

Mary Cook Associates Marks 40 Years of Commercial Interiors Leadership, Appoints New Managing Principal

Josh Kassing named managing principal as firm prepares for next stage of growth

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Chicago-based [Mary Cook Associates](#) (MCA), a national, award-winning commercial interior architecture and design firm, today announced that Senior Vice President Josh Kassing has been named managing principal. The appointment coincides with the firm's 40th anniversary and is part of a long-planned leadership evolution. The strategic leadership transition positions MCA for continued innovation and growth with Kassing's frontrunning capabilities that operate in tandem with Founder/CEO Mary Cook and the senior leadership team.

Founded in 1986 by Mary Cook, MCA built a national reputation for partnering with prominent owners and developers to create highly differentiated environments across a range of real estate sectors, including homebuilding, multifamily, hospitality, student housing, senior living, and private and municipal clubs.

For 40 years, the firm has helped clients set new standards within their markets by delivering design-driven solutions that strengthen brand identity, elevate user experience and drive competitive advantage. MCA projects foster residents Living Better by DesignSM and deliver measurable results known as R.O.E.[®] (Return on Environment).

"Over the past 40 years, we've navigated some of the most turbulent economic environments in modern history," said Mary Cook, founder and CEO. "Each one required us to adapt, adjust and reimagine how we work. That willingness to evolve, and the leadership that drives innovation, has been the foundation of our peak performance and why our work continues to resonate with



Josh Kassing (left), managing principal of Mary Cook Associates, and Mary Cook (right), the firm's founder and CEO.

end users, resulting in clients exceeding market projections.”

Cook noted that one of the key responsibilities of leadership never ends.

“As a founder and entrepreneur, one job is never done — finding the right people and making sure they are in the right seat,” Cook said.

That mindset led to one of the most consequential hires in the firm’s recent history. Always on the lookout for exceptional talent, Cook asked a new employee who joined MCA from a competing firm several years ago a simple question: “Is there anyone over there whose talent, creativity or character really stands out?”

“There’s this one guy,” the new employee replied. Cook reached out via LinkedIn and invited him to coffee. After several meetings, Josh Kassing joined MCA in 2017 as creative director. His impact was immediate. He quickly advanced to vice president of design development and was named senior vice president in 2023.

Over the past several years, Kassing played a key role in transforming MCA’s culture, expanding services, strengthening operational efficiency and driving profitability. His forward-thinking perspective and innovative approach continue to fuel the firm’s position as an industry leader.

A frequent presenter and author, Kassing has become a respected voice within the industry and a trusted resource for media outlets. His leadership has earned numerous recognitions, including Pro Builder Magazine 40 under 40, CRE Rising Star, and Outstanding Young Professional Award, Iowa State University College of Design.

Guided by Cook’s decades of experience and his involvement within the senior leadership team, Kassing’s emergence as an industry influencer and leader within the firm makes him uniquely qualified to guide MCA’s next chapter.

As part of a planned leadership and ownership transition, Kassing’s duties as managing principal will include assuming responsibility for the firm’s day-to-day operations, working in close partnership with MCA’s senior leadership team. He will collaborate directly with Chief Financial Officer Mary McManus and Vice President of Operations Scott Durst, whose experience and leadership remain central to the firm’s continued success, strong financial stewardship and operational excellence.

Kassing will also lead execution of MCA’s strategy across the firm’s fully integrated services, including interior architecture, interior design, strategic positioning, branding, procurement and installation. His oversight of project performance and client delivery will entail ensuring strategic alignment and continued growth.

“I’m incredibly grateful to Mary for her mentorship and trust,” said Kassing. “Her vision of what

was possible, along with creating opportunities for me to develop outside of traditional design roles, set an exciting trajectory in motion that continues to evolve. As we look ahead, we remain focused on pushing the industry forward by expanding how we think about amenity environments, brand identity, and the role design plays in shaping community and experience.”

Kassing notes MCA's existing strengths continue to influence the firm's extraordinary reputation for helping clients lead in their markets through thoughtful strategy, design and execution. “The Executive Leadership team's deep bench of experience and MCA's robust pool of talent, along with our vibrant culture, all support the new leadership structure, which reflects both continuity and evolution,” he said.

As founder and CEO, Cook will continue to nurture key client relationships, guide MCA's market stature and shape long-term strategic direction. Together, the leadership structure reflects both continuity and evolution — honoring MCA's 40-year legacy while preparing the firm for its next era of growth.

About Mary Cook Associates:

Established in 1986, Mary Cook Associates (MCA) is a fully integrated interior architecture and design firm nationally known for creating innovative interiors for leading owners and developers of real estate. The firm's projects include multifamily, model homes, student living, senior living, clubhouses, restaurants, and hospitality environments. MCA's work emphasizes functionality, showcases possibilities, and delivers a measurable ROE® (Return on Environment). MCA's team includes more than two dozen designers and architects that are strategic, imaginative, and skilled at designing a wide variety of spaces that respond to demographic, geographic and lifestyle influences of target markets. Smart, functional spaces that establish immediate connections with their users and boost Living Better by DesignSM, increase property value, and accelerate sales and occupancy rates are the hallmarks of the results MCA consistently achieves. In its 40th year, the firm continues to expand its national presence with award-winning work across the country. www.marycook.com.

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Sarah Lyons
Taylor Johnson Public Relations
+1 312-267-4520
slyons@taylorjohnson.com

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