



DIGroup Architecture promotes Haas and Koehler

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New Brunswick, NJ DIGroup Architecture has appointed Kate Haas and Debbie Koehler to the role of associate in a move that deepens the firm's leadership team and reflects its continued growth and empowerment of women. The appointment of Haas and Koehler also marks the firm's newest class of associates and the first non-architects to achieve this designation, demonstrating DIG's commitment to promoting from within.

Driven by an Architecture for Change mission, DIG delivers world-class designs to underserved and under-represented communities in which its projects are located. At DIG, which embraces the diversity of its own talent base, women account for 51% of the staff. The elevation of Haas and Koehler as associates brings female leadership representation to four at the associate level in addition to Swarupa Samant – the firm's first woman of color at the principal level.

“During Women’s History Month, it is only appropriate that we celebrate the achievements of Kate and Debbie, who are consistently at the forefront of DIG’s sustained growth trajectory and help make us a stronger, more agile firm,” said Jeffrey Venezia, CEO. “As individuals and accomplished professionals, Kate and Debbie are changemakers who are validating AEC-related career spinoffs as viable, exciting specialty areas with unlimited growth pathways to executive representation.”

Kate Haas, associate I director of interior design

Haas, who has been with DIG for a total of eight years, has risen through the ranks from interior designer to senior interior designer, to being named director of interior design last year. Her areas of specialization include interior architecture design strategy, concept development, programming and space planning, 3D modeling and rendering, detailed construction documentation and finish material and furniture selections.

In addition, Haas directs, manages, and mentors a team of talented interior designers to create innovative, practical and award-winning designs tailored to each client’s specific needs. Rounding out Haas’ extensive skill set is her proficiency in Revit, Autocad, Sketchup and Adobe Creative Suite.

“Because DIG offers me a platform to be innovative with ideas, I’m able to deliver thoughtful, well-rounded designs in collaboration with Architecture and Graphics team members,” said Haas. “By feeding off this DIG energy and the enthusiasm of our clients, I’m inspired to create spaces that are fun and functional, but also timeless, sustainable and practical.”

A graduate of Virginia Tech, Haas has earned the following industry certifications and qualifications: Certified Interior Designer – New Jersey; LEED AP; and National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ). Additionally, she has volunteered for many years in the bi-annual International Interior Design Association “Fashion Meets Finish” fundraising event, where she has led her team to several award-winning garment honors, including “Best Construction” and “Best Interpretation of Theme.”

Debbie Koehler, associate I director of marketing

Koehler, an architecture engineering and construction (AEC) industry veteran, has been spearheading the firm’s marketing and business development initiatives for nearly six years. A University of Lynchburg graduate with a B.A. in Business Management and Spanish, she leads new client development and strategic partnerships, as well as all related functions that advance DIG’s brand, profile and business strategy.

She has developed a number of award-winning nominations, including the firm’s AIA-NJ “Firm of the Year” award in 2022. She oversees public relations, content marketing and strategic proposal development. Koehler also is credited with being instrumental to DIG’s expansion into Philadelphia a few years ago.

“Knowing that the Greater Philadelphia Area is a hub for DIG’s target client base across the healthcare, education, life sciences, senior living and civic sectors, it made perfect sense from a business and geographic-growth perspective,” said Koehler, who noted this proposition gained unanimous consensus from ownership and was put into action with the establishment of DIG’s Philadelphia office in 2019.

According to Koehler, the firm gained traction to quickly land multiple Philadelphia contracts accounting for over 10% of DIG’s revenue to date and growing. Just this past year, DIG also remained the sole architectural firm ranked among the city’s largest Minority-Owned Businesses.

In their new role as associates, Haas and Koehler will continue overseeing their interior design and marketing departments, respectively, as well as be involved in firm decision making and strategy.

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