

## Designers Lighting Forum

# Egos, Intuition, & Lumens; Decoding the Architect's Mind

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**Brian Maite, MBA, AIA, LIRC, MIES**

Vice President and General Manager  
ALW (Architectural Light Works)  
an LMPG Company



**Katie Woods Hawk**

Lighting Sales Rep and Designer  
FSA Lighting



APRIL 14, 2026

Credit(s) earned on completion of this course will be reported to **AIA CES** for AIA members. Certificates of Completion for both AIA members and non-AIA members are available upon request.

This course is registered with **AIA CES** for continuing professional education. As such, it does not include content that may be deemed or construed to be an approval or endorsement by the AIA of any material of construction or any method or manner of handling, using, distributing, or dealing in any material or product.

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Questions related to specific materials, methods, and services will be addressed at the conclusion of this presentation.

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## Learning Objectives

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Through this course, participants will be able to:

- 1. Learn the roles of an architect**  
throughout the design and coordination process of projects.
- 2. Identify potential challenges of communication**  
between specifiers & others in the lighting industry.
- 3. Analyze best practices**  
for efficient & mutually beneficial collaboration.
- 4. Identify steps in one's own projects,**  
to better the design process and create greater design results and experiences.

## Brian Maite, MBA, AIA, LIRC, MIES

Brian Maite is Vice President and General Manager of a nationally-renown lighting manufacturing company. His strategic perspective is shaped by his experience as a specifier, distributor, agent, and manufacturer.

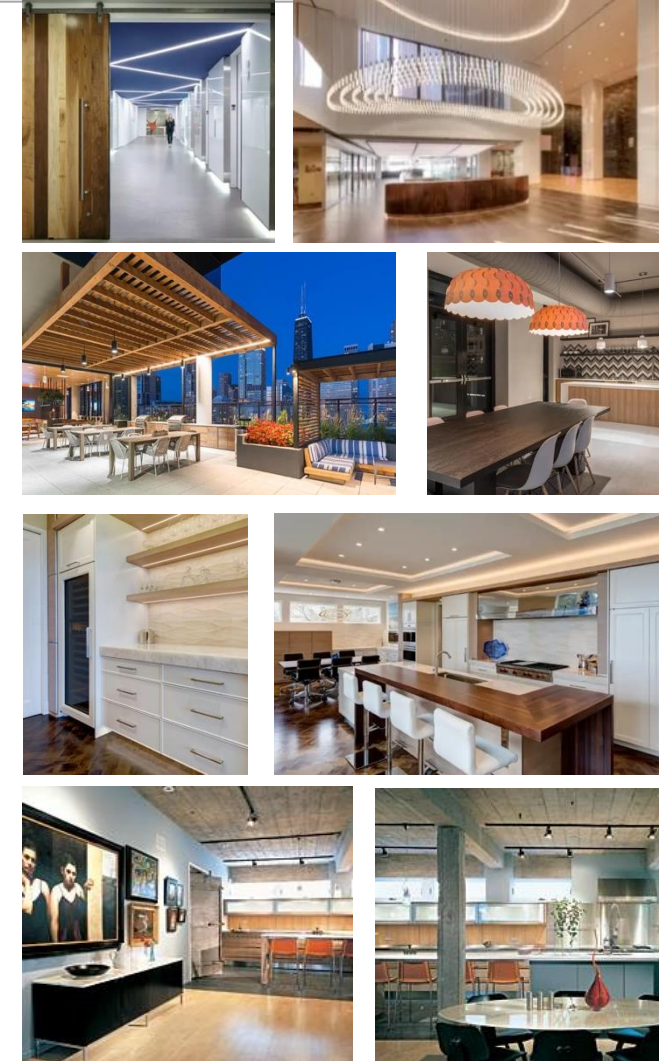
Leading up to his current role, Brian recently had the opportunity to serve the industry in a multitude of roles such as VP of Sales, Director of Pricing & Strategy, Director of Agency Sales, and Director of Architecture. Early in his career Brian served as Vice President of a Distribution company overseeing all business operations and launching both a Lighting and Gear Department, as well as a national accounts program. He was introduced to lighting as an architect for award-winning design firm in Chicago, overseeing and specifying lighting for all of his projects.

This deep, multi-channel expertise allows him to approach leadership with a comprehensive understanding of the market. He is a licensed architect, holds an MBA from Loyola University Chicago with concentrations in Economics, Finance, and Product Development and currently serves on the LIRC Steering Committee.



**VICE PRESIDENT  
GENERAL MANAGER**

MBA, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO  
B.ARCH, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI'S  
COLLEGE OF DAAP



## Katie Hawk, Assoc. AIA

Katie Hawk is an Architectural Lighting Sales Rep & Designer. Prior to Lighting, she built a 10-year career in Architecture & Interior Design. After over a decade of designing & managing projects ranging from Higher Education to U.S. Embassies, High-End Residential projects, & award-winning Permanent Exhibits, she transitioned into Lighting.

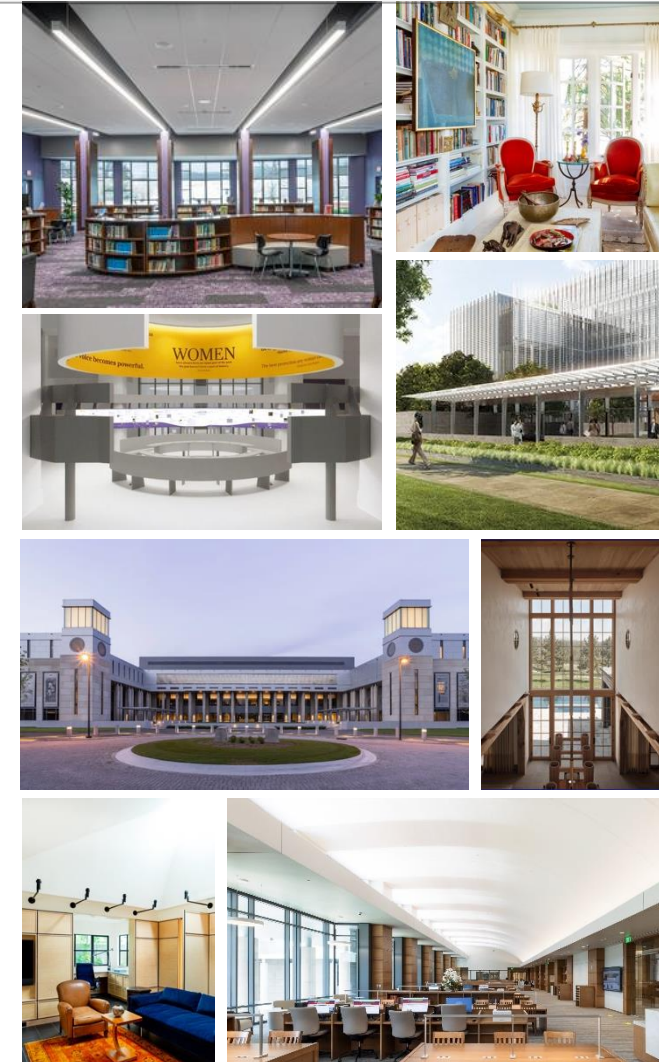
Katie collaborates with former colleagues & new clientele, drawing on her A&D foundation. She assists in selections, applications, specs, & coordination. A key tenant of Katie's is bridging the gap between the vernacular of Architecture with the nature & nuance of Lighting. Her most recent PM role has been designing and managing her agency's Nashville Showroom.

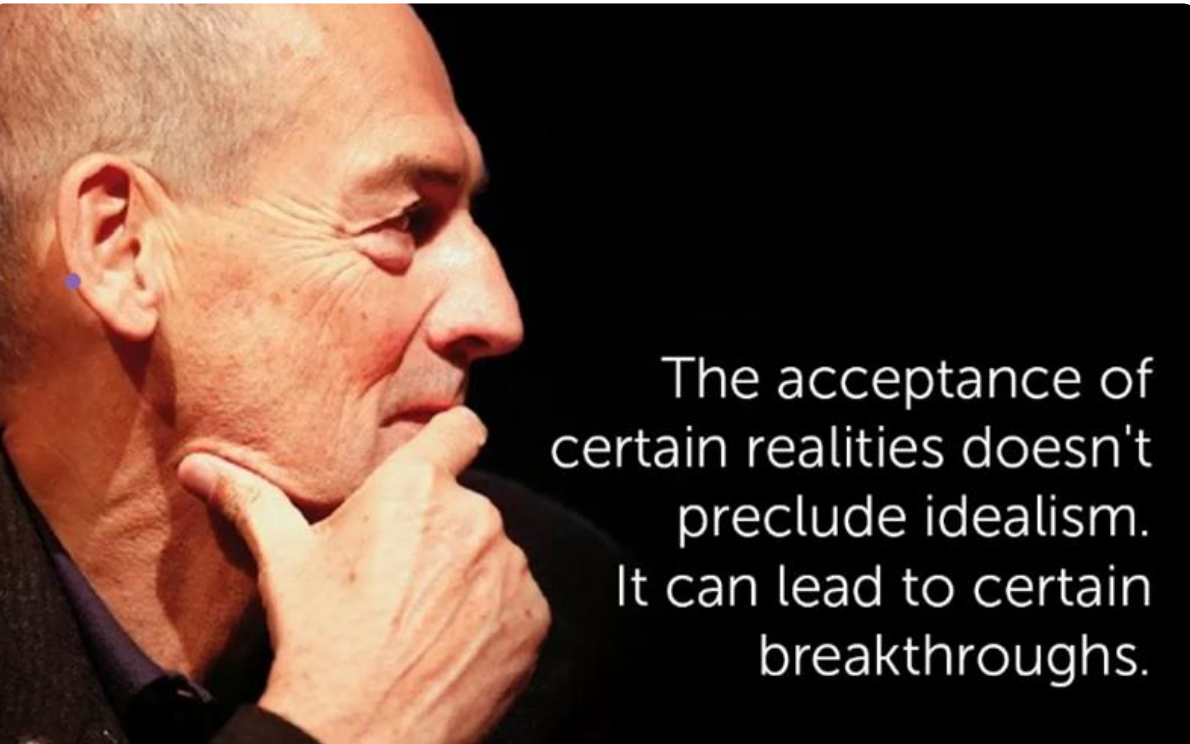
Katie is currently completing a Lighting Certificate program through CU Boulder, teaching short courses for Architecture and Interior Design Universities, and serving on numerous local A&D committees. Her work has been featured in publications such as Arch Daily, ARQA, Dearq, the Sarah Moody Gallery, Luxe Magazine, Condé Nast Traveler, Time.com, CBS and PBS Newshour.



### LIGHTING SALES, DESIGNER

B.ARCH, AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
ARCH LIGHTING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM  
CU BOULDER





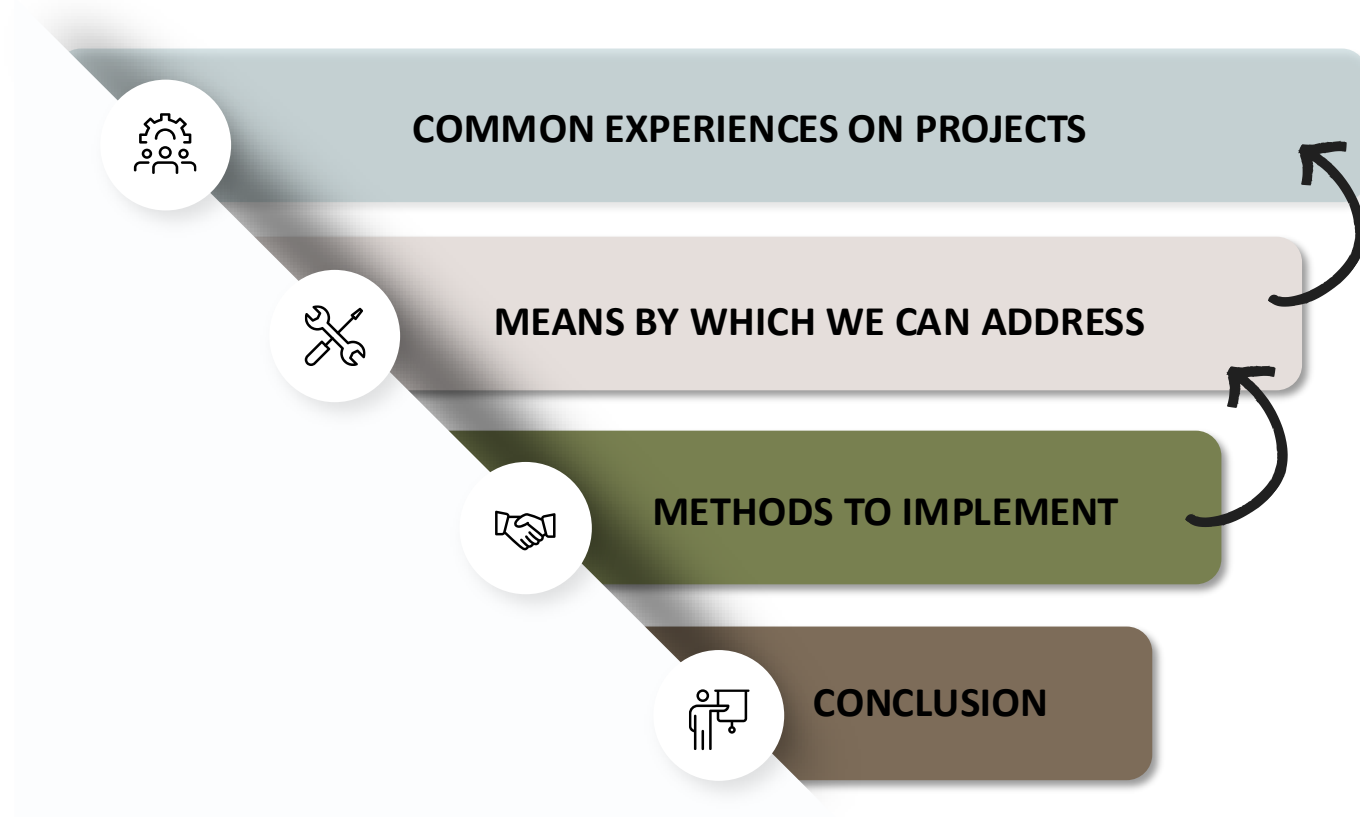
<https://blueturtlemc.com/blog/40-of-the-most-famous-architect-quotes-of-all-time/>

## Course Introduction

Architects balance technical rigor, creative vision, and professional accountability—while shaping design decisions across numerous disciplines, including lighting.

This panel examines how differing roles, vocabularies, and expectations between architects and lighting professionals create friction, and how thorough, well-intended communication can transform collaboration into better project outcomes.

# COURSE OUTLINE



**ROADBLOCKS WE ENCOUNTER AS A TEAM**  
THREE COMMON THREADS

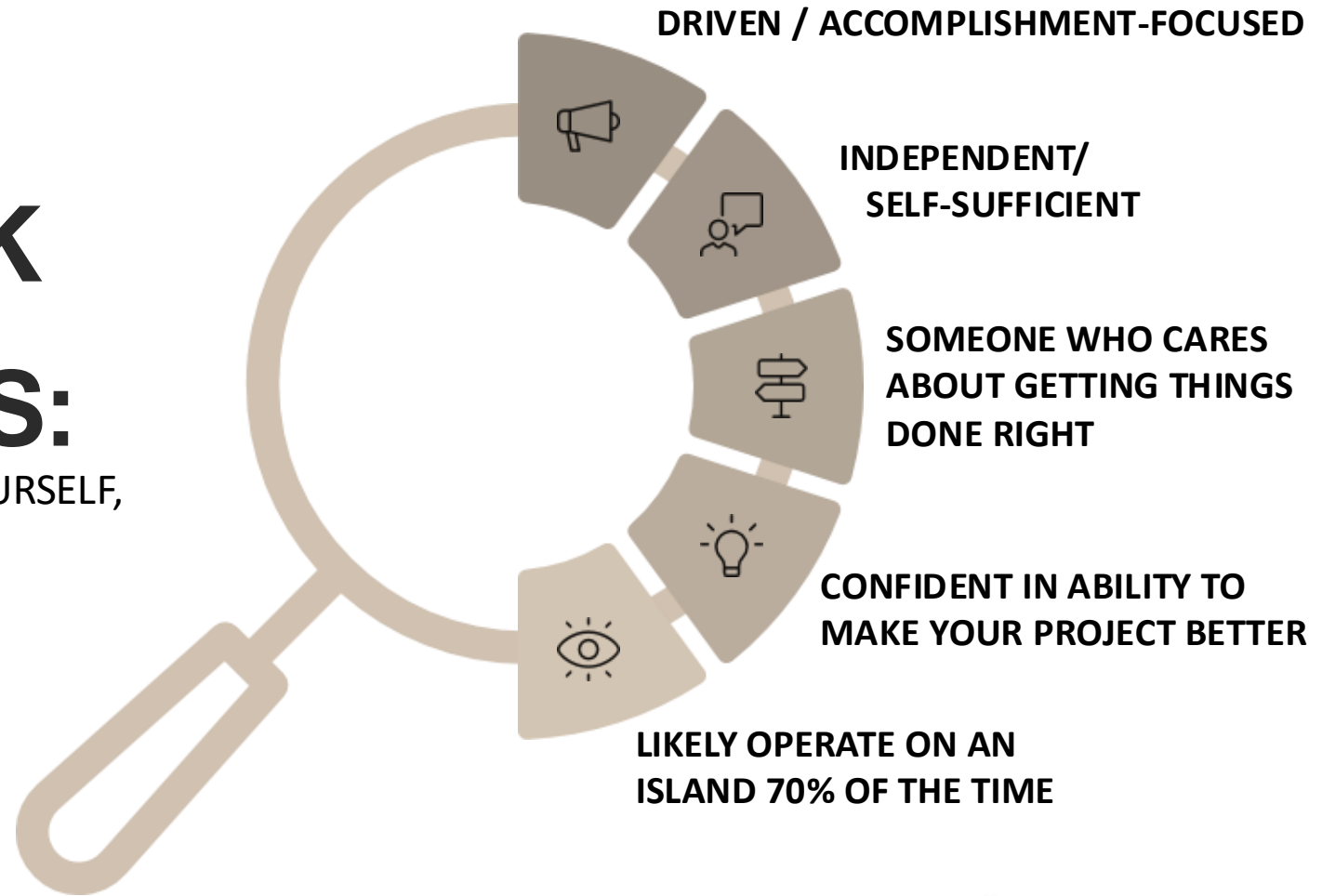
**STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THESE ROADBLOCKS**  
CONTRACTUAL AND NON-CONTRACTUAL PATHS

**APPLYING THESE STRATEGIES TO EVERY PROJECT**  
RESOURCES TO LEAN ON

**KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR SUCCESS**  
TENANTS YOU CAN APPLY TODAY

# FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES:

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF, PROFESSIONALLY?



The combined qualities of successful, highly independent Professionals can be challenging to a team's dynamics

**ESTABLISHING ROLES, COORDINATION STRATEGY,  
AND TEAM MENTALITY EARLY IS PARAMOUNT.**

# COMMON EXPERIENCE

Three common roadblocks we encounter



## ROLES

Roles that are not well-established



## COORDINATION

Coordination processes that are unclear



## FRICTION

Friction due to poor communication

# COMMON RESPONSES

Three common responses to these experiences

“I’ll handle it, myself”

“It will naturally work itself out”

“This is wildly frustrating”

The simplest response to project frustrations is to assume the other party does not know how to do their job, or work with others, when in reality **we all fall short at communication.**



# “THE MEANS”

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RECOGNIZING & STRATEGIZING FOR POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS

**1** defined roles  
+ responsibilities

**2** strategy  
for coordination

**3** trust and  
communication

# 1 ROLES + RESPONSIBILITIES

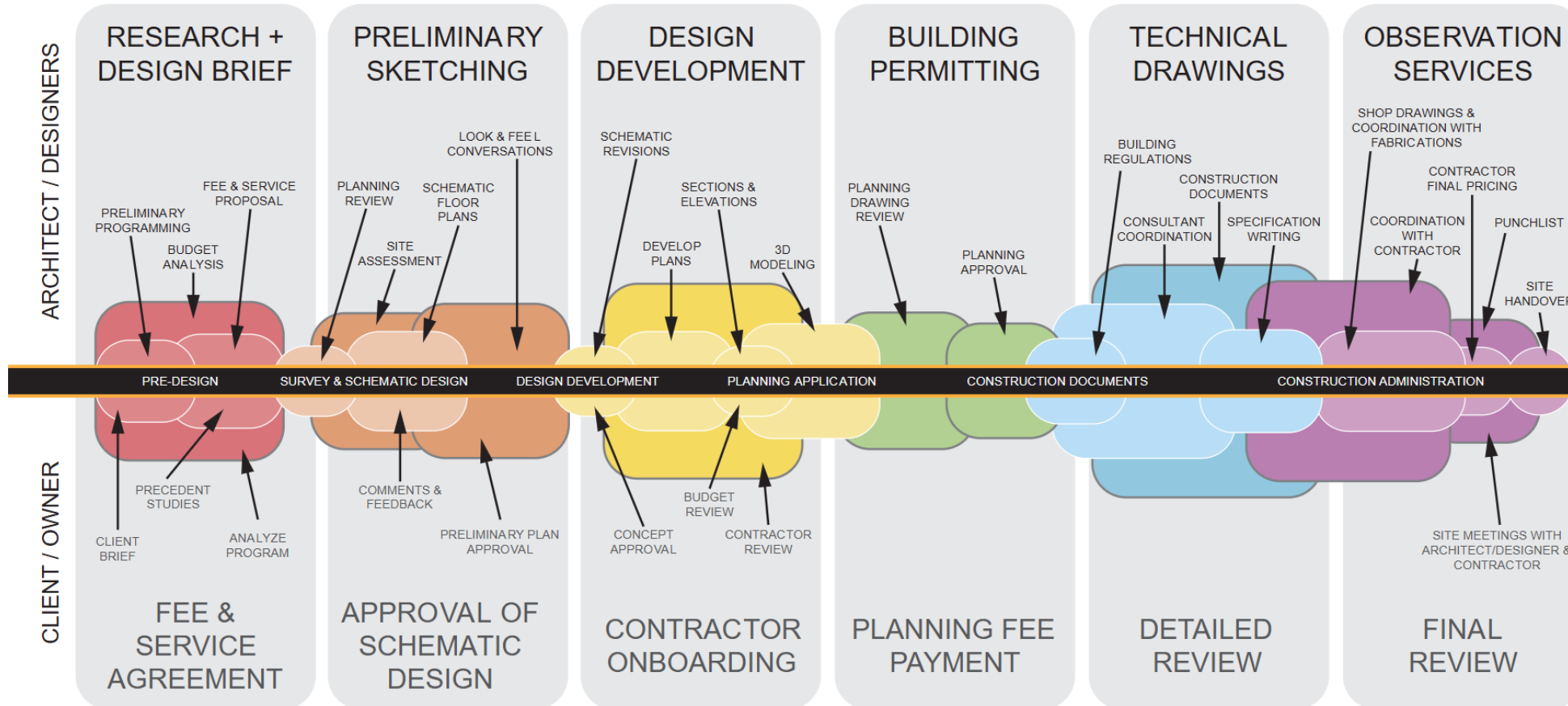
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let's meet the team.

## The Architect

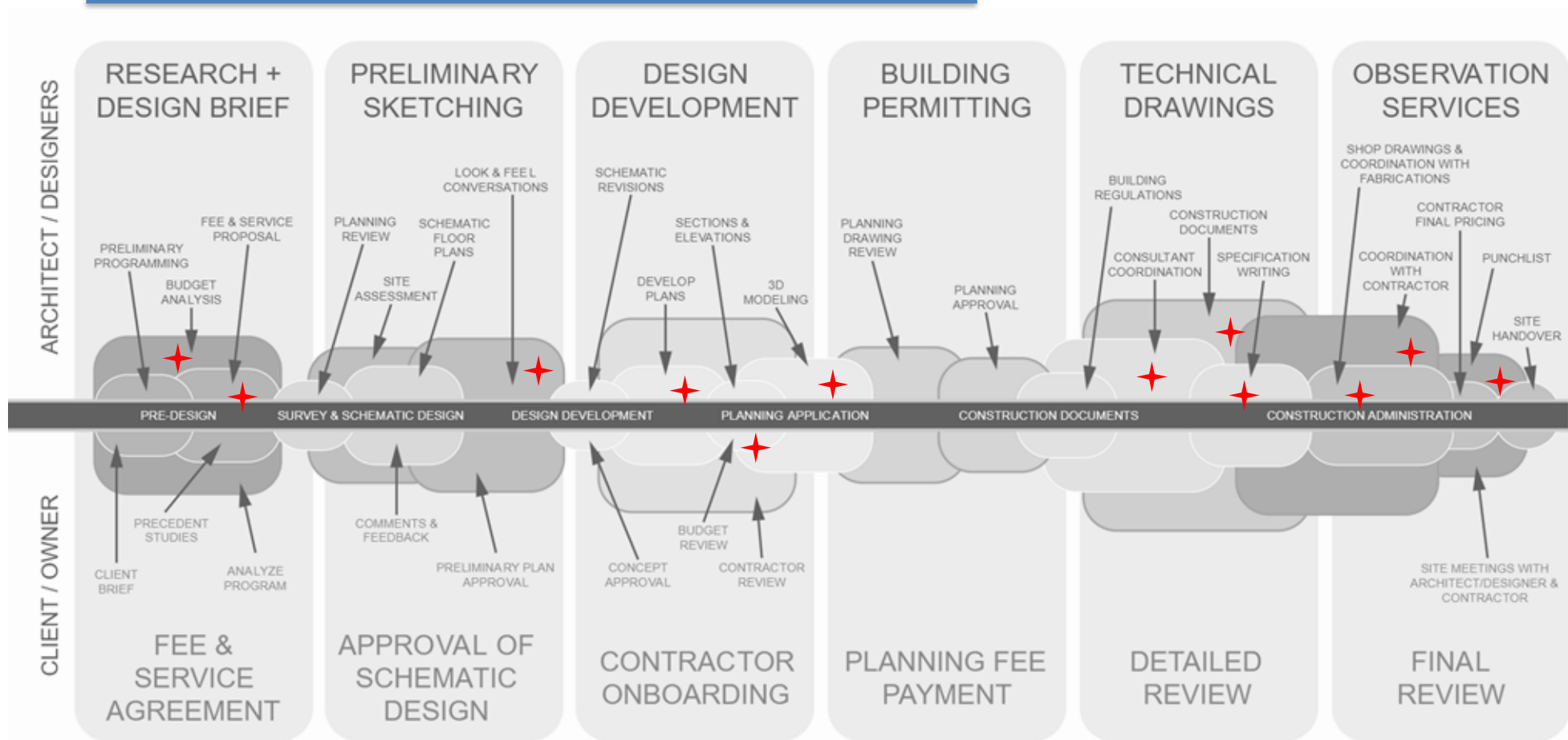


What an architect’s responsibilities look like:



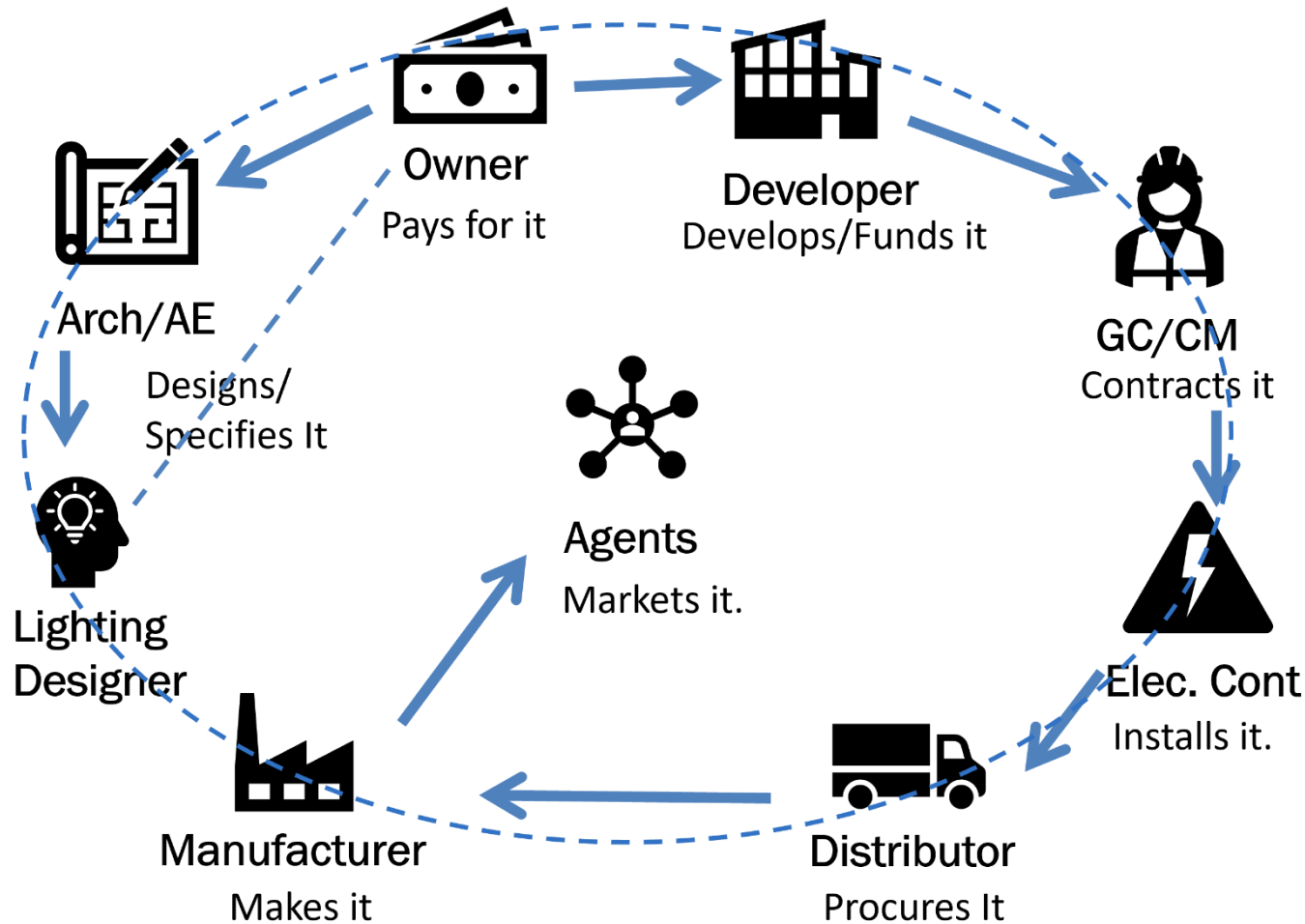
<https://rascoh.com/ways-architects-can-use-ai-design-process/>

Where lighting coordination factors in:



### STRATEGY FOR COORDINATION

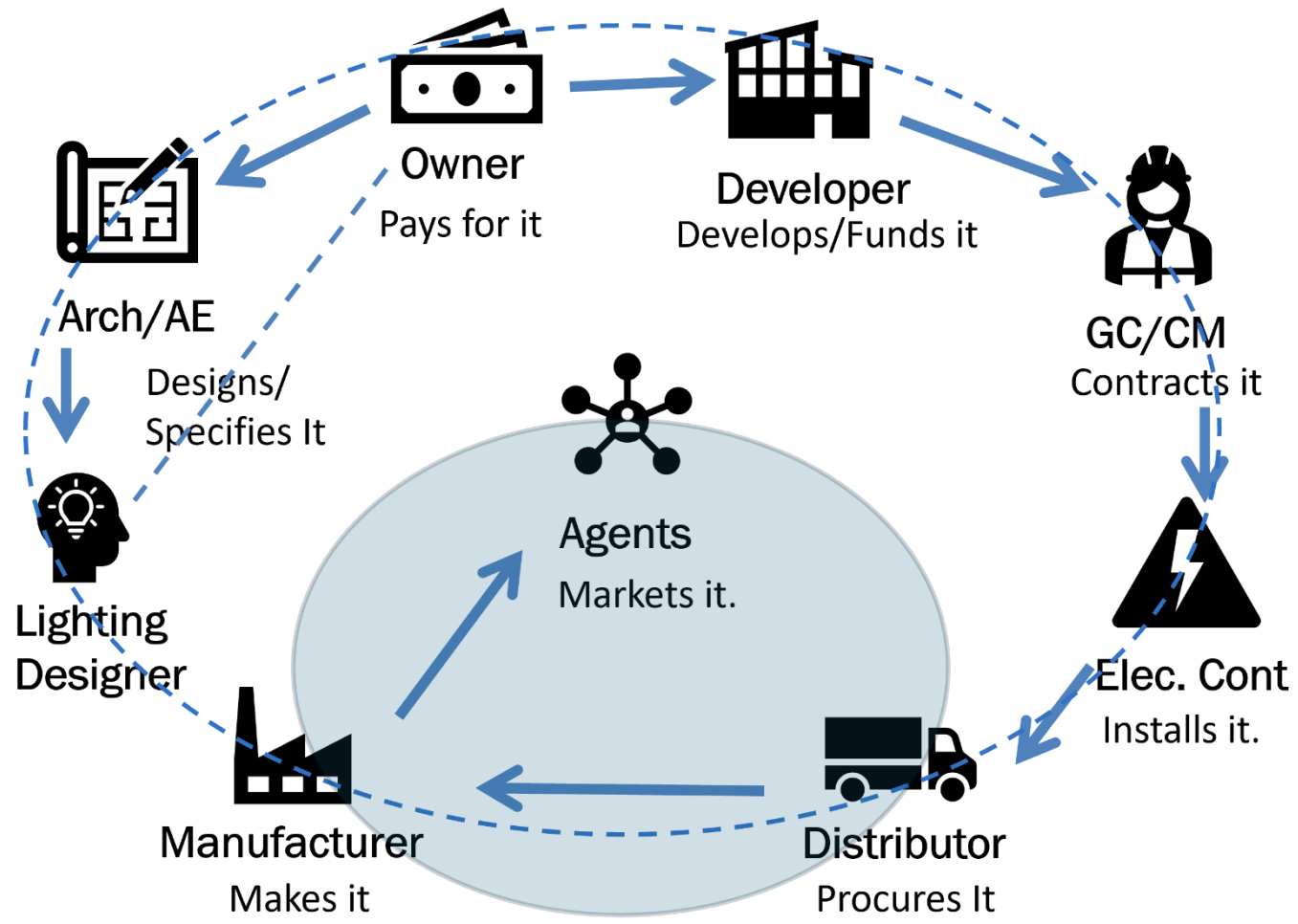
Architectural Spec/Agent Market Contract & Revenue Flow





## STRATEGY FOR COORDINATION

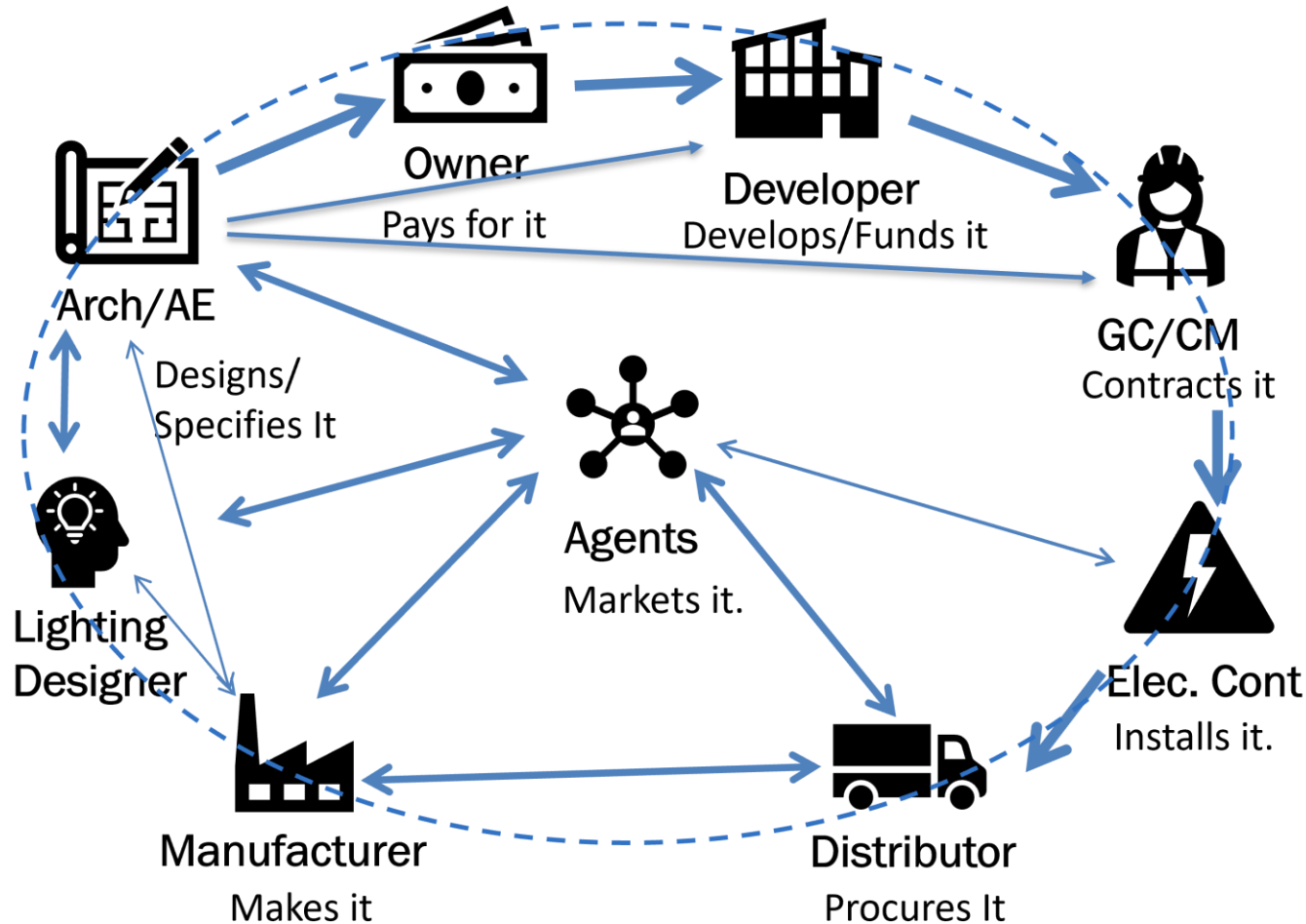
Architectural Spec/Agent Market  
Agent/MFR/Dist.

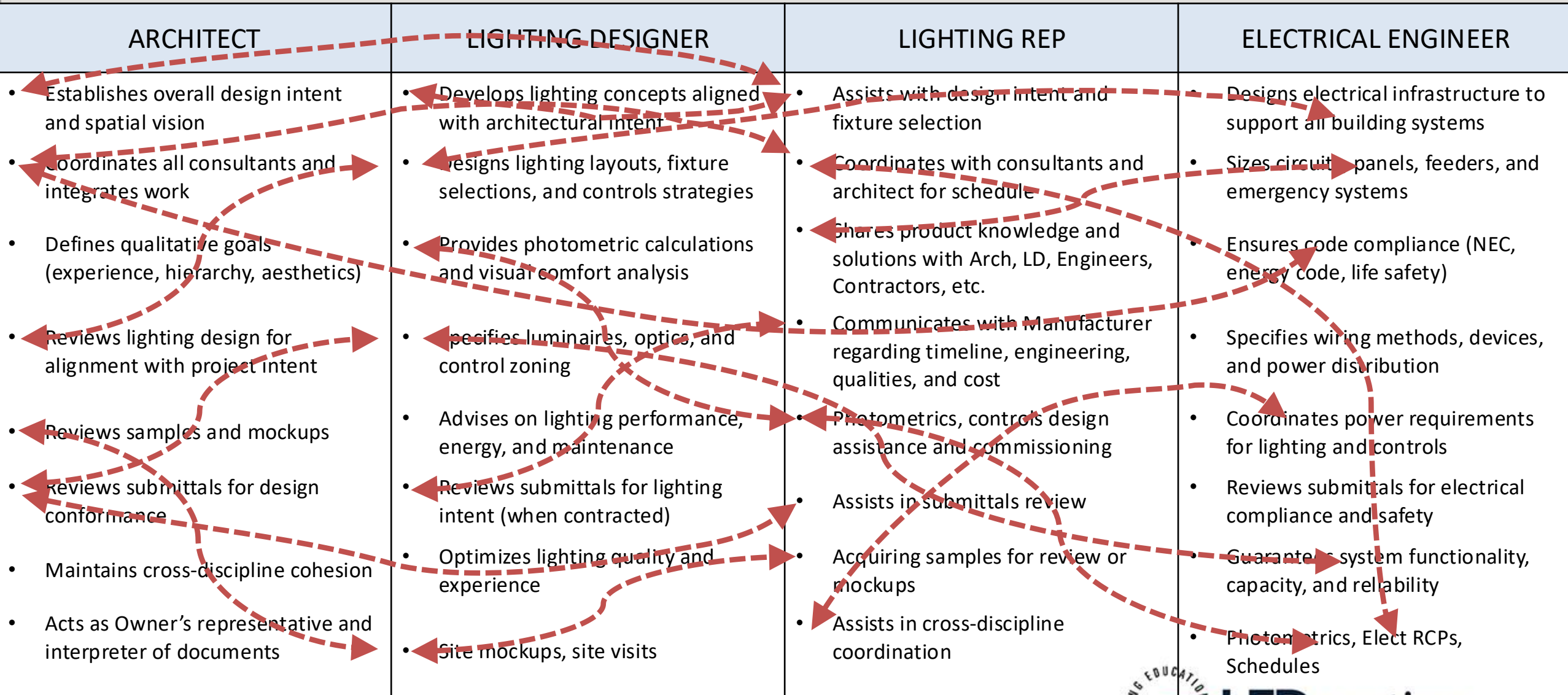




## STRATEGY FOR COORDINATION

Architectural Spec/Agent Market  
Information and Coord Flows





# Misalignment often stems from



Unclear ownership of decisions,  
overlapping tasks,  
and contractual ambiguity

**How do we get  
ahead of the mess?**

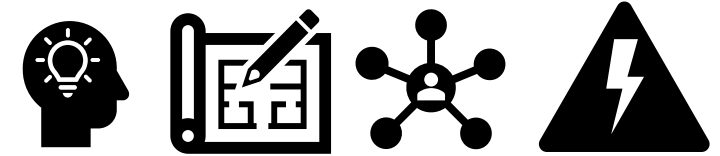
# 2 STRATEGY FOR COORDINATION

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Are you talking to me?

### PROJECT TIMELINE \*Note: based on typ design-bid-build contract

#### ESTABLISHING COORD. PER PHASE OF DESIGN



### SD INITIAL DESIGN

At 100% SD, we should have a Complete Design Intent Document

Architect:

Program, Narrative, Contracts, Schematic Floor Plans, Initial Lighting Intent & References, Generic Renderings, Preliminary Layouts, Codes & Zoning.

Review Contract and Communication Chain for:

Controls, lighting, & shades narratives, budget assistance, prelim graphics and intent, all future phase responsibilities per party.

Est project delivery dates, check-in protocol, coordination means and methods, delivery expectations.

### DD COMPLETE LAYOUT

At 100% DD: full set of drawings, coord across fields, & developed schedule for lighting & controls

Architect:

Dimensioned and tagged Floor Plans, Sections, Elevations, Schedules, Finishes, Openings, & Systems selections. Well-developed lighting concept with initial fixture specs, descriptions, & tags. Project renderings, Codes & Zoning. Initial Details.

Review Contract and Communication Chain for:

Assigning fixtures for design intent, lay out & coord. light fixtures, types + tags with Elect. Fixture qualities that affect pricing should be locked in. Photometrics and mockups.

### CD COORDINATE

At 100% CD: completed drawings, completed submittals, all schedules & specs needed for orders & all documents to build project from.

Architect:

Detailed Floor Plans, Sections, Elevations, Schedules, Finishes, Openings, and Systems finalization & completely coordinated consultant drawings. Photometrics reviewed with full fixture specs no pending asterisks or TBD items. Ceiling & mounting details approved.

Review Contract and Communication Chain for:

Photometrics and full fixture specs, coordination and review of elect, confirmation of finishes, mounting, power, emergency, entire schedule and submittals.

### Submittals

#### Purchase Orders

Review Contract and Communication Chain for:

Date set is going out, when next meetings, what to expect. Who will assist in submittal review.

Architect :

Review and mark Approved/ Approved as Noted/ Revise + Resubmit/ Rejected Submittals

### CA INSTALL

Review Contract and Communication Chain for: Site visits as needed, Programming of controls.

**If I know your set is coming through, I can have your back! (ex: checking how many runs of vertically stacked tape)**

**Design changes should not be made in submittal review**

**Corrections on counts, types, etc. have to come up the proper channels, so QAQC of Arch, LD, and Elect. Sheets is !**

*COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WHAT THE CONTRACT STRUCTURE INDICATES  
IN TERMS OF WHO REPORTS TO WHOM, **CONTRACTUALLY.***

***THEN, ADDRESS WHO COMMUNICATES WHAT, TO WHICH PARTIES, NOTABLY WHAT INFORMATION  
NEEDS TO BE COMMUNICATED SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND WHEN EACH PARTY EXPECTS TO BE CC'D OR  
DIRECTLY INVOLVED.***

# 3 TRUST AND COMMUNICATION

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What was that?

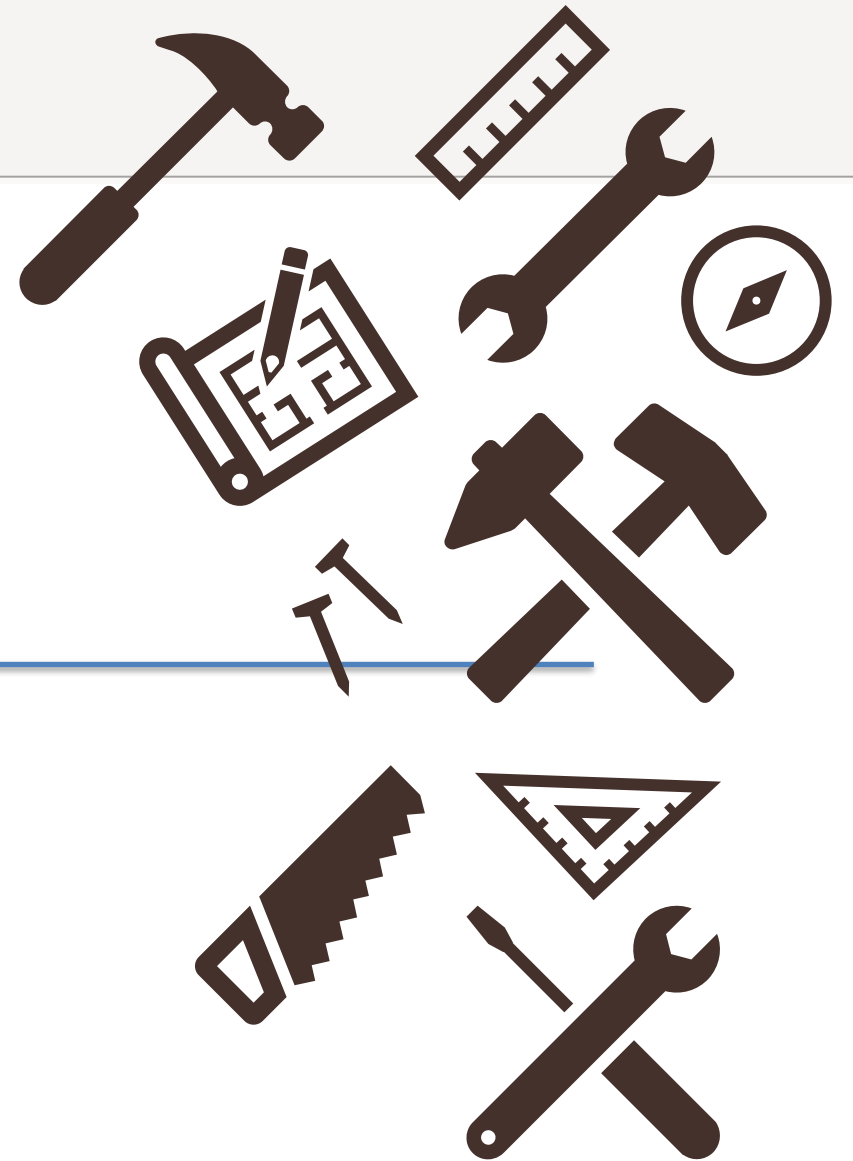
*IDEALLY AT THIS POINT, WE HAVE AVOIDED MISCOMMUNICATION PITFALLS  
BY DEFINING ROLES + RESPONSIBILITIES  
AND ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION.*

*HOWEVER, IF FRUSTRATIONS ARISE OR TRUST IS WANING,  
REMEMBER WE ALL FAIL AT COMMUNICATION.  
AND WE HAVE TOOLS TO UTILIZE FOR COMMUNICATION.*

*LET'S DIVE INTO HOW YOU CAN APPLY THESE TO YOUR OWN  
PROJECTS.*

# “THE METHODS”

TOOLS YOU CAN USE FOR SUCCESS



# Apply Role + Responsibility Chart

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**As it applies to your own contract structure**

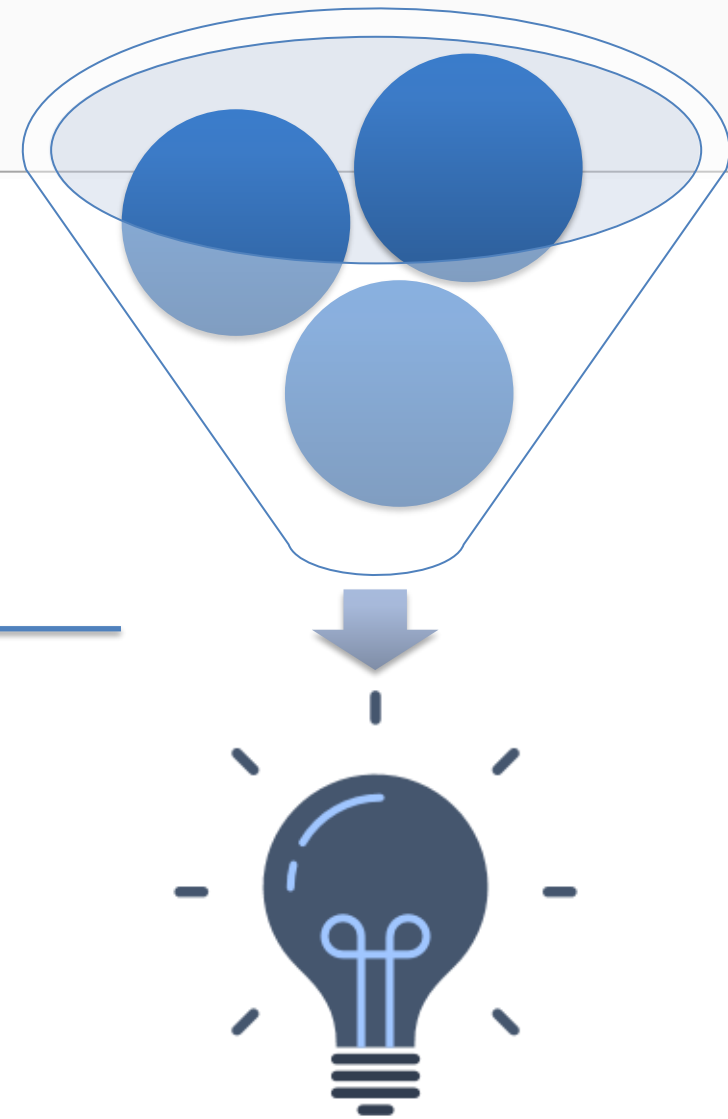
# Apply Coordination + Communication Protocols

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**As it applies to your own project phases and timeline**

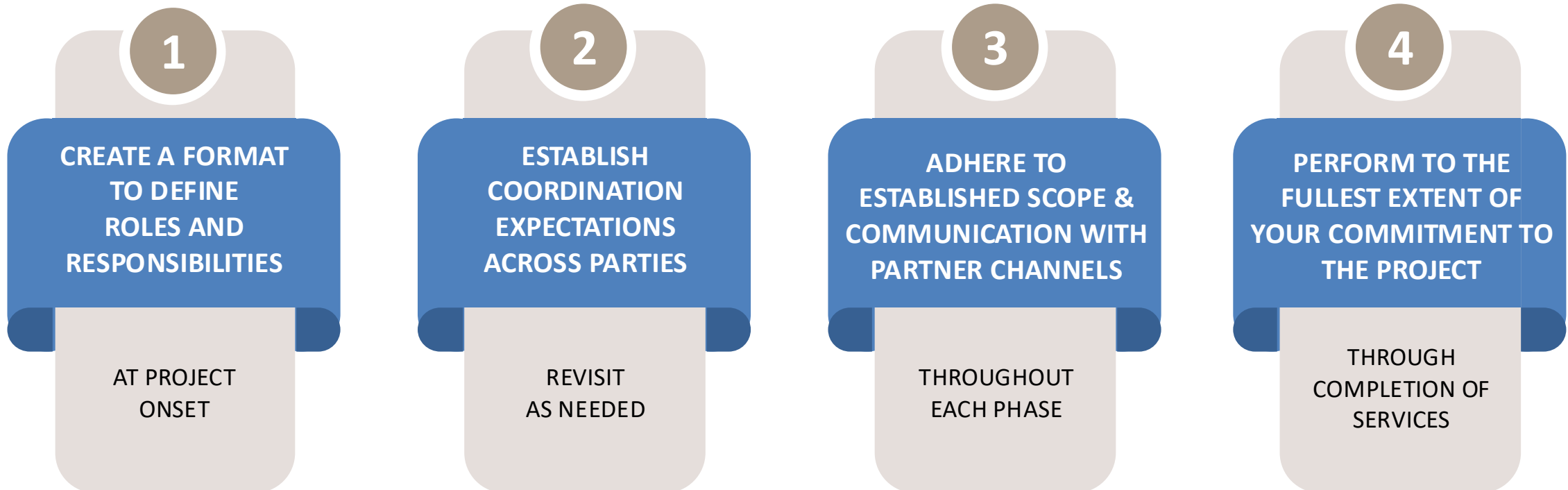
# CONCLUSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND SOURCES



## FOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS

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**All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life  
is made up of light and shadow**

-Leo Tolstoy

# SOURCES AND REFERENCES UTILIZED

NCARB, Destination Architect Resource Guide <https://www.ncarb.org/become-architect/destination-architect>

American Institute of Architects, Contract Document Database <https://aiacontracts.com/>

ALW Onboarding Resource Guide

Delaney Warren, FSA Lighting

Brent Hester, FSA Lighting

Bob Davis, PhD, FIES | CU BOULDER

Rem Koolhaas Referenced Quote and Image <https://blueturtlemc.com/blog/40-of-the-most-famous-architect-quotes-of-all-time/>

Rascoh Studio “6 Phases of the Architectural Design Process” <https://rascoh.com/ways-architects-can-use-ai-design-process/>

This concludes The American Institute of Architects Continuing  
Education Systems Course

# THANK YOU.

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Brian Maite, MBA, AIA, LIRC, MIES  
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