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## **Where did the first half of 2014 go? Business has been good and projects are moving along**

July 24, 2014 - Spotlights

We are now into July and you may have vacation on your mind more than business. We are past the long cold winter and now complaining about excessive heat. I do not know about you but I have been so busy that I cannot believe we are in July. Business has been good and projects are moving along. Sure we have had some setbacks and hiccups but overall things are happening.

The home sales continue to improve and buyers are talking about shortage of supply, bidding wars and rising prices. Landlords are talking about rents increasing and no vacancies in their buildings. Even the stock market has set new records. Massachusetts just released unemployment figures showing 5.5% unemployment and businesses seem to be hiring. Maybe all is not rosy in the economy but we seem to have things heading upward, albeit slowly in some areas.

Where does this leave us? How long do we think this will last? Can the U.S. economy continue to improve with all the pressure on it and other world economies still being unstable? None of us can be sure but in Boston we are lucky to have robust growth and a diversified business base which makes all of us in the real estate industry smile.

It still takes hard work and diligence to succeed and there are potholes all around us threatening to swallow us if we are not careful. Your business needs constant attention to grow and prosper and just because the local economy has improved, there are no guarantees. We have been making sure people know who we are with launching a new website, revamping our Facebook page, publishing our blog and creating a social media and marketing plan. This multi-prong approach keeps us active in the industry. But just having a presence online will not be enough without remembering the basics about marketing. It is about good customer relations and constant networking that we keep our clients and the work flowing into the company.

Our marketing plan is looking to involve many members of our staff and divide responsibilities to make it more manageable for a small firm with no dedicated marketing person or department. Each employee has a specific aspect of social media to keep updated and to post to. The subject matter for posts varies from local events, news articles staff run across to accomplishments of our firm or clients. We try to present the same content to the various forms of social media but not all is appropriate for all outlets. These posts are supplemented with some written content for traditional news outlets and a constant refreshing of content on our website.

We hope to drive people to our website and expose them to all the projects and services our firm can provide. Many of your clients may not realize what is it you do for other clients especially if you operate in several market niches. That has been the case with our company where many clients only ask us to design certain types of projects and do not get exposed to all the work we do. We also want clients to know the broad range of project experience we now have. This came about due to our recent expansion in acquiring another firm which traditionally operated in an entirely different

market niche. The new website starts to address this but chances are the clients you deal with on a regular basis are not going to your website.

The different platforms of social media are designed to broaden our base and provide content that is educational to clients and helpful in their business. We think a major component of this will be our blog. This is now featured predominately on our website and tied into our other online presence. Through this blog with regular postings we will try to give our clients information on design trends, changes to building codes, links to other information, notifications of education events and more. We strive to make it a resource area for them to stay informed and to educate themselves. We deal with projects in many communities and are exposed to issues and problems which require solutions. If we can share this experience, we hope to inform clients on ways to avoid the same problems on their projects, or anticipate trends which help them to run their companies better and be more successful. These are lofty goals that will take a commitment of time and resources within our company but feel it will be a value to our present and future clients.

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