

# The rainmaker

Marketing guru Craig Park talks about work, life, and fun, and provides some advice for other marketing professionals.

Craig Park, the 59-year-old vice president and chief marketing officer at **LEO A DALY** (Omaha, NE), a 1,200-person architecture/engineering firm, and former president of the **Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS)** (Alexandria, VA), has been around the marketing world for a while. Here's what he has to say about the marketing profession in the architecture, engineering, and environmental services industry.



## MOMENTS

**MOST PROUD OF:** Receiving the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award.

**LEAST PROUD OF:** Not having time to write the great American novel.

### Marketing Now: How and why did you get into this profession?

**Craig Park:** "After college, and about 10 years of experience, I was a very good project manager for a New York City-based national consulting practice. I got 'promoted' to run its branch office in Los Angeles, California. Up to that point, my clients were handed to me by my boss, or were repeat clients from my prior work, and mostly in New York City. I soon realized that I had better learn something about marketing if I was going to bring new work into the office to keep my staff (and myself) happily employed. I joined the local SMPS chapter in 1984, got very involved in learning and governance, and the rest is history. I credit my learning in leadership as an SMPS (and other trade associations) volunteer with the parallel growth in marketing knowledge, personal leadership development, and the advancement I experienced in my career."

### Marketing Now: Why did you choose this market?

**C.P.:** "I'm an architect by training (at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo) and an engineering consultant by many years of practice. I am a

student of building science and communication technology, especially those associated with media production, presentation, or performance, and a big fan of architecture in general. I became a marketer because I found that was where my real passion was. I enjoyed telling our stories to clients who wanted the best we can deliver, more than actually doing the work (though I liked that too)."

### Marketing Now: What are you most proud of?

**C.P.:** "Outside of my career: Watching the development of my son, Trevor, now 22. In the business: Receiving the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award in 2007 for my career achievements, and getting to work on some really great projects (the Getty Center museum complex in Los Angeles, California; the Getty Villa educational center and museum in Pacific Palisades, California; and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County in Los Angeles, California). Also, for working with some great clients who really 'get' marketing, sitting across the table from some really great architects, and working with some really great people throughout my career."

### Marketing Now: What are you least proud of?

**C.P.:** "Not having time to write a great American novel (but I'm working on it)."

### Marketing Now: What do you do to recharge your batteries?

**C.P.:** "A few days on a beach far, far away about once every quarter, reading mindless mysteries and thrillers, and ordering 'dos mas cervezas, por favor.'" (Two more beers, please.)

### Marketing Now: What does it take to make it in the marketing profession in this industry?

**C.P.:** "It takes a passion for learning about your clients' needs and fears, a creative approach to both telling and differentiating your story, the patience to weather the business cycles, a commitment to building and supporting your network of friends and associates, and a healthy sense of humor (mostly about yourself)."

### Marketing Now: What should newcomers absolutely know about this job?

"Being CMO is a great challenge. It pushes you to be truly strategic, pre-active (as opposed to reactive or proactive) in learning 'what's next?' You must build consensus and trust with the firm's technical and administrative leadership."

**C.P.:** "Being CMO is a great challenge. It pushes you to be truly strategic, pre-active (as opposed to reactive or proactive) in learning 'what's next?' You must build consensus and trust with the firm's technical and administrative leadership. You need to stay on top of what's happening in your clients' markets and in the whole world of business, especially in the areas you don't practice. You need to read incessantly (news, books, blogs) and tap your network for new information and advice. What it's not about is web sites, brochures, holiday cards, or advertising, though you own those too. It is about pushing your staff and the people in your firm to understand that everyone is a marketer, and that trust-based relationships at all levels are the key to having 'clients for life.'" ■

JOÃO FERREIRA | [jferreira@zweigwhite.com](mailto:jferreira@zweigwhite.com)

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Some firm names were omitted due to space constraints.

