

KTGY Expands Retail Studio Under Craig Chinn's Leadership

KTGY announced that it has recently expanded its Retail Studio to accommodate its growth and promoted Retail Studio Director Craig Chinn to associate principal and hired retail design veteran Rick Grandy as director.

December 5, 2011 (FPRC) -- IRVINE, CALIF. - Award-winning KTGY Group, Inc., Architecture + Planning, is pleased to announce that the firm has recently expanded its Retail Studio to accommodate its growth. KTGY has also promoted Retail Studio Director Craig Chinn to associate principal and hired retail design veteran Rick Grandy as director.

"The growth of KTGY's Retail Studio is due to Craig Chinn's expert leadership and dedication to retail," said Tricia Esser, KTGY's CEO. "He understands what retailers and developers need to be successful in the design and planning phases as well as construction and day-to-day operation. The strategic hiring of Rick Grandy and other team members will allow Craig to stay focused on servicing current clients as well as reach new ones."

"We are very pleased with the rate of growth that we have experienced in a difficult market and are pleased to add Rick Grandy to KTGY's Retail Studio. With Rick's 30+ years of experience he brings a practical approach to design and planning. He has an innate design sense for resolving complicated retail and mixed-use projects," said Chinn.

"KTGY has evolved from doing only big box retail work and has become a multi-faceted Retail Studio working for the top names in shopping center development and encompassing projects such as large ground-up retail developments including up to three-story vertically integrated retail centers, drive-thru restaurants, renovation and repositioning including regional malls, strip centers and stand-alone stores, and direct tenant work," Chinn said. "KTGY's understanding of residential and what renters and buyers are looking for brings added value to mixed-use projects that combine retail with residential."

"The shopping experience is taking center stage again," said Chinn. "The days of build it and they will come is long gone. Shoppers are looking for a great experience, and this goes beyond a clean and safe environment. Shoppers want to be entertained and stimulated through mobile apps, Tweets, Facebook, and multi-media advertising. Being connected is the new realm of the shopping experience."

Additionally, Chinn said he is seeing a greater mix of shops/retailers than ever before in unique building configurations. "Big box stores like Target and Walmart are willing to be on the second floor and have parking decks over them," stated Chinn. "They prefer to have loading on the level they are located on, which can cause some design challenges."

Chinn continued, "Grocery stores, furniture stores, athletic stores, big box, quick serve restaurants, and pet stores are all now getting vertically integrated and popping up near transit centers in dense areas. This is due to the lack and high cost of land," he said.

"The shoppers are back; the key is how to keep them coming back," Chinn said. "I see specific changes being made to the malls, these include WiFi areas with soft seating and a coffee house

nearby, and updated and enhanced food courts designed to be more classy and less cafeteria like. Outdoor seating and gathering areas are also a big push," Chinn added.

"Malls are adding an increased number of seasonal and permanent kiosks and Retail Merchandising Units (RMU) in all common areas. They are also renovating and adding GLA," Chinn said.

Chinn said if you are not adding power/data/wet kiosk locations during a renovation project you are missing a huge opportunity."With an income of \$1,200-\$3,500 per kiosk location per month, the additional construction cost is well worth it," noted Chinn.

"Less is definitely more when it comes to the higher-end shoppers," Chinn said. "A clean retail store sales floor that isn't cluttered with clearance merchandise or messy cluster tables is the new push for smaller retailers. Great lighting on the sales floor as well as a comfortable fitting rooms with proper lighting is in high demand. This approach keeps customers coming back," added Chinn.

Grandy most recently served as a principal at JAG Architects. Prior to JAG Architects, he was the senior vice president at Nadel Architects. With nearly 40 years of experience, he has personally been involved with over 450 shopping center projects in California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Mexico. They varied in size and scope from small convenience neighborhood centers to large community and power center projects. Grandy will be based in KTGy's Irvine office.

About KTGy Group, Inc.

Celebrating its 20th year last month, KTGy Group, Inc., Architecture and Planning, provides comprehensive planning and award-winning architectural design services for residential communities, retail, hospitality, mixed-use and related specialty developments. KTGy delivers innovative solutions that reflect clear understanding of development, market trends and financial performance and takes particular pride in its highly motivated and principal led studios. Serving clients worldwide, KTGy maintains offices in Irvine, Oakland and Santa Monica, Calif., Denver, Colo., and Tysons Corner, Va. See www.ktgy.com.

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