

SM+A Helps Clients Design Their Vision Into Reality

BY MARIO BELAVAL DÍAZ

Timely, knowledgeable and professional services have been key to SM+A's solid roster of clients and success, but the firm's ability to assimilate its clients' vision and mission have set them ahead and apart as leaders in Puerto Rico's architectural and engineering market.

"Clients can count on SM+A architects, engineers and development consultants being committed to the on-time achievement, within budget, of their goals," said AIA (American Institute of Architects) architect Olga J. Muñoz, managing partner at SM+A. "We'll be creative, knowledgeable and advise clients on the feasibility of their projects in terms of cost, development and construction."

Muñoz said SM+A maintains a multidisciplinary approach to every project, with services attuned and rendered according to each client's particular needs, goals and expectations. Some of the firm's clients are investors looking into the Puerto Rico market, who SM+A assists with the assessment of target properties for land-use approvals, permits, analysis of any environmental restrictions,



applicable codes, conceptual planning, among others. Others are clients who already have purchased properties, some of which may need to be retrofitted or expanded, while other clients may only need SM+A to provide conceptual and preliminary designs, or a civil design of the site.

"We adapt and innovate according to clients' specific needs," Muñoz said. "Our accumulated and varied knowledge, technological

savvy, awareness of the island's strengths and limitations, and having worked with many international firms and companies have given us the opportunity to stay busy by offering a wide array of services ranging from predevelopment to post-opening."

SM+A's client base covers the entire spectrum, from global companies (such as Solaner) and multinational retailers (Costco and Home Depot), to publicly traded

Aerial photo of The Mall of San Juan during the last phase of construction, where SM+A performed, among others, as the Architectural Site Manager, Site Civil Designer and Project's Permit Manager.

development companies (Simon Property Group), retailers (Hollister) and private individuals, as well as local companies including V. Suárez & Co., Yaucono and PRISA Group, the latter for whom the firm prepared architectural and site concepts for Hyatt Place Bayamón and Manatí, and the future Dorado Health Care and Life Style center.

One of the firm's most impressive projects was in 2011, when

Taubman Co. engaged SM+A as its local architectural and engineering consultant, which turned into the Mall of San Juan, with internationally recognized architecture, which is the first phase of a mixed development that will include a hotel, office tower and entertainment.

Besides securing the land-use entitlement for the Mall of San Juan, SM+A performed the project's due diligence, site assessment, civil design, offsite infrastructure design, permitting management, government-agency liaison and architectural-site management. SM+A worked hand in hand with the mall's five U.S. architectural design firms, which comprised the mall and site's creative, production and code compliance team. SM+A has also been involved in governmental work for land-use planning, transportation and design of healthcare structures for government agencies.

"Creative capabilities, technical knowledge, organizational structure and management skills have all been essential in our growth and success, but most importantly, it is our ability to listen and adapt to the client's needs and expectations," Muñoz said. ■



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