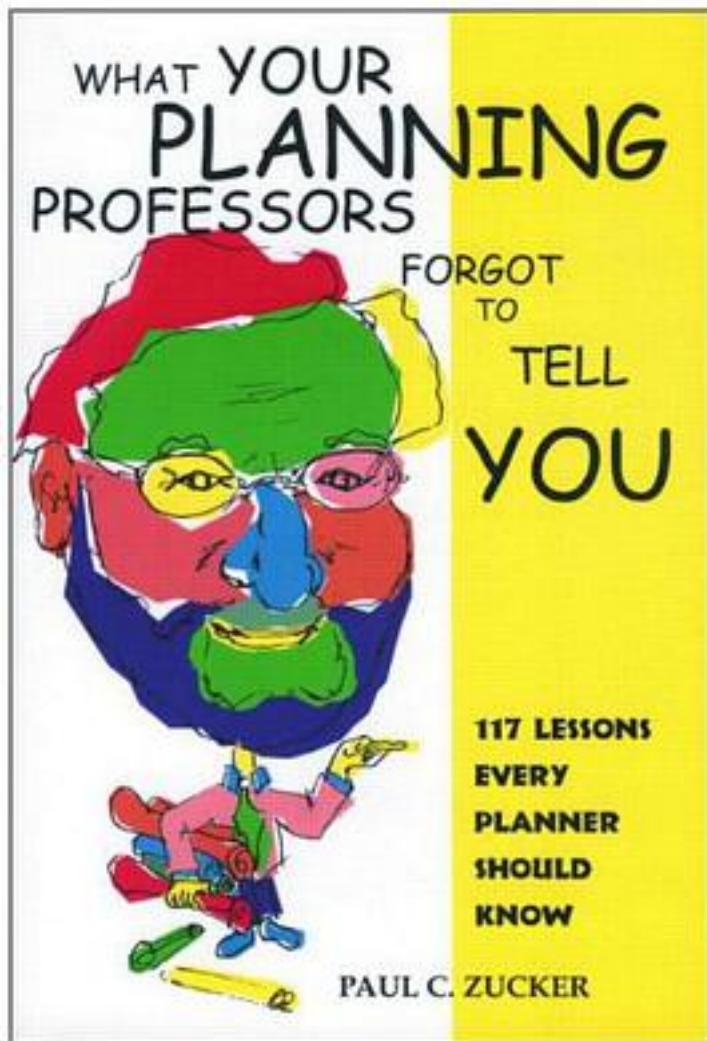


What Your Planning Professors Forgot to Tell You



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What does an urban planner need most? A sense of humor! Peripatetic planner Paul C. Zucker, author of the best selling *The ABZs of Planning Management*, proves it in this wise and funny book from APA Planners Press. Zucker knows a good story when he's lived one and he shares a career's worth in this collection. It's a tongue-in-cheek primer on how planning really works (or doesn't). His wry observations ring absolutely true on every page. Practicing planners will nod in rueful agreement with lessons-often learned the hard way-about achieving true success in planning and in life. And those just starting out will benefit from Zucker's insights about management, vision, career paths, and professional relationships. What planner hasn't developed a brilliant idea only to have it shot down by balky politicians? Check out Zucker's attempt to tame the San Andreas Fault only to be thwarted by the county board of supervisors. His conclusion? Sometimes it's better not to ask. Despite such frustrations, Zucker draws the line between planning and politics. Planning is involved with political issues, but planners should not be involved in politics. But to those who can't resist the temptation to run for office (as he did, with disastrous results) he offers this sage advice: If you're going to shoot the king, make sure you hit him. Does any of this sound familiar? There's more: With due respect to Daniel Burnham, in the planning world bigger is not always better. Zucker tells why it might be better to make little plans: People may actually understand them. Still he champions the planner's essential role as an agent of positive change and asserts: Big ideas are out there. Planners need to find and sell them. Paul Zucker's forthright and thoughtful advice concerns things that matter a lot to the day-to-day work of a practicing planner: hiring the right person for the right job; building, nurturing, and using constituencies; networking; working with (or around) local government bureaucracies; pitching proposals creatively; and knowing how and when to give up a cherished idea gracefully when the pitch doesn't work. His engaging profiles of those with whom he has studied and worked reveal the personalities of planners whose names are familiar to anyone who has labored in the profession during the last half-century. These cogent lessons will make you laugh and think and inspire you to do your own job better. Don't miss this entertaining look back at a unique planning career.

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