

## CLOSE OR REMOTE?

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Is the collective body of "professionals" (of all kinds) a group that is closer or more remote to their work?  
Closer or more remote to the users of their work?

My suggestion that in both cases we are closer! Due to the sheer magnitude of information and knowledge we have gathered and assimilated to date, we "know" more about our work (hence are closer to it and really intimate with it) and in turn seek to be closer to the users of our work to both assist them and assure proper use of our work.

The basic point out on the horizon there is that some professional education (architecture being a good example) does not follow this line of thought, as I see it. By truncating instruction at the design concept level, the "intimate" details of projects are never really approached much less addressed in any depth. Hence, only the design can really speak! We see this a lot in our "signature architect" colleagues as they are restricted or tend strongly to only "talk design" and offer plentiful rhetoric and flower-complex explanations of the inner depth of the concept. Maybe akin to a Native American who is highly skilled in making smoky signal fires, but then has nothing to "say"!

It is truly the intimate knowledge of the many things from the nuts-and-bolts, to relationships and maintenance items that comes from the professional who is acutely aware of the totality of the project, what will (or will not ) happen, and how things both fit together and may require adjustment, fixing and changes through the years of operation.

Certainly, it is outside the task of the professional, and more than likely never comes to mind to be anything but close to the project via the execution documents, and the information developed from the program, subsequent detailing and the basics of the owners' desires. We cannot and do not work at arm's length, as too much depended on what we "say" (via drawings and specifications) in the translation of program requirements and end result. This should not, though be misconstrued as we are NOT the GODS of detail, but we do reflect Mies' words that, "God is IN the details".

And you know--that is a really neat place to be! And a place many designers never go; being too busy explaining their last project, at cocktail parties, schools, seminars or self-convened symposiums; or visualizing their latest dream (project).

A long time ago, there was a song that sort of explains all this (this is when songs had melodies and lyrics you could both decipher and use). It was called, "The Nearness of You", a love song most obviously. But in it the "pale moon" is summarily dismissed as the thing of delight, in favor of --da, da, "the nearness of you"! Proximity is present and most valuable in so many instances regarding human activities. It is a matter of reassurance, or communication, and assistance (when needed) and stability in process when variations come to the fore.

We all know that many professionals have suffered in one way or another due to the decision or requirement to give up a close relationship with a project to be processed and controlled by others. Not always a pleasant scene, and certainly rather heart tugging to the professional. It is hard to remain closer on days when things are out of whack--but even then you may well be the source of getting it done properly and in a timely manner. Stay near/closer--it's a highly professional virtue!