



Interview with Jerry Yudelson, author, “Marketing Green Building Services: Strategies for Success” (Amsterdam and New York: Elsevier/Architectural Press, November 2007).

Where did you get the original impulse to write Marketing Green Building Services?

We live in a marketing-driven, if not marketing-dominated world. Green buildings have to be sold along with everything else. I often tell architects and engineers: “Good work no longer speaks for itself, it whispers. There’s just too much noise, too many messages in the environment. Marketing helps a firm develop a platform for telling others about its achievements.

Recognize that the green building phenomenon is no longer a fad; it’s a full-fledged revolution. Between early 2000 and late 2007, the number of green buildings has grown from a handful to more than 8,000 actively seeking LEED certification.

Lots of people already know this, and they want to know, “How should design and construction firms and professionals profit from this change?” *Marketing Green Building Services* answers that question and more. My book presents the key strategies that building industry professionals need to respond to the growing market for green buildings, design and construction services and products.

Marketing green buildings is becoming increasingly important and will become a major point of differentiation for all architects, engineers and builders. People who take the lessons learned in this book seriously will have a major head start on the competition.

Who did you write the book for?

This book is for insiders, building industry professionals and those whose livelihoods depend on successfully marketing design services, products and projects. Conventional marketers and sales people also will find this book helpful in gaining an understanding of what the green building client really wants and how to present sustainable design features and strategies to buyers.

Marketing Green Building Services shows professionals how to make the business case for green buildings to even the most skeptical clients and gives them the research and facts to support this effort. This book has more useful green building statistics than you’ll find anywhere. It also covers all major sectors of the building industry and has special sections on selling projects with solar technologies and green roofs.

What makes this book unique?

This is the only marketing book available for green building professionals, especially those in architecture, design, engineering and construction. It’s completely revised, updated and expanded from my earlier works on this subject. After a decade of practical experience marketing green building services, I have been fortunate enough to meet many of the leaders in green building design, construction and marketing.

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Dozens of those leaders shared their experiences of successfully marketing green building services. Their collective experience really sets *Marketing Green Building Services* apart – the book combines important elements of marketing theory with case studies from pioneers in the field. This book contains the cumulative experience of many experts from forward-thinking firms.

In *Marketing Green Building Services*, I present *seven keys* to marketing sustainable design services. In today's environment, a company should strive to be *remarkable* in the eyes of its clients and the media. This means that firms must continually work to find new points of differentiation and new ways segmenting the market, targeting those segments and positioning the company. The seven keys offer a comprehensive approach to developing a marketing strategy for green building projects.

What are some of the ways that a firm can position itself to succeed in this growing marketplace?

Any firm wanting to take advantage of opportunities in sustainable design should explicitly promote sustainability as the central design focus of the firm. Sustainability has become part of the firm's DNA. One place to start is by greening their company's offices. This can include everything from implementing a recycling program to buying hybrid cars for use as company cars.

Is the green building movement gaining momentum?

The green building industry is experiencing dramatic growth; new projects registered under the US Green Building Council's LEED rating system grew 50% in 2006 (vs. 2005 year-end cumulative data) and are on track to grow more than 70% on a cumulative basis again this year.

We've also seen a *sea change* in consumer attitudes toward everything green, including green buildings and green homes. The momentum of green building design, development and construction will sweep across the entire building industry over the next three to five years. Firms have to prepare for this major change in the competitive environment or risk being left at a considerable disadvantage.

What is the future of green building?

The green building revolution will continue to accelerate no matter what Congress or the President does. If passed, the new energy bill in Congress will help renewable energy systems (especially solar photovoltaics) become more widespread in green buildings and it will undoubtedly spur energy conservation efforts in both new and existing buildings. Green buildings weren't created by Washington and they will continue to gain in popularity no matter what Congress does.

Is sustainability gaining greater acceptance in the building and development community?

Over the next three years, we will see architects and engineers routinely aim for 50% reductions in building energy use from today's baselines. I predict that more than 2,500 new building projects will register for LEED certification this year and more than 4,000 will do so next year, to bring the total of LEED-registered projects to more than 12,000, each with an average size of about \$15 million. Green building growth will far outpace the general growth of the commercial and residential building industry over the next five years.

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Looking even further into the future, the industry will begin looking at how to move beyond LEED requirements and toward buildings and neighborhoods that are “restorative” or “regenerative.” We will start seeing “intelligent green buildings;” buildings that work more like a tree, providing all of their own power and water as well as restoring local habitats.

I have spent most of my career engaged in energy and environmental affairs, working to make our current economy and way of life more sustainable. My role is to communicate between green building professionals and the larger business and governmental community. This is my passion, and I want to share it with others. Together we will make this transformation happen.

How can green buildings make a difference in terms of global climate change?

The greatest sources of carbon dioxide emissions are vehicles and the electricity generated to run buildings. According to the UN’s “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,” these emissions are the primary cause of climate change. Green buildings can reduce carbon emissions by about 40% compared to conventional buildings.

What aspects of green building do you feel are most misunderstood or underutilized?

Cost is the biggest obstacle for green building right now because there is a perception that green buildings cost more. Cost is obviously the single most important factor in design, development and construction. And it is true that green projects in general have been more costly than conventional projects. However, this was largely because the transition to new methods of design and construction involved a lot of learning that was accompanied by construction mistakes, poor designs, unproven new products and other reasons leading to extra costs.

By 2005 and 2006, many design and construction teams had done enough green projects to start lowering costs to conventional levels. As we approach 2008, building teams are finding ways, through integrated design, to bring costs down to conventional levels.

The most important thing is this: project teams should take the first 30 days of a project design effort (which influences 65% to 85% of total costs) to assess innovative project options, make choices among key cost drivers, and developing a clear vision of results. This is where the *integrated design process* comes in. The basic principle of integrated design is that by looking at the whole building’s energy and water use, not just focusing on individual systems in isolation from each other, the increased costs of some things will be offset by reduced costs of others. I call this “cost transference,” but the net result is typically a zero cost increase for the total project.

Jerry Yudelson is the author of [Marketing Green Building Services: Strategies for Success](#) (Elsevier/Architectural Press, 2007) and five other books on green buildings and green marketing. He can be reached through his web site at www.greenbuildconsult.com.