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## **Phase Zero Design is off to a great start and continues to build upon its foundation**

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Since opening their doors in June of 2009, Phase Zero Design is enjoying slow and steady growth. "When we founded the firm, a few of our friends and colleagues thought we were taking a big risk since the economic conditions were less than ideal. We also heard that some of the most successful companies began during an economic downturn. We believe Phase Zero Design will be added to that list," said Matt Wittmer a principal with the firm.

Phase Zero Design offers the traditional services of architecture, design and planning. However, the firm believes that its strategic consulting and research capabilities differentiate them in the marketplace and reinforces the Phase Zero Design brand position.

The firm has an almost existential approach to its projects. Every project "begins before the beginning." How does a project start before the beginning?

It's a fair question and one that's often asked of the firm's principals since founding Phase Zero Design.

The concept of "phase zero" was developed in the life sciences industry to precede the traditional phase one clinical trials. The goal of a phase zero clinical trial is to streamline the costly and time-consuming drug development process, helping to deliver good drugs to people who need them more quickly.

"We believe that this approach can be incorporated into how we deliver our services to our clients," said Jim Kimball a principal with the firm. Phase zero is initiated before the project begins by the project champion and involves all the key stakeholders including of course the client. The purpose of phase zero is to identify the important factors that need to be considered for the project and to select the best ideas while eliminating the ineffective ones. "The phase zero design approach allows our clients to have more ownership in the design process, teach them to think more creatively in the context of what they do and it can also accelerate subsequent phases of their project."

"This innovative approach provides our clients with tangible value and reinforces our core value of customer advocacy," said Wittmer.

Phase Zero Design's expertise includes the retail, corporate, residential, hospitality, and industrial practice areas with a diverse base of local and national clients. The firm is a team of experienced professionals, with locations in the Hartford, Conn.; Greenwich, Conn. and Boston, Mass. markets. The firm's projects include shopping centers, commercial interiors, specialty stores, private residences and grocery stores. Currently the firm is engaged in a number of retail projects which include assisting The Dartmouth Company with the entitlement phase for The Shoppes at Avalon, a mixed-use development located in Glastonbury, Conn., rolling out new stores for BCBGMAXAZRIA across the country and remodels for Winn-Dixie in Florida. Other projects which add some diversity to the firm's practice include the design of Elite Health Services' new location in Greenwich, Conn.

Also, the firm recently announced their partnership with Phase Zero Consult, a real estate advisory practice.

The long term plan for Phase Zero Design is for the firm to be positioned as an expert in the markets it serves. The firm has a strong foundation in the retail, corporate, residential and industrial practice areas. Clients today want to hire experts. It is a strategic imperative for the firm to continue to build upon its foundation and sustain its growth.

According to Wittmer, Phase Zero Design has what it takes to succeed in a competitive industry. "Our growth plans will be primarily driven by our clients and our ability to leverage our expertise to develop new relationships and opportunities. Geographically, our projects are located all over the country. We'll go wherever our clients need us, however, we firmly believe that "owning your own backyard" is important to the success and longevity of our firm. Our plan is to grow our local practice from Boston to New York."

"We are also very excited about the opportunities being created as a result of the recession. According to our research, most of the development to occur in the next 3 to 5 years will be driven by public/private partnerships working together to repurpose distressed commercial and industrial properties or to revitalize suburban town centers," said Jim Kimball. "As a firm, we embrace the ideals of sustainable development and we will be positioning ourselves to play a role not only in Connecticut's future but also in the future of the cities and towns across New England and beyond. After all, we have a head start. We're starting at phase zero."

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