



# OVERALL DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

By: Jeffrey W. Ganthner, AIA

*“Architecture can be a source of inspiration that creates a special place or it can be constraint to the same persons it was meant to inspire. Architecture done right works and does not let imposed barriers limit its potential to be successful.” Jeffrey W. Ganthner AIA*

We choose to make our clients successful. It is an active choice that we make daily in how we approach the profession of architecture. The process of architecture is a simple four step process that we apply to every project that we are commissioned to execute. **We call it L.E.A.D. - Listen, Engage, Activate, and Deliver.**

**Step 1** is to actively listen to our clients. We do not come to client meetings with preconceived notions of outcomes that may or not be the solution that will serve a particular client the best. We listen and ask questions to find out what is important, what needs truly exist, what desires are sought to be met. We understand that architecture is a tool to help a client become successful or it be the box that no one wants.

**Step 2** is to engage our expertise and talent to begin a true conversation about the potential of a project. We often use a two-day charrette process that engages our talented team of professionals with the architect serving as the maestro drawing out ideas for a project. This is

highly interactive process where we use hand sketching and the latest virtual reality technology to develop the ideas.

**Step 3** is to activate our full talent and experience. Through a selection process we choose the best ideas to push forward. We challenge assumptions and critique our work to position the surviving concept as a basis for design. The selected concept is proven out and challenged from a function, aesthetic, budget, sustainable, schedule, and constructible perspective. And it must be able to answer this question: does it influence and inspire?

**Step 4** is to deliver for the client. We do not create designs that sit on a shelf and thus serve no purpose other than academic. Our designs must be built to be successful. We engage every design discipline to create the final built solution. We ensure that the built solution is successful. We despise designs that only work on “paper” and not in the world we live in. Our built designs must be able to inspire in the real world. And achieving project success in the real world requires delivery of expertise and a commitment to making our clients successful. And we have both.

We believe this process, best positions our overall design team to overcome complex design challenges and constraining parameters that may be on a project.

Finally, our design architect remains an integral part of the team from concept design through construction documents remains active through the construction completion. This is important as we do not bait and switch – we may add additional design talent and resources, but we do so only for the good of the project and thus the client.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeffrey W. Ganthner, AIA is a proven and well diversified professional expertise leading teams and organizations in the architecture, engineering, construction and technology industries. Jeffrey casts the vision for innovative thought, leadership, and solutions. He has led a distinguished and diverse career as an architect, engineer, designer, teacher entrepreneur, and business leader. He can be reached at [jeff@leadershiphunt.com](mailto:jeff@leadershiphunt.com).