

# I N N O V A M A N I F E S T O

---

“I look in the mirror every morning and ask myself: ‘If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do?’ And whenever the answer is ‘No,’ I know I need to change something.”

**Steve Jobs**

“Just don’t give up trying to do what you really want to do.  
Where there is love and inspiration, I don’t think you can go wrong.”

**Ella Fitzgerald**

Neither of these successful artists were post-Italian Futurists, but they shared the same zeal about their life’s callings, to show people not just How or Where or When or What They Did... but Why They Did It. We do, too. Daily we **embrace** the good we can do in our profession and in our lives and **reject** those people and places and things and situations that take us away from that “love and inspiration.” So in the spirit of other PDF “thought pieces” on this site that feature a “list of 10,” here’s 10 Declarations:



We **reject** the “isms.” Racism, Sexism, Classism, and even Pessimism: there’s just no place for those wrongheaded and offensive attitudes in our work or our office or our relationships. Conversely, we **embrace** the “ions”... Inclusion, Communication, and Collaboration with clients and partners and other stakeholders, which create better design solutions with a greater positive impact on people’s lives.



We **reject** the notion that Sustainability (design to ensure our buildings and places will endure) and Resiliency (design to ensure they’re still there TO endure after a disaster) are “extras.” Instead, we **embrace** them both as starting points and as ongoing guiding principles for all projects, and with that our responsibilities as Custodians of the Environment in our lifestyles and in our professional pursuits.



We **reject** the common inertia of the AEC (Architecture/Engineering/Construction) Industry, the “that’s the way we’ve always done it” and “that new idea/system/material will never work” statements that can stymie opportunities for better solutions. That said, while we **embrace** new ideas and systems and materials, we also appreciate proven, effective answers and techniques of both near and long past.



We **reject** the notion of Design as a Commodity, like gypsum board or paper clips or pork bellies. Designers (like Doctors, Lawyers, and Auto Mechanics) have the experience, expertise, and responsibility to “make things better” via their unique professional input and services. Thus we **embrace** Design as the Highest and Best Use of our Team’s time to optimize budgets and end results and user experiences.



We **reject** the “fast food” approach of some public and private project development efforts, the race-to-the-bottom tactic where short-term functional and financial concerns are paramount. To the contrary, we **embrace** the long-term perspective, the push to make the right decisions with a fully informed viewpoint that will provide greater long-term health, safety, building performance, and profit.



We **reject** the Ego and Power Trips often found within all participants and phases of Planning, Design, and Construction. To be sure, these are serious undertakings – people’s lives and livelihoods are literally at stake – but they are also typically communal efforts between participants. So we **embrace** a sense of cooperation, of respect, of working to a “greater good,” and (when all else fails) a sense humor.



We **reject** the Easy, Expedient, the Errant... unless they help us Do The Right Thing on a project. Then, we **embrace** the Easy, high-ROI decisions on building orientation and access to natural features and transportation in site design; the Expedient ways to produce a great set of specs and drawings; and the occasional Errant afternoon as needed to help recharge and reconnect with a client and a project.



We **reject** the blinkered view that characterizes some projects in relationship to how they interact (more accurately, refuse to interact) with adjacent properties, with nearby communities, with transit networks and utility grids, with eventual users not initially considered. So we seek and **embrace** projects with opportunities for Community Service, Community Development, and Community Input.



We **reject** the idea we are in fierce competition with all other Designers, whether Architectural peers or Engineers or Interior or Landscape or Other Designers. We understand and **embrace** the fact that not every project/client is the right “fit” for every firm’s interest and abilities, and most importantly that projects don’t stand alone: that they should be created within a productive, collegial design dialog.



Finally, we **reject** the idea we’re in a 24/7/365 “emergency response” industry. It’s common, but that’s not how good work gets done. There are some true emergencies: we handle those efficiently and professionally, but we **embrace** a few key time management ideas like comprehensive scheduling, like blocking out dedicated time for each client, like building good working relationships with positive communication... to avoid such unnecessary stress and conflict, and to ensure we can do the best work.

