

GREEN BUSINESS QUARTERLY

*Library in Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger, Inc.
corporate headquarters in Waltham, MA.
Photo by Esto.*

WINTER STREET ARCHITECTS

Sustainable architecture with a focus on quality people,
innovative solutions, and a shared vision



ENTREPRENEURS

Dauntless businesspeople share their stories of independent success.

Paul Durand & Mark Meche

Winter Street Architects advances sustainable architecture with a focus on quality people, innovative solutions, and a shared vision

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

WINTER STREET ARCHITECTS AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
SALEM, MA

AREAS OF SPECIALTY:
GREEN DATACENTERS,
PUBLIC INFRA-
STRUCTURE, HIGHER
EDUCATION, AND
CORPORATE PROJECTS

AVERAGE ANNUAL
SALES:
\$4 MILLION

SALES GROWTH IN
PAST YEAR:
\$1.2 MILLION

EMPLOYEES:
25

EMPLOYEE GROWTH
IN PAST YEAR:
7

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TWO AMBITIOUS adrenaline junkies combine their passion for adventure with their talents in architecture? A compelling, creative, and inventive company like Winter Street Architects (WSA) is born.

Best friends and founding principals, Paul Durand and Mark Meche, took their love of conquering mountain tops and translated it into a shared dream—creating an architectural firm built on overcoming any challenge, directed planning, tenacity, endurance, and courage.

As a result, WSA was established in 1987 with a commitment to delivering great design, improving clients' business, and leveraging technology to streamline the design process. Meche explains, "The firm's business model still drives us forward today, attracting talented architects, creative thinkers, problem solvers, and synthesizers. Our team focuses on our clients and their business first, allowing us to create quality architectural solutions that benefit the bottom line."

The company's success has established a 13-year relationship with Harvard Medical School and a recent, global-partner-

ship agreement with Sun Microsystems. Always at the forefront of innovation, WSA is currently working with companies to better integrate the physical with the "virtual" workplace—leveraging technology to enhance team collaboration and employee effectiveness. "The goal is to optimize both human capital and real estate, wherever it resides," states principal, Mary Beth DiFiglia, AIA, who leads the firm's workplace strategy and design practice.

Green practices are an integral component of WSA's corporate structure. Durand explains, "Sustainable design and business practices frame our work as architects, interior designers, and entrepreneurs. It is who we are because environmental stewardship is a heartfelt responsibility that helps us define 'design excellence.'" He adds that sustainability is imperative to today's world and WSA's approach to business. "We foster a green culture just as much as green design—you have to live, walk, and preach it."

WSA maximizes environmental benefits and minimizes cost investments by developing aligned, sustainable strate-

gies for its clients' business objectives. Meche calls it, "Finding the green in green." The firm also maintains LEED-accredited professionals at the principal, project management, and design staff levels, who optimize buildings and incorporate some of the best green practices, which include:

- alternative energy usage and efficiency options;
- demountable/moveable wall systems;
- free cooling techniques and under-air floor distribution;
- green IT/LEED-certified datacenter design;
- intelligent building and power management systems;
- monitoring, sensors, and smart systems;
- virtual work strategies;
- waste/heat recapturing systems.

WSA has also worked on sustainable laboratory designs for Harvard Medical School that include energy recovery, low-pressure drop design, systems that minimize/eliminate reheat, multi-stack exhaust plenum, multiple cooling loops, high part-load heating/cooling efficiency, occupancy controls for lighting/ventilation, and daylight harvesting strategies.



Paul Durand, AIA and Mark Meche, AIA, founding principals of Winter Street Architects (WSA) of Salem, MA. Durand says that WSA brings value to its clients through quality people, experience, and a shared vision of success.

“Sustainable design and business practices frame our work as architects, interior designers, and entrepreneurs.” *Paul Durand, Founding Principal*

Durand and Meche describe WSA’s competitive advantage with three distinct attributes:

- **Quality people:** WSA’s seasoned team understands the mission, vision, and values of its clients, weaving together information from many sources to develop integrated, holistic solutions.
- **Innovative tools:** WSA uniquely approaches, implements, and delivers BIM technology which uses relationship databases and 3D models to capture and present building information in an intelligent and tangible way. The firm also utilizes Integrated Project Delivery

(IPD) to improve performance and client payback through enhanced communication, design, construction, and operational procedures.

- **Shared vision:** WSA’s success stems from the clients’ success. This shared vision is fostered in a team of strategically selected specialists, end users, stakeholders, designers, and consultants who develop thoughtful and creative objectives through collaboration and technology.

Everyone at the firm truly believes that meaningful design results from a deep understanding of the client, paired with a dynamic process. Durand concludes,

“WSA goes to great lengths to engage clients and create an integrated vision of the future. Our history of excellence is bred from our ability to craft innovative, quality solutions—and it is measured not by what we put in, but what our clients get out.” *GBQ*

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