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How did you find your way into the industry? In my junior year in high school I took a drafting class where I discovered the passion that I had towards design and Architecture, subsequently I applied for a Bachelors of Architecture program. While in college I studied abroad in Athens, Greece where I travelled throughout Europe where I walked a wide spectrum of urban environments broadening my perspective of architecture and space. It was in my travels that I realized that I wanted to design and contribute to the fabric of cities with place making. Upon graduating I took a design position for a firm specializing in High Density Urban infill and Mixed-Use Projects. Over a decade later I am happy to say I still feel what I felt in my junior class in high school.

What advice would you give to an emerging young leader just starting their professional career? I would advise the emerging young leader to surround themselves with people who share similar visions and ambitions. It has been here alongside the ULI YLG group where I have met some of the most aspiring leaders driven with motivation and passion, a feeling that has been contagious creating a synergy fostered within the group.

What traits do you think define a successful leader? A Successful leader has vision, and serves to enable everyone around to be the best they can be. A great leader radiates passion that is infectious, and evokes momentum towards the common goal.

What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now? Currently I am the lead designer for a Transit Oriented Development in Northern California. This project was an RFP that we secured by demonstrating to the client how to reposition their project to be economically viable in 2014. The project is inclusive of 599 market rate apartment units, retail and office space, all being designed around a 2 acre park in the spirit of Placemaking. I joined MVE & Partners in 2010 and was promoted to Associate in 2012. Since 2010 working on High Density Mixed-Use projects, I have designed over 2,000 apartment units encompassing Northern and Southern California contributing to the fabric of cities. Next time you fly out of San Jose, California if you glance out the window you can see my contribution to the City of San Jose.

What do you find most challenging about your profession on a day-to-day basis? The most challenging portion about my profession is the constant deadlines measured in hours but tested on my ability to solve complex problems in a creative manner enabling our clients to succeed in their endeavors. I challenge I gladly accept and thrive upon.

What are you looking for in terms of career development - OR In what areas would you like to professionally develop further? I strongly believe designers/architects share the social responsibility for the built environment and thus constant edification is necessary. I will always be a student of urban environments exploring and observing in order to be a cognizant designer. My goal is to continue to work with the real estate industry in pursuit of responsible land use and to bring a social benefit to the communities the projects will integrate into.

Describe a situation that was a great learning experience. When I graduated from College I got the opportunity to work under the Design Director who not only was a great mentor to me but also showed me how to develop and execute a creative design process. I can recall he would make me visit his desk 3 times a day with sketch paper, sign pen, and prepared to discuss ideas. It was a tremendous learning experience in the beginning of my career on how to solve problems in a creative process which I still employ today.

How do you deal with stress at work? I keep a smile on. I always tell my team to keep smiling because somehow we always reach the light at end of the tunnel. During my lunch hour I also try to walk outside for 30 minutes around my office complex. The sun on my back and the fresh air really help to clear my mind and allow me to reset myself to get back into what I call my “Architecture Mode” when I need to be efficient and creative simultaneously.