As an architecture firm, we’ve found our clients increasingly reliant upon us in ways that go beyond our typical scope of work. As a marketer, I’ve experienced a similar evolution of my own role, lending perspective outside the traditional scope of marketing, in areas like firm culture, HR, and project support.

This shift in our industry—both with clients and internally—spurs the question, how can marketers harness their unique skillset to improve firm operations from within? If a brand is the sum of interactions one has with a firm, it’s pragmatic to think marketing can fine-tune the client experience and overall operations. Here are four considerations to expand marketing’s leadership across your organization.

**Improve Staff Engagement**
Your most valuable assets are employees. From recruitment to retention, analyze the employee engagement cycle and how you currently market inward.

- **Communicate benefits.** Craft a compelling story about who you are and what your firm values. Then, clearly communicate to recruits the benefits of joining your team—just like you would a client.
- **Make onboarding meaningful.** New hires bring energy and enthusiasm to a firm, but roughly three-quarters of organizations aren’t effectively...
onboarding employees. Your marketing team can assist the onboarding process through brand training, educating employees around standards, and working with HR to creatively package the onboarding experience.

- **Show existing staff they are valued.** Just as marketing helps retain the best clients, it should also turn efforts inward to retain employees. One way to do this is to let employees in on the marketing process. Share why certain projects are pursued. Show how a team won a recent interview. Bringing employees into a critical, but often mysterious, area of your organization provides an understanding of the inner workings of marketing while helping them feel valued.

**Create Better Stories and Connections**

Humans love stories and our personal connections are what differentiate one firm from another. Ask yourself, “How can we better communicate our story? Are we connecting with others through our storytelling?”

- **Deliver better presentations.** Marketers successfully prepare teams for interviews by understanding how to craft engaging stories. Community events and project meetings are no different. Coach your team to identify a hook that engages the audience, and work with them to deliver their message with confidence.

- **Improve existing client relations.** Business development and marketing often uncover clients’ key issues. Transferring this knowledge to the project team once a contract is signed sets a project up for success. The marketing team can also serve as a neutral party to check in with clients during projects for feedback.

**Deliver Project and Branding Support**

How a project is managed, the accuracy of your documents, and the ease of paying invoices all affect a client’s experience with your firm. Study project deliverables and view everyday project essentials as opportunities to unify your brand.

- **Review graphics and writing.** Develop a review process for graphics and written project material to ensure the quality promised in the marketing stage is maintained throughout the project. When designed well, graphics and narratives are great tools for communicating. Create templates for typical project documents to improve efficiency and brand continuity.

- **Offer staff training.** Develop a staff training series that shares your strengths. Are you a color theory guru who can select better palettes for renderings? Or do you notice a lack of white space makes project documents difficult to digest? Bringing small items to your teams’ attention (and offering solutions) can result in better deliverables.

- **Get creative to add value for clients.** How you best add value will be individual to your firm; one design firm shared that it holds. Whether you are looking for more thorough project data, clearer project management reporting, or future workload predictions, work with your teams to identify priorities and develop a process for getting the information you need and making input easier.

Nearly all facets of an organization can reap rewards from marketing leadership. As a marketer, you have unique talent, skills, and influence. Your role gives you a seat at the table to be bold, thoughtful, and to use your creativity to make a positive difference across your organization.

**Uncover patterns to inform pursuits.** Accounting and marketing professionals can collaborate to identify what projects are profitable and why. This process uncovers patterns, such as where your firm is most efficient and which client types require extra hand-holding. Gathering and analyzing this information better informs the go/no-go process, influences fee development, leads to more profitable work, and improves your bottom line.

**Fine-tune systems for information management.** A database of information is only as helpful as the information it holds. Whether you are looking for more thorough project data, clearer project management reporting, or future workload predictions, work with your teams to identify priorities and develop a process for getting the information you need and making input easier.

FOOTNOTE

1. Statistic from a survey of 350 organizations conducted by Kronos, Inc. and the Human Capital Institute (HCI), as reported by the Society of Human Resource Management, 2018.

Author’s Note: A special thanks to the A/E/C marketing professionals who shared examples of how they creatively infuse marketing across their organization.