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- Design and construction requires a very similar level of execution in order to successfully complete projects.
- It may be cliché, but I have found that the more I put into these types of activities, the more I get out of them.



Jeffrey Hausman, AIA, LEED AP, is senior vice president and Detroit office director of SmithGroupJJR, the nation's longest continuously operating architecture, engineering and planning firm, with nine U.S. offices and one in Shanghai, China. A practicing architect for over 30 years, Hausman served the AIA at the Chapter and State levels, including Detroit Chapter PreSident in 2002 and Michigan Chapter president in 2006. He is currently the design representative to the AGC Michigan board and member of the executive committee for the CAM Boy Scouts Building Connections event.

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Design & Construction is a Team Sport

Jeffrey Hausman, AIA, LEED AP, SmithGroupJJR

Autumn is a great time of year in Michigan – fall colors, crisp air and football season. For me, nothing is better than watching a well oiled offense execute on the football field. There is an intense precision required by each person performing their assignment exactly at the right time in coordination with their teammates to achieve the desired result: a touchdown.

Design and construction requires a very similar level of execution in order to successfully complete projects. Each team member must execute their job in a timely and precise manner, in coordination with the other members of the team.

However, in the design and construction industry, we often start from the point of view that we are not on the same team. We are architects, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and consultants. We run our own businesses and have our own goals: to make sure our client is happy and will hire us again. We do not often think about how the responsibilities of the other members, affects us (and the project) until something goes wrong. After all, we are busy doing our own job. We do not have time to worry about what someone else is supposed to be doing. But I strongly believe that adopting the approach of being empathetic to our fellow team members generates much better results.



In my experience, when I have taken the time to get to know my other team members and what drives them and their concerns, we end up being better teammates and the projects we are working on are more successful. One of the best times to get to know someone is when you are not in the throes of a project, but how do you do this? The answer is by getting involved in the organizations that support our profession.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Construction Association of Michigan (CAM), Engineering Society of Detroit (ESD), Association of General Contractors (AGC) and other professional associations are always looking for design and construction professionals to get involved. They also host annual events that provide a chance to mingle outside of



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the office. event that raises money for the Boy Scouts of America. Along with raising money for an excellent cause, it provides us an opportunity to meet many industry professionals. CAM is a major driver of the program with Greg Montowski leading the charge. As an active member of the executive committee, I have met and gotten to know a host of other industry leaders. It makes it much easier to call one of those individuals if there is ever an issue on one of our projects because we have already built those connections. The 11th annual Building Connections event, held this year at the Detroit Historical Society on September 17, was a great success. You can get involved in the planning for the 12th annual event by letting CAM know you're interested in being on the committee.

The AIA/AGC Midsummer Conference, a partnership between AIA and AGC, completed its 72nd annual conference in August. I was fortunate enough to be the chair of the conference this year and blessed to work with a great committee of architects, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and association professionals. As a team, we brought together a program focused on how the design and construction industry is making a positive difference in Michigan.

The AIA/AGC Midsummer Conference is also a family event, which makes it the perfect place to gain valuable insights into a different side of the people you may work with on projects.

It may be cliché, but I have found that the more I put into these types of activities, the more I get out of them. I have certainly used the connections developed at these events to solve problems amicably and quickly, to the benefit of the entire team.

So, the next time you're watching a football game, I ask you to stop and think about how you can be a better teammate to your design and construction partners. Getting to know each other as people so we can better empathize with one another will help the entire industry. We will be better teammates because we will be thinking and acting as the team we truly need to be to complete successful projects. It is a much more satisfying way to be involved in our profession and make a positive difference for Michigan.