

The Visionary: SAGE Design's Joe Landrigan is more than just a 'Cool Office' guy

By: *Stacy Wescoe*

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As president of **Sage Design-Build Inc.** of Upper Macungie Township, a firm he founded in 2009, Joe Landrigan has had his hand in the construction and renovation of many prominent properties in the Lehigh Valley, including most recently, his work to design and renovate the Swain School in Salisbury Township.

While the firm handles the design and construction work of all kinds of properties, Landrigan's heart is in the adaptive reuse of old and historic buildings, and his love for the work shows.

SAGE's work has been recognized not once, but twice in Lehigh Valley Business' annual Coolest Offices in the Lehigh Valley feature. In 2017 the work he did converting an old church into offices for **Werner & Co.** in Wescoville was featured, and in 2019 he was tapped again for the work he did just down the road, renovating the former Joanne Kostecky Garden Design building, located in an historic Victorian home, into offices for **Andesa Financial Management**.

But above and beyond his 'Cool' honors, Landrigan has even bigger dreams of merging the classical detailing of historic buildings with the latest in green technologies and building a better future for our past.

Here's what he had to say:

What's different about design-build firms from others in the architecture or construction industry?

One of the things that is different is that you get to work on both sides of the industry. By better understanding the thought process of what goes on in each side it allows us to work in a more collaborative manner.

What led you to the field?

When I was in high school I really enjoyed building and I was good at math and OK at drawing. A guidance counselor said 'you'd fit into either an architectural or engineering career.' So, I went to Penn State and majored in architectural engineering...and I really loved it. I came out working as a project manager and transitioned into the design side. I really loved both sides. I think if I was doing just one it wouldn't be as fulfilling as designing it and seeing it through to completion.

When starting a design project, what are some of the things you take into consideration?

I always start by talking to a client and starting with really basic questions. It's more about asking questions to better understand their business. If I understand their business I can perhaps better shape the space they need. Then I ask about the aesthetics, about what they like and then we talk about the budget and we talk about a time frame and putting it all together.

What kind of project do you like to work on the most?

I like to do major renovation and adaptive-reuse projects. I really love the history of old buildings. Every one is different, and as you're digging into it you find out why things were built that way...and adapt that into the new technology you're installing. It's so much more complex than just a new building.

What are some of the projects you've been most proud of? Why?

It's so hard to name just one, but I'd have to say the Werner & Co. project. It was a church built in the 1800s and it was poorly converted into church offices in the 1980s. When they [Werner & Co.] purchased the building from the church we were tasked to convert it. It was the first major renovation project for SAGE. I'm so grateful to Werner for believing in us and having the vision. There's a lot of faith in renovation. You don't know what is there until you open up the walls.

What would your dream project be?

A major adaptive reuse renovation project to become a Net Zero building. I've been dabbling in that for a while and I look forward to the time when we get something along those lines.

If you weren't running a design-build firm, what do you think you'd be doing?

I'd probably be mentoring or teaching other people coming into the profession, making them aware of the different paths in the career. I'd show them things I wasn't aware of when I was getting started.



Joe Landrigan –

Joe Landrigan

Position: President

Organization: SAGE Design-Build Inc. of Upper Macungie Township

Hometown: Easton

What book are you reading right now? "The Daily Stoic" by Ryan Holiday

If you were stranded on a desert island, what three non-necessity items would you want with you?

Sunglasses, a journal and an endless supply of ice. I like cold beverages.

What person in your life influenced you the most and how?

I feel like my wife was the most influential. She encouraged me to start my own business and to embrace change as a good thing.

If you could pass on one piece of advice to a younger you, what would it be?

Don't overthink making decisions and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Also, stay true to your word.

If you could bring one thing to the Lehigh Valley from anywhere in the world, what would it be?

Right now, the weather from Colorado, but that might change by season.

Are you a print person, or digital?

Kinda both. I'm a print person, but I have embraced the digital.



Writer Stacy Wescoe has her finger on the pulse of the business community in the Greater Lehigh Valley and keeps you up-to-date with technology and trends, plus what coworkers and competitors are talking about around the water cooler — and on social media. She can be reached at stacyw@lvb.com or 610-807-9619, ext. 4104. Follow her on Twitter and on Facebook.
