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Now is the time to get out, circulate, renew old connections and establish new ones

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As we approach the start of another spring we in the design community wonder what news will come that will bring our industry back to its former flourishing self? It has been a long winter with a slow down in work for most and nothing but bad news on the financial front. The stock market seems to go up and down on the slightest news good or bad, the consumer confidence is low and many feel we are in a recession.

The spring brings with it a new hope, a rebirth of nature. We would all want it to bring us renewal and more work but it is a time to take control of your business, not just hope things will improve.

The idea that a recession will be bad for your business is the easy way out, blaming what happens on the economy without adapting and changing as the circumstances require.

We know that things in the housing side of our industry have been sinking down more and more, especially those out of the way projects or poorly conceived ones. There are opportunities and areas where things are still active in housing; you just need to dig for them. Smaller projects, infill, mixed use are all places where you could find opportunities. It does mean a change for many.

The other areas of design work are showing signs of slow downs as business cuts back on spending, renovating their facilities or expanding. The retail sector is still in the midst of a renovation as they retool to attract the waning consumer dollars out there. The institutions are still keeping architects busy as they improve facilities to attract new people. There is a need to have new labs, classrooms, housing, athletic facilities for the ever more demanding students and their hard to satisfy parents. As more baby boomers want a legacy they continue to donate to schools and universities in record numbers. If you are working in this segment, you need to work now because with the recent stock market slides the money may stop and the endowments shrink.

So why do we stay in the industry with all its up and downs and uncertainty? It is the creative energy that we all love, the accomplishments we can make, the difference we can make in people's lives. We know that as business goes for the short run it will not be easy given the economy but that should not stop us from doing what we do. It is time to get out, circulate, renew old connections and establish new ones to make things happen.

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