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Why today's economy requires new solutions and finding new opportunities.

By James M Williams

AE URBIA & J.M. Williams and Associates, Inc

The new economy, or lack thereof, may be the new norm. You can keep waiting for things to return to how they were, or you can look for new opportunities and new solutions. We opted for the later.

Rome wasn't built in a day...but the LDS Motion Picture Studio's Jerusalem Set was designed, engineered, constructed and film shot, in less than 1 year! And it's actually more than three football fields in size. In addition to exceeding our client's expectations, the set was constructed within 2% of a very tight budget. Sound impossible? It would have been using traditional methods and processes.

AE URBIA is a creative and innovative architectural firm, and as president, architect and engineer I was able, with the assistance of my team, to provide a holistic approach to the design, as well as identify challenges and opportunities this project presented. Off-the-shelf building materials were used, thus eliminating long lead times. Conventional construction materials were selected to facilitate the construction and reduce costs. The structural system was panelized in order to expedite the process and to allow the owner to self-perform many of the tasks in addition to starting framing before the earthwork and foundations were done. In addition, a new and innovative wall system was also created. The completed movie set was inspirational.

Food for Health is another example of new opportunities and solutions. When it neared time for Food for Health to renew their lease, we indicated that we thought we could provide them with a new office, manufacturing and warehouse building that they could own for nearly the same price they were leasing, and...we were right! The owner now has a new facility and asset, not to mention the increase productivity and increased business.

We recently created a state-of-the-art office and distribution center for Quality Bicycle Products. It was the intent of our design team to provide Quality Bicycle Products (QBP) with a fun, healthy, energy-efficient working environment and to provide them with a facility that will reinforce their leadership role in doing business in an environmentally responsible manner. The owner, design team and contractor were able to exceed the original expectation and have submitted for a LEED Platinum Certification, which is the highest possible LEED Certification.

As energy, sustainability and resilience move to the forefront of our lives, new construction methods must be conceived and adapted and new opportunities identified. The use of tilt-up concrete can be a major factor in accomplishing this while helping to keep the cost of the project down. Tilt-up concrete, once only used for large tilt-up boxes, is now being used for class "A" office buildings and everything in between, thus expediting and simplifying construction while providing durability, energy efficiency and reducing construction and future maintenance costs. Tilt-up concrete, if properly designed is an excellent method for creating facilities that are not only well suited for wind and seismic, but can also provide blast resistance, as now required by all federally leased or owned buildings, as well as many in the private sector. The Clyde Companies Corporate 3-story office building is a great example of what a modern tilt-up concrete

building can look like. This new building type can be utilized for any style of architecture.

Today's economy has redefined the business sector. Many companies have been eliminated or greatly reduced in size. Those that remain must be more competitive than ever. They must be more efficient and do more with less, and discover new creative means and methods. Each company must recommit, realign or redefine itself. Listen to clients and give them what they want. Be open minded and creative, have vision. Improve performance. Become an expert. Create meaningful experiences. Be a team player. Continue learning and increasing your knowledge. Find unique solutions to today's problems and look for new opportunities, or create them. As the world continues to get smaller, your opportunities continue to increase. Above all, be honest, ethical, fair and create true value. Remember and do all the things you used to, act like a start-up.

I know architecture and architecture is simply based on relationships, relationships on all levels, the relationship between space, components, rooms, buildings, cities, and most important, people. Successful business is also successful relationships. Every deal and transaction boils down to a relationship, between people, or between people and products. Improve your relationships and improves your business.

Our success comes through our relationships and from helping our clients to succeed.



James is a licensed architect, structural engineer, civil engineer, professional engineer and LEED accredited professional. He is the owner of AE URBIA and J.M. Williams and Associates, Inc. The firm has received over 50 design awards and has successfully completed over 3,500 projects. He has worked on projects across the country and in 15 different countries. James is an active member in many professional organizations.

AE URBIA is located in Salt Lake City. James and his wife Rachel live in Orem and have 7 children.