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David Koren: Marketing Strategist

by Karen Euler

David Koren will be in Boston on April 30th for his workshop arranged by the Education Committee, "Creating and Implementing a Strategic Plan". eOutlook spoke with him via phone to learn more about this New Yorker who was recognized among Building Design + Construction's "40 Under 40" last year.

Currently Marketing Director for Perkins Eastman in New York City, an 800-person firm with 25 marketing staff in 10 offices in the US and abroad, Koren received a BFA in Playwriting at NYU and a Master's Degree in Irish Theatre at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. He first produced a play (in the Dublin Fringe Festival) while living in that city and has more recently "workshopped" his play about Lewis and Clark in New York. His plays *The Falling Moon* and *Quazimodo!* are published by the Dramatic Publishing Company. Theater companies in various US cities and towns produce these plays every year - *Quazimodo!* has been produced around 25 times.

After working for a short time in the A/E/C world (when not writing plays) Koren asked himself, "[What color is my parachute?](#)" He found that he was actually on the correct career path for his aptitudes and interests, so committed to marketing as a career. He worked at Gensler for 8-1/2 years before taking his current position at Perkins Eastman. While still at Gensler, he wrote [Architect's Essentials of Marketing](#) (Wiley, 2004).

Koren began theorizing about strategic planning while writing the book. He notes that firms approach strategic planning in a wide variety of ways. "Businesses run themselves as differently as individuals," he says. Gensler did not approach strategic planning in an explicit way, but more intuitively. Perkins Eastman engages in an annual planning process that involves quantitative analysis around sales and profitability and sets annual targets along a variety of metrics, including win/loss percentages.

Koren has been involved in SMPS-NY "all along," he says, or at least since 2001. He was chapter president in 2005-06, having come to the role from his work on the Professional Development Committee (similar to Boston's Education Committee). He has also co-chaired the marketing committee of the New York Chapter of the AIA, of which he is an associate member.

He sees the value of SMPS as "professionalizing what we do" - in other words, putting the activities of marketers for A/E/C into a context and giving us a forum to discuss our occupation. "SMPS has given me contacts, perspective, and models from which to work," says Koren.

When asked whom he would call his favorite architect, Koren says with a touch of irony, "That would have to be my favorite architect *du jour*". He admits a special fondness for Renzo Piano's partly-transparent [New York Times building](#), which he

can see from his home. The building has been celebrated domestically and in the international press for ushering in a new era of skyscrapers.

Koren looks to a coterie of high-profile contemporaries as role models, listing the likes of Sir Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, and Barack Obama – people who he says, “make their own rules.”

When he is not at work or enjoying family life (he has a new infant son), Koren is busy planning his next book. He is discussing ideas with his agent for some non-fiction books and is also considering writing a play or screenplay. He is also involved as a volunteer in helping to plan a new arts festival in New York City, [FIGMENT](#).

As a reader, Koren has enjoyed many of the currently popular business books, such as *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't* and *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*, both by Jim Collins and *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. He is currently reading *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.

By all accounts, David Koren represents the new generation of leadership in marketing professional services. Those attending his workshop in Boston on April 30th will surely benefit from his vast experience and well-honed strategic planning ideas.

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