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civil + structural ENGINEER

CELEBRATING THE DESIGNERS OF THE WORLD AROUND US

INNOVATIVE DESIGNS IN STEEL

CALYX Engineers + Consultants: A new chapter
Arcadis analyzes construction disputes
Structural ingenuity to fight homelessness
Technology supports extreme sewer makeover





WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER BUSINESS

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WE ENGINEERS have faced the challenge of how to work with other disciplines during design and construction of a project. Architects, contractors, developers, engineers, and public agencies each bring different priorities, responsibilities, and thought processes to projects. Some projects run smoothly; others are full of discord.

Even our approach to problems may be different, beginning with how we were trained before we entered our respective professions.

Architects mull over a wide variety of design and artistic ideas, exploring many facets before finalizing their ideas. Engineers tend to be more focused on understanding the problem and the most efficient solution for the challenge — end of story.

Collaboration is paramount, and we've all become relatively good at working with — or around! — our partners. We want to be good partners, but maybe we're unsure how to improve or what that even looks like because we are so different in training and the way we approach challenges. Most of us have architect jokes when they are not around and vice versa. One way to take collaboration to the next level is to build stronger, more genuine partnerships.

The people in our Los Angeles office recently took a step at improving this when they kicked off something called the “Great Mind Series.” Invitations marketed Great Minds as thought-provoking, high-level talks with the “Greats” among us: Great Architects, Great Builders, Great Developers, and, of course, Great Engineers. We limited attendance to 50 to make it exclusive and the first one “sold out” in four hours. The two architectural thought leaders featured so far — Craig Hodgetts of Hodgetts + Fung and Matthew Porreca of BNIM — definitely had innovative ideas to share at these well-received events.

Watch a 30-second video from the last event at <http://miyamotointernational.com/greatminds>.

Designing an evening for the very specific reason of socializing with diverse professionals and clients is a key strategy for the series, as well as being at the center of synergistic conversations about the best practices and the most exciting projects going on in Los Angeles. The beauty is, we aren't talking about our own projects or angling for work, but it's time well spent to get to know the attendees and speakers on a more personal level.

And for them to get to know us and each other.

Events such as Great Minds might be an idea to try in your market to improve collaboration and connect with new people. After all, it is more efficient — and fun — to work together if the relationship is more personal and has moved beyond mere business. That way, the respect is already there and you're just friends solving a challenge together.

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