Stanford eCorner

Adopt a Project

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Video URL: http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3452/Adopt-a-Project

Jeanne Gang, founder and principal at Studio Gang Architects, discusses how her firm occasionally takes on projects not presented by clients, simply to work on problems that her team finds important and interesting. She also talks about the value of seeking public input to inform the team's work.
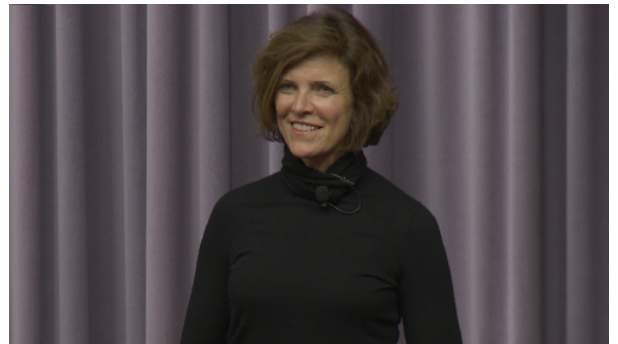
Transcript

Another thing that we do in our practice which I think everybody should do is just make up projects. Sometimes, clients don't walk in through the door with a project that you want to think about and so what we've been doing over the years is as a problem begins to show itself, we might make that problem a project for ourselves. In this case, the project really ended up being a book and a series of steps that the city could take to improve its waterways. And it came about from a number of sessions we had been doing on the ecology around the river and the post-industrial river. Again, we met with a lot of people that were using the river and found out that even though it is an incredibly dirty river with raw sewage being ejected right into it, there are still a lot of people - public that use the river and so we interviewed them and we also figured out what the engineering problems were in terms of this waste, treating the river like a waste sewage canal. We also had flooding basements with increased severe storms through climate change. We have this carp species that's coming up the Mississippi, threatening to get into the Great Lakes. So it's another huge environmental issue, the bad water quality. But then they saw there is this great potential of space that could be used that is no longer being used for its industrial purposes. So we felt this was like a perfect - the ingredients that make a really interesting project.