



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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2021 Ones to Watch: Zachary Smith, Associate | Senior Architect, Bergmeyer Associates

May 28, 2021 - Spotlights

How do you contribute to your community or your profession? Currently, I'm the Chair of the American Institute of Architect's Retail and Entertainment Knowledge Community. I enjoy overseeing the group and appreciate the valuable connections, discussions, and knowledge-sharing it promotes about the retail and entertainment environments.

What led you to your current profession? I found architecture early in life spending hours watching my childhood neighborhood grow with me on the front porch. As I grew and moved through school, I found that art, building, and design, in general, were taking my fascination from pure construction to design and architecture. As I continued to develop, I became fascinated with how a person experiences their environment and specifically how environments can shape one's experience. This interest has led me to a career working with both interesting smaller hospitality projects and up to multi-story mixed-use developments with developers seeking to do something unique within their communities.

Who or what inspires you? My inspiration comes from many places, but the projects and people who inspire me the most are the developers/architects who don't settle for the easier design solutions and push the envelope to meet the needs of the end-users, community, and environment. Seeing these projects inspires me to ask those hard questions to develop deep understandings of what a particular project needs to find a solution that may not be my original assumption.

How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles? I've always believed in direct, honest communication through a supportive environment across my teams. In my experience, this builds a strong bond through transparency, which, when paired with a common goal of a particular project or approach, fosters a tight group that works together through challenges in a safe and trusted environment. 2020 may have had the most obstacles of my career, given the current pandemic that forced us all to flip the way we work seemingly overnight. Transitioning this philosophy to daily meetings that are equal parts status/support/social calls developed one of the strongest teams I have ever worked with.

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? Use your time in school and early on in your career to understand what motivates and excites you. The architectural profession is broad and offers all sorts of career paths throughout the built

environment. Understanding what makes you get up in the morning early in your career will make every day after more rewarding. Take risks early and find your passion.

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