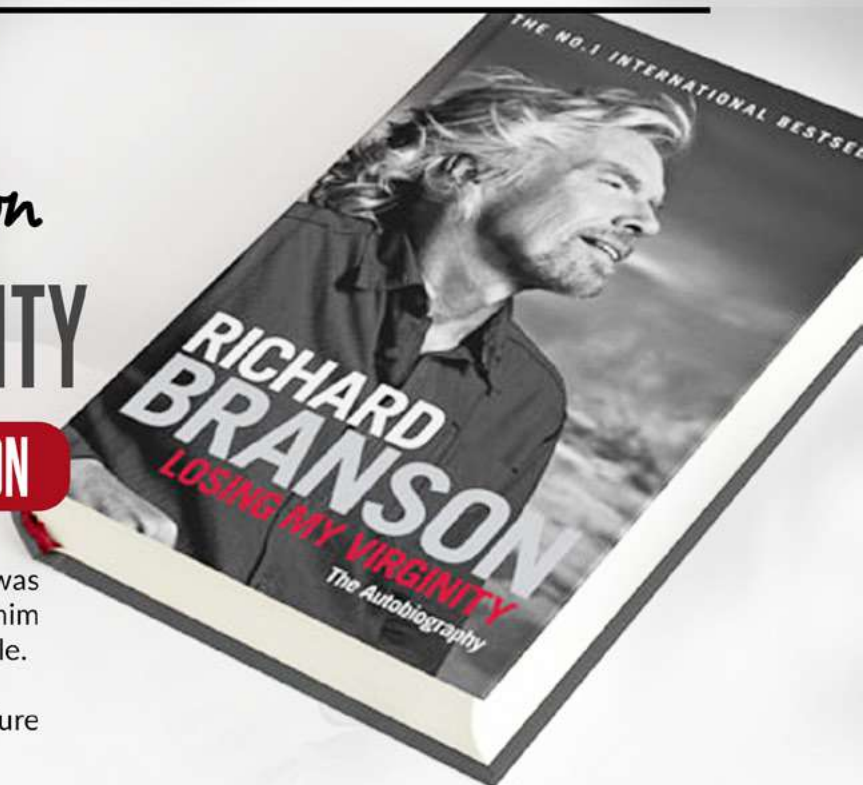
This may sound like a tough task go give to a boy, but it wasn't the first time his family acted like it.

When he was four, his aunt decided to bet him that he couldn't learn to swim by the time they return from their holiday. She was betting him ten shillings.

Branson did not back off – he rose to the challenge and spent the holiday trying to swim.

Unfortunately, the time was short, and they left without him learning how to do it.

However, that was not the end for him.



On the way back home, he saw a river and asked his father to stop the car.

His father did as asked, and Branson took off his clothes and jumped in the river.

He began to sink, but he couldn't give up like that!

He kicked and moved, and finally, he pushed himself up. When he looked at his family, they were all clapping and cheering, and his aunt was showing him the ten-shilling note.

The approach his parents had may seem like too much, but it seems that it worked – Branson developed competitiveness, strength, and persistence in his early childhood.

Read "Losing my Virginity" and find out the exact path of how he became a self-made billionaire and an owner of one of the most famous airline companies in the world.

Key Lessons from LOSING MY VIRGINITY

1. You Set Your Own Limits
2. Problems Will Arise -
It Is Up To You To Change The Course of The Journey
3. Always Look For Something More

"In the same way that I tend to make up my mind about people within thirty seconds of meeting them, I also make up my mind about whether a business proposal excites me within about thirty seconds of looking at it. I rely far more on gut instinct than researching huge amounts of statistics."

Source: <https://blog.12min.com/losing-my-virginity-pdf/>

You Set Your Own Limits

No condition in life is a limit to your possibilities. Although battling with dyslexia, Branson was a dedicated editor and writer of magazine articles. This proves that passion is stronger than any shortcoming.

Problems Will Arise -

It Is Up To You to Change the Course of The Journey
There will always be problems just around the corner. But you must not stop when you face them - instead, you have to look at them as opportunities and change the course of the journey. Who knows, maybe you will end up somewhere even better?

Always Look For Something More -

Even though what you are doing seems to be going great, always be on the lookout for opportunities to do better. Challenge yourself and expand.

Quotes from "losing my virginity"

"I can honestly say that I have never gone into any business purely to make money. If that is the sole motive then I believe you are better off not doing it".

"A business has to be involving, it has to be fun, and it has to exercise your creative instincts"

"Most necessary evils are far more evil than necessary".
To be successful, you have to be out there, you have to hit the ground running.

"I have always believed that the only way to cope with a cash crisis is not to contract but to try to expand out of it."

"It is only by being bold that you get anywhere. If you are a risk-taker, then the art is to protect the downside."



URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Urban design, to put it simply is the design of towns and cities. It is a multi-disciplinary practice that covers:

- Planning
- Transportation
- Architecture
- Economics
- Engineering
- Landscape

It enhances the quality of life of a people by:

- Creating places for people in the public realm where they feel safe, comfort, have variety of attractions
- Enriching the beauty & character of existing built environment
- Making quality connections for ease of movement and legibility for both pedestrians and vehicles
- Maximising landscape which enhances liveability utilizing the natural environment.

These can be attained with proactive adaptability where the design is creative and flexible enough to lend itself to changes in demographics, lifestyles, spaces and building use.

Landscape architecture is the art of arranging or modifying the features of the outdoor space.

It encompasses hard & soft areas, structures, lighting, water, furniture etc.

In terms of urban designs and city planning landscape helps in

- Beautification
- Increasing values of land and landed property
- Creating healthy environments

In planning cities, there are a number of approaches that the designers may consider.

For this case study though, the *greenways approach*, a method in which the city is treated as an extension to the natural world and the ecological approach which is non-damaging to the environment, but rather contributes to the city's ability to sustain its social and economic structures, were used.

Accra, a sub-Saharan African city, was founded as a port city by the British colonial masters, was once covered with forest. Unfortunately, though, it is now characterised by stench, lack of beauty, limited open spaces and excessive heat which makes walking through the city very uncomfortable.



The Old Fadama Urban Redevelopment project located on the western most part of the Central Business District (CBD) of Accra covers a total area of 301 acres with the Korle lagoon diving it into 3 distinct sections.

With ecology at the centre of this proposed project, we ensured that the green way is not hurt by brick and mortar but rather rejuvenated into beautiful open spaces.

Being a residential development project, ample percentage of the land would be developed into over 10,000 units of urban housing.

Since the land is in the CBD, some commercial blocks were also provided for economic sustainability and the existing light industrial activities were also catered for.

To successfully create this urban redevelopment we created park connectors, riparian greenway, as well as public open spaces that will ensure that the community offers a high quality of life to the residents and productive work environment for the businesses in its commercial vicinity.

By Spektra Global Editorial Team.





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TOP 5 PLACES YOU SHOULD SEE IN *Ghana*



Boti Falls

Boti Falls is located just 17km North-east of Koforidua, the eastern regional capital. For those interested in how soon it takes to get there, it is just over 30 minutes drive from Koforidua and over 90 minutes from Accra depending on your means of transportation.

River Pawnpawn which forms the falls takes its source from Ahenkwa-Amalakpo before falling over an igneous rock outcrop at the Boti Langmase that is how the falls get its name. The fall was hidden in the forest until it was discovered by a white catholic priest. It is recounted by locals that the priest used the base of the falls as an entertainment ground for his friends and himself



Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary

Located 20km on the Kumasi and Accra highway, it is a quiet research showcasing an arboretum, forest hiking trails and a butterfly sanctuary; lodging, guiding and interpretative materials are available.

The Forest is an undisturbed rainforest. In front of the guesthouse is the butterfly sanctuary where different butterfly species could be observed. The butterflies are at their best during mid-day since they do not like moisture.



Kakum National Park

Kakum Conservation Area is made up of mostly rain-forest comprising the Kakum National Park and Assin Attandanso Resource Reserve in the Central Region of Ghana. Kakum National Park is situated 33km north of Cape Coast, the Central Regional Capital, and 170km west of Accra. The key attraction of Kakum, is the tree canopy walkway, that enables you to walk over the high tropical forest on a swinging bridge measuring almost 500m long among the tallest trees. The canopy walkway receives over 120,000 visitors a year and is one of the only six in the world.



Bonwire Kente Weaving Village

Bonwire is located 18km on the Kumasi-Mampong Road, Bonwire is popular for Kente weaving.

Kente is a colourful Ghanaian traditional fabric which is worn mostly on important occasions and celebrations. There are about 50 types of Kente patterns. Sometimes weavers compose new designs of honour. Example is one called "Fathia Fata Nkrumah" meaning Nkrumah merit Fathia was created in 1960 for Ghana's first president Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Egyptian wife madam Fathia.



Mole National Park

Mole National Park is Ghana's biggest and best National Park and is located in West Gonja District of the Northern Region. It is 24 km from Damongo, the district capital, 146km south east of Tamale, the Regional capital. The park is 700km from Accra and 430km from Kumasi. Mole National Park is 4,577 square kilometres and offers visitors close encounters with wild elephants which can always be seen near the lodge as they are attracted to the two dams nearby. Mole holds viable and interesting populations of large and small mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. Some 94 mammal species, over 300 bird species, 9 amphibian species and 33 reptile species have been recorded in Mole.

Source:

Top Tourist Attractions in Ghana. (2019, April 05). Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://touringghana.com/top-10-tourist-attractions/>

Real Estates *Minute*

ROOFING HACKS IN 90 SECONDS

Most people, when it comes to constructing the roof of their buildings, are primarily concerned with either the cost or the aesthetics. Health is almost at the back burner sadly. It may interest you to know that even the shape of your roof can contribute to higher or lower energy consumption hence a proper roof plan and design goes a long way. It is also poignant to note that roofing forms one of the major components of build cost and 15 years after first installation, most roofs will need some love, care and possibly replacing. So, what could be your best roof care tips? Have a seat and let us take it step by step. Have a Roof Plan Did you know the pitch or shape of roof actually needs approval as per your building permits, hence any significant change to the shape or roof will need approval? Find out from the district or metropolitan offices the process and costs involved so you can plan far ahead as the cost involved could mean parting with a chunk of your savings. It is also advised that you consult several contractors for quotes, at least three different estimates that you can compare.

Examine Your Roof for most people, the only time the roof of their home ever comes to mind is when the house showers get a cousins in other living spaces. It is only then that we might call a roof contractor to check for leaks etc. It is however advised, especially when roofs have gone beyond their 15 year shelf life to request a professional roof contractor to examine the exact state of the roof and recommend either repairs or complete overhaul. The last thing you want to do is to climb onto your roof, it is very dangerous with possibility of a cave in and injuring yourself, it's best to leave that to the professionals.

Select a Roofing Material so, when you have drawn your plan, had your roof examined and recommendations made, you will naturally have to select the material for the imminent overhaul. It's easy to sit thousands of miles away and recommend a particular roof type, but since no one size fits all, you will have to consider a few factors before making your choice of material. Consider the current pitch of your roof, the climate you live in, your home style, and your budget. Some roofing materials to consider include stone-coated steel, slate, rubberized slate concrete etc.

Consider Finance Options Finance options you say? Yes please! Unless you have an imposing roof, it is easy to forget that the roof forms a chunk of the construction budget so a complete overhaul will require substantial amount of money and while you may have saved and planned, sometimes there may be a roof wreck you may have been unprepared for hence you will need a few fall back options for a quick re- placement. Consider home equity loans, home improvement loans from some of the mortgage finance houses around town. The roof is an integral part of your house, it keeps your home and family safe, and so it is absolutely worth your time and investment. Shall we start planning?

Source:

www.gredaestate.com



Coastal Commercial Building: **3 TIPS TO BE CONSIDERED**

When building any project along the coast, there are quite a few pertinent issues you should pay attention to, in order to ensure the longevity of your project and the maximization of the returns on your investment.

KNOW YOUR FLOOD LINES

When there's a heavy downpour, how high does the sea level rise and how close does it get to your plot or property?

GREENERY

Being close to the mother nature already, you can successfully enhance the beauty of your property with ample appropriate greenery. This can also help you protect your land from erosion and prevent flooding.

MATERIALS AND MAINTENANCE

Salt water causes rust that can weaken the structure. When building a coastal structure therefore, don't try to go cheap at all! Use materials that are durable, corrosion resistant and easy to maintain.

These factors contributed immensely to the design and construction of this green headquarters in Tema.

The Burkina Shippers' Council project is a 3 storey office with a total floor area of 2983. It is purposely designed for the head office of the Burkina's Shippers' Council in Ghana. The Building consist of 3 floors of which one is dedicated to the needs of the client which includes training rooms, board rooms, offices, Kitchenettes, transport offices, etc., and open offices for rental for businesses operating within the Port.

The structure of the building has it longest side facing north-south orientation to reduce the heat gained from the sun which are usually on our west and east facades. On the west and east facades, the building has slit small slim windows to reduce solar heat gain on the east facade, and on the west facade all the washrooms and staircases have been put on the west facades. This allows the building to be more energy efficient in terms of the use of air conditioning and heat gain. Also the building is designed such that the large glass facades have a view towards the sea and towards the beautiful port during the day and night.



The interior of the building is clad with composite wood sided panels and large porcelain tiles together with curtain walling. This will hopefully reduce the maintenance cost that comes with frequent painting.

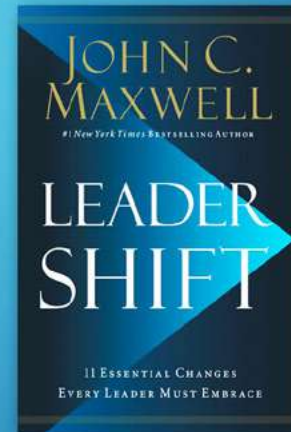
The form was determined by the need to maintain a very huge existing tree on the site leading to a "y" form which straddled with the tree along its middle axis. Hence being ecological friendly to the site.

The parking lot has been designed with extensive landscaping with trees to provide shade for both cars & pedestrians.



Book Summary on LEADER SHIFT

JOHN C. MAXWELL



The Main Idea

The business environment is always changing, and in order to excel, every leader needs to make ongoing "leadershifts" — changes that positively enhance personal and organizational growth.

Specifically, there are eleven leadershifts that will help you position yourself for success in the future. Miss the boat and you stay the same as today. The future is yours to take advantage of. Enjoy.

The 11 Leadershifts

Leadershift #1 — The Focus Shift — Soloist to Conductor Great leaders used to be top producers. Tomorrow's leaders need to orchestrate groups.

Leadershift #2 — The Personal Development Shift — Goals to Growth Goals help you do better but growth lets you become better. Leaders are growth oriented.

Leadershift #3 — The Cost Shift — Perks to Price Great leaders don't think about what they can get. They're focused on what they can give.

Leadershift #4 — The Relational Shift — pleasing people to Challenging people you cannot lead people if you need them. Great leaders challenge their teams to do better all the time.

Leadershift #5 — The Abundance Shift — Maintaining to Creating Have the mindset you want to move things forward rather than standing still. Be a creator.

Leadershift #6 — The Reproduction Shift — Ladder climbing to Ladder building Forget about ladder climbing. Help others build and ascend their own ladders. Be an equipper.

Leadershift #7 — The Communication Shift — Directing to Connecting Great leaders don't order people around. They connect, influence and help people.

Leadershift #8 — The Improvement Shift — Team uniformity to Team diversity Great leaders value diversity highly. Do everything you can to bring people into your teams who are different.

Leadershift #9 — The Influence Shift — Positional authority to Moral authority A leadership position does not give you leadership authority. You have to earn moral authority.

Leadershift #10 — The Impact Shift — trained leaders to Transformational leaders Don't settle for being a trained leader. Become a transformational leader who inspires change.

Leadershift #11 — The Passion Shift — Career to Calling don't look at leadership as a career. Make it your calling. Find your purpose and you'll never look back.

Leadershift is quite an engaging and timely book, and it does succeed in making the point that in times of change, you have to do different things. Effective leaders make constant course corrections to adapt to ongoing changes in the market place.

Source: <https://summaries.com/blog/leadershift>



How to Create a POWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Conveying power with your workplace is a fine and expressive art. Interior design is the most often thought of in the most simplistic ways as creating beautiful spaces. It is however a lot more than that. Interior design is both an art and a science that shapes behaviour, infuses or saps drains, influences productivity and the biggest impact is on the subconscious mind. It is a tool that can also be deployed to give a window into a person's life, power, status, past and vision for the future. The work place design is the unspoken and the most silent contributor to the bottom figure. Executive offices are the pinnacle of corporate chic, brand power, corporate values and yes, certainly evidence of the achievement of the CEO and or any other C-suite executive. This article and infographic is to share some power ideas with you that will help you create the best office that not only captures the corporate value but also your value (s) as a business executive without compromising effective execution of your duties and pushing the company to achieve its goals.

1 Power Position

The desk should face the door or placed diagonally from the entrance of the room.

Add emphasis to this working area by decorating the lamps, art work or tall plants.

This power position gives straight line of sight and portrays clarity of vision and confidence.

2 Power Desk

Avoid L- desk. This gives impression of lack of control over the entire space (and organisation) as it tends to determine the direction of your movement.

The desk should be sizeable.

3 Power Chair

High back solid arm rest and certainly no nets. This should certainly give the needed back support.

4 Power Book Shelf

This should have high power best selling books and world status magazines and publications that demonstrates your breadth of knowledge and intellect.

Do not position the bookshelf behind your chair (unless you have absolutely no option).

5 Space and Volume

The space allocated for you the executive, should not be constrained in anyway.

You should not feel that you have any limitation in your movement. A high ceiling accentuates authority.

6 Rare Stationery & Accessories

Your stationery and accessories used to decorate should not be easily found at the departmental store.

Art makes a statement of personal style and taste.

7 Power Brand

Interior design of any company is a reflection of its values, so use colours and brand memorabilia to accentuate this.

8 Colour, Material & Finishes

Mature earthy colours, touches of gold and leather create the right ambiance.

9 Elements of Design

Use the power symmetry, geometric shapes (preferably squares) and rich colour (for accent)

10 Tell Your Story - or Not

Provide hints of where you've been, who you've been with, classy sports or games played, what you have achieved and where you are going.

This should be done subtly though as an overt expression of this can rather have a negative effect on dignitaries and investors you host in your office.

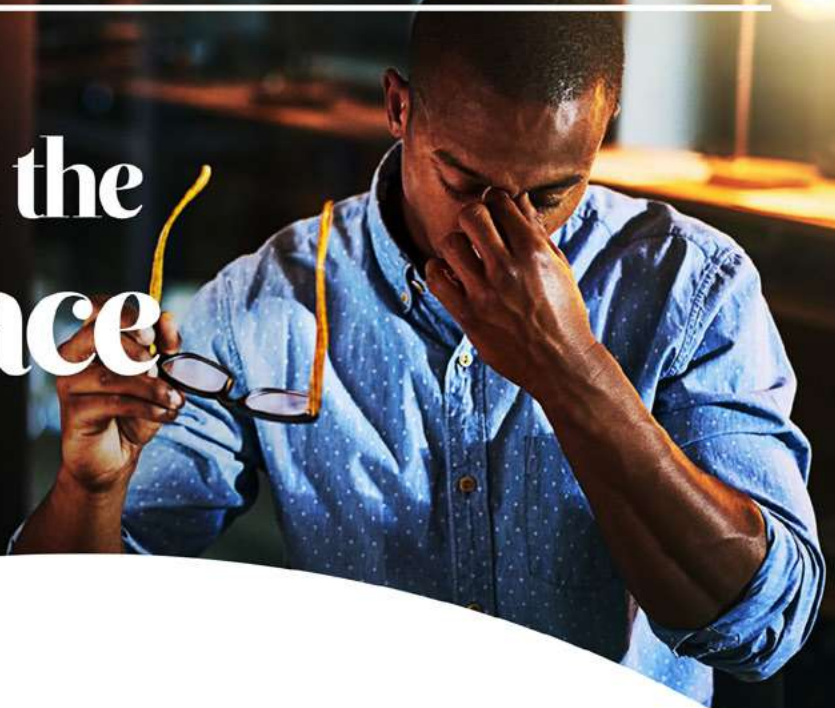
11 Inspiration

This power office must inspire you to do more. Pictures of loved ones, visions of heights yet to be attained.

12 Keep it Functional

Relevant nodes or work centres, reception and resting areas must all be catered for.

Stress and the Work place



Life in and out of the work place is filled with stress. Every business is striving to achieve their goals in the face of stiff competition and unfavorable economical conditions. While some amount of stress is useful, it can be destructive to both employees and the business if excessive stress is not managed properly.

Here are a few common causes of workplace stress:

Unclear Requirements

When assigned tasks are unclear, employees will have to spend time and energy figuring out what exactly has to be done. This source of stress can be circumvented if supervisors give clear directives on tasks to be carried out. Employees on the other hand must seek clarity on assigned tasks and what is expected of them, to give them the confidence in executing tasks.

Interpersonal Conflicts

When the workplace is plagued with interpersonal conflicts, the physical and emotional health of employees are negatively affected, resulting in a decline in creativity and productivity. It is important to avoid conflicts as much as possible. However, when conflicts are unavoidable, it is necessary to know how to handle them in order not to disturb the workflow

Multitasking

Every employer is glad to engage employees who have the ability to multitask. We often believe that we get more work done when we are able to do a number of things at the same time.

This may not work for most people. It appears beneficial but it may come with some errors and a lot of stress from having to split your focus in trying to complete more than one task. To reduce this stress, it is best to organize your day by planning your activities in order of priority and executing them in that order.

It is easy to burn out in life's roller coaster and the pressures of work but this can be reduced by following some simple routines like:

Taking a walk during lunch break

Talking to your supervisor about your work challenges

Staying organized

Listening to music on your way from work

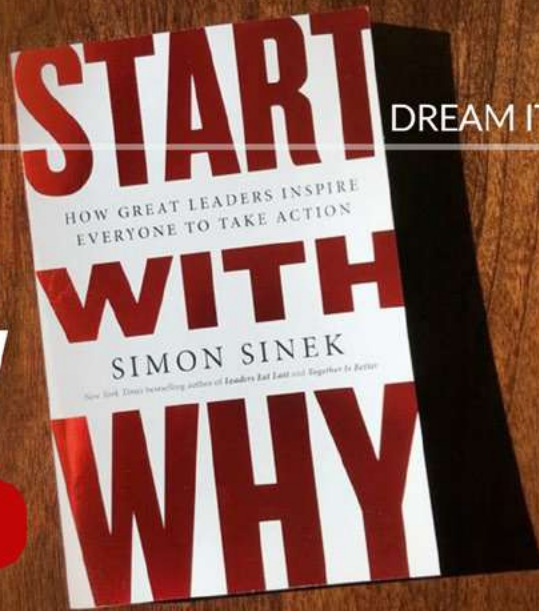
Ensuring comfort where you perform your tasks. Eg. your desk

Employers can also help to reduce work-place stress by organizing corporate fun activities for all employees from time to time.

To keep employees and the business healthy and alive, it is necessary to watch out for possible stressors and determining ways to reduce or eliminate them if possible.

Book Summary on START WITH WHY

Simon Sinek



The Book in Three Sentences

- The ability to inspire those around you and to achieve remarkable things starts with WHY.
- Any organization can explain what it does; some can explain how they do it; but very few can clearly articulate why.
- Those who start with WHY never manipulate, they inspire

The 5 Big Ideas

Your WHY is your purpose, cause or belief.

Every inspiring leader and organization, regardless of size or industry, starts with WHY

People don't buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it.

Knowing our WHY is essential for lasting success and the ability to avoid being lumped in with others.

When your WHY goes fuzzy, it becomes much more difficult to maintain the growth, loyalty, and inspiration that helped drive your original success.

Summary

Great leaders are able to inspire people to act. And those who are able to inspire give people a sense of purpose or belonging that has little to do with any external incentive or benefit to be gained.

"Most businesses today are making decisions based on a set of incomplete or, worse, completely flawed assumptions about what's driving their business."

"There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it."

"Though positive in nature, aspirational messages are most effective with those who lack discipline or have a nagging fear or insecurity that they don't have the ability to achieve their dreams on their own (which, at various times for various reasons, is everyone)."

"Peer pressure works not because the majority or the experts are always right, but because we fear that we may be wrong."

"If a company adds too many novel ideas too often, it can have a similar impact on the product or category as the price game. In an attempt to differentiate with more features, the products start to look and feel more like commodities. And, like price, the need to add yet another product to the line to compensate for the commoditization ends in a downward spiral."

Source: <https://www.samuelthomasdavi.es.com/book-summaries/business/start-with-why/>

THE LAND ACQUISITION PROCESS

Currently, land acquisition in Ghana is not smooth and easy. Quite frankly, it can be very frustrating and sometimes leads to loss of money. The constraints include: insecurity of land tenure, inadequate land policy, indiscipline in the land market leading to fraud, conflicts, frustrations and anxiety. Though Ghana is still developing and we have a lot of unbuilt up areas, there are also more problems in acquiring land if proper procedure is not followed.

This article seeks to address this issue with this dialogue between Jackie, a middle-aged professional in the finance sector on a journey with her husband to build their own home, and her architect Tekoa. This fictional dialogue, an excerpt from a series published in the Business and Financial Times by Karen Halm, addresses the process required for success in this endeavor of land acquisition in Ghana.

Jackie relaxed her back in the couch, Arc. Tekoa did same and crossed her legs. They both felt comfortable and tried to enjoy their little quiet time "alone"



"So, this land acquisition thing, where exactly does it start from?" Jackie asked with a cloud of confusion over her face.

"Okay" Arc. Tekoa said smiling, "We have three types of land ownership in Ghana. The state lands, stool lands and family lands".

"So what about lands owned by individuals and organizations?" Jackie asked. "Yes and those too" Arc. Tekoa continued, "each of these have their own processes, so for the purposes of our discussion let's focus on the type that will help you. If it's a state land, you will apply through the government agencies. If it's a stool land, you go to the chiefs of the land and they will give you a consent for a lease hold for about 99 years. This figure keeps reducing though as some have 75 years or less depending on the location of the land. If the land belongs to an individual or corporate organization, you deal as much as possible directly with them and this will help you save some costs".

She paused and allowed her to ponder over the information she had just received. Observing her facial expression, she determined she could continue, "Irrespective of the source of the land, you need to ascertain the land use, i.e. What the land has been earmarked for, or simply put, what the owner wants the land to be used for. Some may want to give it out for residential purposes, or for farming, or education. You honestly wouldn't want to build your home on land meant for a school for example, you run the risk of it being pulled down one day. But once you know the owner of the land you are interested in and have ascertained its designated use, you need to verify this information".

"Madam wait please", Jackie interjected holding up her hands, **"before I even get to the point of knowing the owner and figuring out the land use like you're saying, where do I go, how do I even get to meet an owner?"**



"Oh I'm sorry, I missed a step" Arc. Tekoa apologized, understanding her dilemma, "you could tell your friends and families who may link you up with a land broker, an individual selling off his land or go to the real estate company."

"Oh okay" Jackie said with a sigh of relief. "Jackie relax, we are going to answer all your questions before we go" M. Tekoa said, assuredly and continued "whichever land type you get, the process I'm about to give you applies to all of them if you want a stress-free land".

"Architect, lets back track a bit with the stool lands for example, **how will I know that I'm dealing with the right person?**" and **what is the difference between the stool land and the family land?**". More enlightenment was obviously required here so Arc. Tekoa obliged: "as the names go, the stool land for example, is owned by the chief. He represents the people so he is the custodian that you should be dealing with, he then can give you some people who he has put in charge of that land to deal with you in the transaction. He however will sign the documents and that will show that he has sold the land to you, be it leasehold or free hold"

"Ok, I get that but how will I know that I'm even dealing with the right chief?" Jackie paused. M. Tekoa gave further clarification. "You may get someone who will lead you to him, ask around or you could also get a surveyor who would be able to ascertain this in a more scientific way by using the GPS to pick the points and do a land search at the Lands Commission, the legally recognized owner of the piece land you are interested in will be uncovered. You can then follow the address of this owner, then you can continue the process". Jackie was nodding now so M. Tekoa knew there was clarity now but she still wanted to be sure that she was not misunderstanding her body language. "Are you ok now?" "Yeah, Jackie said, "you may continue please". "Great" Arc. Tekoa said with a smile and continued.

Madam Tekoa was saying: "If you express interest in any piece of land and somebody asks you to pay some money before he gives you any document to you for you to begin the search process, please refrain from such a transaction, it is not legal."

This is because if you commit financially and you encounter a problem, they will not be able to refund the money, rather they will want to give you another piece of land which may not be as appropriate for your project as the initial one. They may sometimes not even have any alternative land. This is risky and you could lose money, so please if you see any piece of land you want to buy, first ensure that you're dealing with the rightful owner, and conduct a search at the *Lands Commission, Lands Title Registry.*"

"So what if I'm buying from say Kofi Mensah, who duly gives me the documents covering the land but at the search I discover that it is rather Ama Serwaa who owns the land, however Kofi Mensah has receipts to prove his purchase of the said land. What do I do then?" Jackie asked. "Well these are some of the complications that arise" Arc. Tekoa started. "Jackie", this scenario can be caused by one of the following:

- A mistake on the part of the Lands Commission or Lands Title Registry, where the wrong points were picked and registered under the wrong name. In this case it can be corrected from there with the *Deed of variation*.

It could also mean that Kofi Mensah failed to complete the purchase process by not registering the land under his name, in which case you may have to get into contact with Ama Serwaa to ascertain the authenticity of Kofi Mensah's receipts.

● It could also mean a double sale by the principal owner, which is fraudulent. In this case, I'll advise that refrain from the transaction and have the culprit arrested. You'll need to be very patient when trying to buy land in this country. Even if you're trying to get the land from a real estate company, the process remains the same, get the documents, conduct a search and ensure that the land is duly registered in the name of the company. If it's still in the name of the stool or family please stay away, it means that the said company does not have the full rights over the land yet or they have not finished paying for it and therefore could lose it. Other problems could arise even if you have your house built on it and trust me, you don't want to go anywhere near land litigation!



If you however do the search and everything is alright with the land, then you may go ahead and make payments. And please do not forget your receipts.

After completion of payments, you will be given an indenture, which is the deed covering the portion allotted to you. The next stage is to get the land registered in your name at the Land Title Registry.

INDENTURE CHECKLIST

- DATE OF THE AGREEMENT
- NAME AND ADDRESS OF SELLER "**THE LESSOR**"
- NAME AND ADDRESS OF BUYER "**THE LESSEE**"
- IDENTIFICATION OF THE **RIGHTFUL OWNER** OR HIS/HER REPRESENTATIVE
- THE EXACT **SIZE** AND **CORDINATES** OF HIS/HER LAND
- THE **TERM** OF THE LEASE
- THE SPECIFIC DETAILS AND **CONDITIONS** OF THE AGREEMENT
- ANY POSSIBILITY OF **EXTENTION OF LEASE**, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THAT AND THE DURATION OF THE EXTENDED LEASE
- **SIGNATURE AND SEAL** OF THE LESSOR
- SIGNATURE OF HIS/HER **WITNESS**
- SIGNATURE AND SEAL OF THE LESSEE
- SIGNATURE OF HIS/HER WITNESS
- OATH OF PROOF SIGNED BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE **LAW COURT**
- OATH OF CERTIFICATE SIGNED BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE LAW COURT

This is where many land buyers stop and eventually get into trouble when conflicts arise. The registration protects your ownership of the land from the legal front. While on the ground, you mount pillars on the corners of the plot that marks your boundaries and also warns potential buyers. You may also construct a short fence wall around the boundaries if you're not ready to start building yet.

Arc. Tekoa paused for Jackie to assimilate the information she had just received.

So Madam, Jackie started, **“what if I don't have the bulk money to pay for the land out-right but need to pay in installments, do these still apply?”** Yes, the process still applies except in the case you'll have to agree on the terms of payment and have a Contract of Sale that clearly states the agreement between the two parties, including the plot in question, installment dates and amounts. Normally you should finish paying before the land owner would give you the indenture, but you may be fortunate to have a lenient seller who may permit you to continue the process prior to completion of payment. In this case do well not to break that trust.

For the search process, you'll need to write to the Lands Commission requesting a search of the said land. You'll need to attach 2 copies of the site plan. It will be stamped 'received' after you've made the payments. You can pick up the results on the given date. It's quite simple actually.

Acquiring land in Ghana, is not a quick process. It is therefore ideal to start early in order not to rush the process and run into risks of fraud and loss of capital. More information can be sought from the Lands Commission Ghana.

Source: Spektra Editorial Team



TRANSLATING TO Virtual Office

In the face of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations are forced to work from home in order to keep their businesses afloat.

It is important to communicate clearly with your staff what it means to work from home, what will be expected of them, and the organization's contribution in making it possible. In order to do so, you must set guidelines that will apply to all staff irrespective of their rank or position. As much as possible, recreate a live office environment. Here are a few tips:

WORKING HOURS

It is necessary to specify working hours. Especially for organizations whose work is collaborative, workers must be on the same work schedule. If work is usually from 8:00am to 5:00pm, it should be same while working remotely. All staff will have to follow the same working hours.

SETTING TARGETS AND DEADLINES

Monitoring productive and performance can be challenging while working remotely. It is therefore important for supervisors to set targets and deadlines for each task given and ensure that these deadlines are met.

OPEN COMMUNICATION LINES

Keeping open communication lines is key when working remotely. If the organization has a common communication platform, it must be utilized to the maximum to send important information that affect all staff. Managers and supervisors must give clear directives on tasks assigned to their team members through emails, voice or video calls, professional software or WhatsApp to avoid ambiguity.

Managers and supervisors must be reachable whenever team members need clarity on tasks assigned to them, especially during working hours, to avoid unnecessary delay.

EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This is a great opportunity to make good use of technology and explore.

If your organization already has a software that manages work flow, it must be used in every way possible to make work easier.

What does this mean for Employees?

You can do these to make working at home a lot easier and productive.

Get a dedicated work space.

Find a space in your home with a table and chair to mimic a real office setting.

Stick to defined working Hours

This will help to organize your day, help achieve more and help you "close from work" to attend to domestic matters and rest for the next working day.

Make to do lists

It important to make a list of your tasks in order of priority and cross out completed tasks.

Communicate

Get in touch with your colleagues if you need assistance or an opinion on your tasks and give feedback when necessary. Managers and supervisors must also check-up on their team members to show concern and keep up the team spirit.

The closure of physical offices should not mean the end of businesses. After all the human resource of an organization is the life of the organization. With the proper systems in place, we should be able to operate no matter how far or near we are.

Afrochic HOUSE

Located on an iconic Tema street, this five bedroom house is organised around a double-volume courtyard with spaces oriented to capitalize on views to a pool area within the central courtyard. The design is self-assured with local African pattern (kente) and a confident street façade. The courtyard responds to sustainability by allowing the concept to breathe by enhancing ventilation and natural light in all spaces.



UPCLOSE

WITH THE ARCHITECTURE DUO

William and Karen are the most sought after design and build architects in Ghana. They are famous for creating iconic buildings with breath-taking interiors without compromising timely delivery and construction excellence.

IC: Tell us about Spektra Global

William - Spektra Global is a team of young, super creative and energetic people with the passion to create inspiring buildings, comfort and lasting impressions in the field of architecture and construction.

We started 9 years ago with 2 people and now we are 23 in number and this excludes site staff. We believe that architects and the allied professionals in the industry should also be able to work in a structured workplace with a structured system in which they can grow their careers and build fulfilling lives. Because of the diversity of the talent we have, we're able to serve the clients from end-to-end offering them a one-stop-shop solution to their property acquisition needs.

IC: What would you say is your guiding principle or design philosophy?

William - We believe that people are the same, yet different. Some want large spaces, others don't, some love bright colours other people prefer neutrals and so on. In that regard, we tend to create architectural solutions that suit the desire and needs of the individuals or corporate entities. We however ensure that the art, science and cultural aspects are firmly in place. Every building must bear the soul and identity of the owner- that's our focus.



Office building with "afro-chic" concept in Accra

IC: For you, when is the start of a project?

William - Any project starts with the very first conversation with the client. We seek to understand what the pain points are so we can create something that relieves the pain. Also seeing how capital intensive each project is, one major factor is that whatever the solution is, it has to make economic sense.

We also seek to understand the concept of the projects: what is the culture of the people or person we're designing for? What is their history? Where are they going? If it's a company, what do they stand for? What do they want the project to mean for their brand, shareholders, customers, employees and so on?

Karen - So once we're able to grasp the central pain or problem, our minds go to work and it's not limited to office hours only because sometimes design solutions come to you in the most unusual places.

And really design doesn't stop. So long as we still have the keys to the project, it continues. Sometimes we may be at the construction level or even at the fitting-out stage and decisions and choices still need to be made. Plus it isn't always just us. Our team gets involved. It's a total immersion to ensure what comes out at the end of the day is a thing of beauty as well as sensible.



IC: There has been a lot of talk on the environmental impact and sustainability and so on regarding buildings and the built environment. How do you think you contribute to the degradation or perhaps help mitigate the problem with your work?

Karen - As an office, we're very mindful of the SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) and fully support the UN's effort to transform our world, "leaving no one behind". What we therefore do is that for every project, we work on, we consider sustainability, energy efficiency, and disabled persons to impact the buildings or spaces in the long-term health of the users, green cover and so on.

In the end though, there's always the need for that balance because we create the buildings not for ourselves but for people and they have their own lifestyles, hopes and dreams and we have to pay attention to that as well.

So basically we keep balancing the dream world, where there are no limits and everything is picture perfect with the real world, giving its constraints of budget, time, materials and skills – with every project we give it our best shot as a team so that our projects give life to both the client and users rather than taking it away from humanity.

William - Let me give you an example of how we applied this balance in one of our projects. In an office design we're working on, we used timber to clad some areas, and we have specified other materials with less volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as Paints and wallpapers to reduce emissions harmful to health. Other interventions like operable windows, soft to hard landscape ratio, rainwater harvesting, and use of breathing walls and so on have been created. So we are quite conscious of our environment.



Office building with environmentally friendly interventions currently under construction, Tema

IC: What is the one thing you will not compromise on when designing or building any project?

William - This question demands a very long answer but we'll keep it simple and say function and then beauty.

It's like when choosing a wife, this woman has to have a good character, wisdom, and must be hard working, that's the function part – the building has to work - it has to be sound. And like in the wife hunt scenario, the beauty (which is the aesthetic appeal of the building) attracts you. If the building is good-looking, it attracts buyers, investors, tenants, etc. but it's the function is what keeps them in it.

IC: - Speaking of wife hunt, is that how you "grabbed" Karen? How did you 2 meet?

William - We met in school. We were in the same class at KNUST and yes she had both function and aesthetics.....hahaha

Karen - Hey....well, I had a say in the matter too. Lol. As the "grabee" also had to check if the "grabber" had the right specifications and definitely "function" was on top of that.

IC: Well, now that we're on the subject, I might as well ask, Couples working together is a complete no-no for many but you chose that path. Why?

William - It's simple actually, because it makes sense. We know each other's strengths and not so strong areas and it's a perfect fit both at work and home. Plus who else would you rather build your life with, other than your best friend?

IC: Okay, how do you make it at home and at work? Really?



IC: So who does what?

William - Hahaha... The million dollar question. What we tell people is that, the architectural practice is a business, like any other. Like banking, Mediacom, retail, and so on, so in order to move Spektra from a "One -man" or "mom-and-pop" business somebody has to work in the organization to build that corporate culture and outlook. On the other side of that though, the machinery has to run today so another person has to ensure that the machinery is up and running today.

So I work "in" the business and Karen works "on" the business and this ensures growth, satisfaction and profitability.



DREAM IT . LIVE IT

Wow!!! Interesting!!!

Let's get back to the work aspect. One of your well-known strengths as a practice is interior design. We don't often see that with other firms. So what is it that made you pay attention to that discipline?

Karen - Well, as people we spend about 85% of our lives inside the building rather than the outside. So we think that it simply makes more sense to ensure that the environment we create with our buildings have positive long-term impacts on the users whether they are working, playing, worshipping or simply living.

IC: Where do you see architecture, construction and technology intersecting?

William - The demand for speed, perfection, finesse, convenience, connectivity is on the rise and built environment is not excluded from the race. Things like voice-controlled assistants, remote operation of systems and equipment in the home, smart security, smart tracking of work force on construction sites, purchasing of buildings, energy roofs, smart waste management systems and so on are already here with us. So really it's not a question of whether they merge but rather to what degree they're merging.

IC: Where do you see architecture in 10 years?

Karen - Well, architecture and construction do not yield themselves to change as fast as other areas. This however does not mean that the next decade will remain the same. We can say for sure that a few things will occur but we'll limit it to 3:

- For starters, the practice of architecture will have to expand in the scope of services rendered to clients prior to both design and post- occupancy. And when that happens, the profession will be more financially stable and lucrative with the ripple effect of bigger firms - (not only in brick and mortar spaces but virtual offices as well) - better employment for the graduates and better business, case for the practice.

Then of course education will have to change to make the graduates market-ready.

- Reduced cost of products. We think that the infusion of technology and smart solutions are still in the easily and experimental stages so they're expensive.

But in the next 10yrs, they'll be cheaper as more manufacturers will be able to produce the same systems. This will make green building more "affordable" for a wider market.

- Construction will become more automated. The 3D printing technology would have been enhanced and some things that we're struggling with now in terms of labour and skill will be done by robots.



On-going construction at ICGC Zoe Temple, Tema

IC: Have you heard of the African continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) Agreement?

Karen - Yes

IC: What is your opinion?

What Should Architects and contractors do in preparation for the enforcement of this agreement?

Karen - Well, first of all we think that it is a blessing for not only architects but also for Ghanaian businesses as a whole. It however can easily turn into a curse for corporate Ghana or the entrepreneurial sphere if we find ourselves unprepared. The simple broad line content is that we can do business across borders without any hindrance of permits or labour laws and so on.

So we think that we all need to sharpen our axes in terms of the products and services we render to ensure that they are of international standards. Also we must urgently, put the critical internal systems and processes in place. That will allow us to run our businesses across borders.

We cannot disappear when the walls are collapsed and the South Africans, Moroccans, Nigerians, Kenyans start coming in. We also must be ready to go to those countries

IC: If you had the opportunity to speak to your younger selves a decade ago, what would you have said to younger William and Karen?

William- Learn and understand how business works because architecture is a lot more than design, brick and mortar.

Karen - Do not be afraid to be different because it's in that difference that your strength will shine through.



SPEKTRA IN ACTION













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