AIA Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program

Session #2: Entrepreneurship & Management

Date: November 5th, 2021

Session 2 was introduced to the scholars by Kris Mehrten and Michael Barkoviak, we met at the AIA Resource Center and it was sponsored by JEMA and ACI Boland Architects as Session Supporter.

John Mueller, Principal from JEMA Architects started the 2nd session of the Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program. He asked the group who wanted to start their own company and why? He went further to develop five characteristics that he finds essential to own your own company: Ambition, Perfection, Be solid as a mountain, Care and good with people. Ambition because starting your own company is difficult and full of unknowns. It will require to work 90 hours a week and will have to sacrifice many things. He linked it with the concept being solid as a mounting because you will be exposed to your weakness and you will have to feel secure with that insecurity. He went on to the next concept perfection and being super critical about your work. Be also aware that perfectionism will decline as the company grows because there will be more input. The next concept care linked with the work environment and care about the people that work for you since the Principal needs them to care about the company as well. He concluded that people will become the best resource for the firm. Thus, caring about them is important.

David Zobel from Danna McKitrick, Attorneys at Law, talked about the liability of starting your own firm. As the firm grows, there will be more complex things that will require more experience in fields where one may not feel comfortable and they can become risks to the firm. A principal needs to know what they don’t know and build a team of resources to fill those gaps where you lack experience, ie insurance, accountant, real state, etc.

He moved to talk about transition planning and becoming a partner at a firm. It is important to always about the government documents to help to establish the behavior that is expected from you once you become Partner of the firm. At the same time, it is important to know about what is it going to take to get out of the firm? Loyalty and conflict of interest should be discussed.

David concluded with expanding your firm and the issues of hiring employees and their benefits as they are very expensive assets with a lot of rights and it is important for the firm to have a employee manual.
Aaron Perlut from Elasticity followed in our 2\textsuperscript{nd} session and he focused on building a brand. Culture is essential on building the brand because it will define the work environment of a firm. How do you expose yourself in social media? A concept he focused on was company brand vs individual brand and how important is to define and create those boundaries in between.

The culture at elasticity is the best idea wins no matter where it may come from. In their environment they what to be the Disrupter. They want to change the way to view something, get your attention. How do you market to people?

Aaron Perlut was followed by Ed Morrisey from Integrity. He presented some slides with the rise of the creative class in which nowadays, people are getting away from the automation and production and we are leaning toward the making and creating. He explained how his firm is set up in a Holacracy method in which the management is decentralized and organizational governance, which claims to distribute authority and decision-making through a harcherry of self-organizing teams rather than being vested in a management hierarchy.

To conclude the session, Albie Mitchell from Collab brought the Business Canvas workshop, in which scholars thought about all pieces required for the business creation from the problem to the assets and being conscious about client relationships and the market.