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Building Connections: An Interview with Sol Fleischman

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Sol Fleischman Jr., a distinguished architect in Tampa Bay, has left a lasting mark on the city's architectural landscape through his innovative designs and community-focused projects. In a series of interviews conducted by Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) students, Fleischman detailed his life story, from his formative years to his professional achievements. .

A series of phenomenological interviews with successful Tampa architect Sol Fleischman, Jr. The researchers identify five themes (relationships, active engagement, family, profession, and community) that underscore the use of social capital in a fruitful life and career.

Fleischman's upbringing was shaped by his father, a well-known Tampa Bay sportscaster, and his entrepreneurial mother. Their influence instilled in him a strong work ethic, creativity, and a commitment to community service. After graduating from the University of Florida with high honors, Fleischman co-founded FleischmanGarcia Architects with Cuban refugee Eduardo Garcia. Despite facing significant challenges, including his partner unexpectedly passing after 13 years together, Fleischman's resilience helped the firm thrive, contributing to over 1,000 projects in the Tampa area.

Engagement in sports and community activities was integral to Fleischman's personal and professional development. These Active Engagements facilitated networking and relationship-building, essential components of social capital, which Fleischman harnessed to advance his career. His story underscores the importance of relationships and community involvement in achieving professional success and personal fulfillment.

Fleischman's dedication to mentorship and community service reflects his belief in giving back to the society that supported his growth. His approach to leadership, emphasizing collaboration and active engagement, has fostered a supportive environment for young architects. Through his narrative, Fleischman illustrates the critical role of social capital in building a successful and fulfilling life, highlighting how interconnected relationships and community involvement form the foundation of personal and professional achievements.

Keywords: Social capital theory, relationships, profession, entrepreneurship, qualitative, interview, phenomenological, sense-making

In qualitative research, phenomenological interviewing offers a profound avenue for uncovering the lived experiences of individuals. This article explores Sol Fleischman Jr.'s journey, captured through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted by three Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) students. Fleischman, a prominent architect based in Tampa, Florida, has significantly influenced the architectural landscape with his innovative designs and thoughtful approach to urban development. The full transcript is provided in Appendix A at the end of this article.

The impetus for this interview series arose from a course assignment specifically focusing on qualitative research methodologies. Under the guidance of the course instructor, we employed Irving Seidman's (2019) three-interview series to investigate Fleischman's personal and professional life (Figure 1). The objective was to comprehensively understand his experiences, motivations, and reflections.

This series of interviews provided valuable insights into the life of a distinguished architect. They demonstrated the efficacy of Seidman's phenomenological approach in qualitative research. As we navigate the rich narratives Fleischman shared, we invite readers to gain a deeper appreciation of the human experience behind architectural innovation.

The theoretical foundation of this study is social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships in contributing to professional and personal success. Social capital comprises relational, cognitive, and structural capital, which are crucial in building human capital. Relational capital involves trust and mutual respect within personal relationships; cognitive capital includes shared goals and values that facilitate collaboration; and structural capital encompasses individuals' overall network of connections. Through his narrative, Fleischman illustrates how these elements of social capital, mainly those grounded in community engagement and professional networking, are integral to building a successful career and a fulfilling life.

Sol Fleischman

Sol Fleishman is the founder and senior partner of FleischmanGarciaMaslowski, an architecture firm based in Tampa with branch offices in Pinellas, Sarasota, and Pasco counties. Fleischman started the firm two years after graduation from the University of Florida, where he earned a bachelor's degree in architecture, magna cum laude. While at the university, he was tapped as a member of Florida Blue Key, a prestigious leadership organization. Subsequently, Fleischman was also selected for the University of Florida Hall of Fame. Now semi-retired, Fleischman still is involved with the firm's day-to-day operations. Fleischman's firm has been involved with over 1,000 projects in the Tampa Bay area, including K-12 schools, community college and universities, public libraries, community, recreation, worship centers, corporate headquarters, custom estate homes (a personal favorite of Fleischman), and many other projects. The firm recently finished a $109 million project for the city of Tampa. Several Fleischman-designed homes can be found on the scenic Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa. Fleischman states, "300 to 400 [employees] have gone through the firm during its 53 years."

As a Tampa native, Fleischman has prioritized service to the community by serving on several professional and community-based boards. Fleischman was a founding board member of Tampa's Architecture Review Commission and was a founding board member of the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board. Additionally, his service has extended to the Hillsborough Education Foundation for more than three decades and the board at the H.B. Plant Museum.

Theoretical Foundation

We chose social capital theory as the theoretical framework to ground our analysis. Social capital, as defined by Bourdieu, emphasized its critical role in society:

> *"The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects. Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a vis insita, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a lex insita, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world"* (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 15).

In Bourdieu's framework, social capital is the "networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively" (Hellerstein & Neumark, 2020, p. 128).

Methodology

Research Method and Design

A phenomenological interviewing method was utilized, which allowed us to explore Sol Fleischman, Jr.'s life history through his own words. Specifically, we aimed for Fleischman and ourselves to engage in sense-making around the interviewee's life. Sense-making is the act of finding meaning through one's lived experiences and answering questions like "what's going on here?" (Weick et al., 2005, p. 412). The research was conducted using the three-interview approach designed by Irving Seidman. Seidman identified four themes that made the three-interview approach appropriate for phenomenological research: the "transitory nature" in which humans experience their lives, the subjectiveness of the meaning of what is real, the lived experience as empirical evidence, and an "emphasis on meaning" (Seidman, 2019, p. 19). Each researcher was assigned one interview session, where Fleischman was asked open-ended questions about his early life and current life experiences, and reflective questions on the meaning of his experiences. After each interview, we discussed our responses and adjusted interview questions for the next researcher.

To maintain ethical standards and protect the privacy of individuals mentioned, personal comments that are irrelevant to the research objectives are removed from the transcript.

Data Collection

The three interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim utilizing Microsoft Teams. Each researcher was provided copies of the transcripts to review for accuracy compared to the audio/visual recordings. Adjustments were made to the transcripts to correct issues with inaccurate wording. Transcripts were then uploaded to Quirkos for individual coding by the researchers. Each researcher coded all three interviews.

Analysis

Coding involves systematically reviewing the interview transcripts to identify recurring patterns and significant statements. Each coder independently reviewed the data, assigning codes to meaningful text segments. These individual codes were then compared and consolidated to form the primary themes. This method aligns with the grounded theory approach, where themes emerge inductively from the data rather than being imposed a priori (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

For the first round of coding, we utilized open coding. Open coding allowed us to "remain open to all possible theoretical directions suggested by your interpretations of the data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Each researcher combed through the data using inductive coding, without predetermined codes, categories, or themes, to identify codes from the interviewee's own words. Inductive coding requires the researcher to participate in a "data-driven method" of coding (Saldana, 2021, p.41). It is often chosen for phenomenological studies. The second coding round was completed using axial coding, where categories from the initial coding are identified as major, sub-major or minor categories. Categories not considered major were grouped together around major categories. This process often reduces the number of codes (Saldana, 2021).

After completing the first two rounds, we compared identified codes and categories, looking for similarities and differences. This process was conducted via group discussion to reach a consensus on major categories (Saldana, 2021). We did not attempt to achieve a quantitative intercoder agreement. Through the group discussion, we conducted thematic coding, looking at the categories and identifying underlying themes that explained the interviewee's lived experience (Figure 3). Through thematic coding, we identified themes that were "essential" and not "incidental" (van Manen, 1990). We reached a consensus and determined five themes (two major and three minor) from the interviews. These themes are presented in the Discussion & Themes section.

This theory builds on the concept of human capital, which refers to individuals' attributes that contribute to their economic value, such as education, skills, and experience. Coleman describes human capital as follows:

> *"Just as physical capital is created by changes in materials to form tools that facilitate production, human capital is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways"* (Coleman, 1988, p. 100).

Social capital theory suggests relationships are an

essential tool used to accumulate social resources, which in turn can be used to elevate one's posture. This theory is particularly relevant to Sol Fleischman's experiences, as his career and personal life are deeply intertwined with his ability to build and maintain a diverse network of relationships.

As suggested by Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998), the underpinning constructs or "clusters" of social capital that help form human capital are structural, relational, and cognitive (p.243), which are applied in this study:

Structural Capital: How people are connected within a network. Fleischman's extensive network, including family ties, professional associations, and community involvement, represents his structural capital. These connections provide access to resources, information, and opportunities that might not be available to others less connected. A well-connected individual can leverage these networks to achieve professional success and contribute to community development (Lin, 2001).

Relational Capital: The value gained from personal relationships, including trust, mutual respect, and shared values. For example, Fleischman's relationships with clients and community members often led to significant architectural projects and professional opportunities. Trust and respect in these relationships made things cheaper and more accessible, leading to more successful projects (Putnam, 2000).

Cognitive Capital: Shared goals, values, and beliefs that promote effective network collaboration. This construct illustrates Fleischman's alignment with community values and dedication to historical preservation and civic projects. Working together is more manageable when people and organizations share the same vision. This shared understanding helps them collaborate better and build stronger, more united communities (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

Structural, relational, and cognitive capital are critical components of social capital that contribute to the creation of human capital. Relational capital fosters trust and cooperation, cognitive capital ensures shared understanding and goals, and structural capital provides access to networks and resources. These forms of capital enable individuals like Fleischman to achieve professional success and significantly contribute to their communities.

Sense-making

Relationships have been fundamental to Fleischman's personal life and profession. From family involvement and influences to professional networking to community engagement, relationships have been pivotal in shaping his journey.

Family: Fleischman's family provided a strong foundation for his values and approach to relationships. His father, a sportscaster who "had the gift of gab" and was known for his engaging personality and extensive network, gifted Fleischman with the values of building and maintaining relationships. Fleischman's mother influenced him with an entrepreneurial spirit, emphasizing the importance of being nice to everyone and the opportunities that come with such interactions.

> *"It kinda came naturally because my dad was a master at that just because he knew everybody in Tampa because everybody listened to him on the radio or watched him on TV and wanted to get to know him and my dad did not push them away, but embraced it. I mean we, I joked with him. We'd be playing golf at Palma Ceia and walking down #1 fairway, and some guys were walking up #2 adjacent to us coming back and they would yell 'Hey Sol' and he'd go over and chat with them and I'd say, 'You gotta play'. But he always had time for people."*

> *"If my dad taught me to be nice to everybody but many years ago, and I'm probably talking about 40 years ago, I was doing a home designing a home in Palm Harbor for a client and I got a call from a contractor one day and that many years later, many, many years later, about 20 years ago I get a call from this contractor…Also, I didn't recognize the name and he said Sol, I've been trying to get my foot in your door for many years, unsuccessfully, but I met you when I was a carpenter on a house you designed in Palm Harbor. And you were so nice to me. And I was so impressed with your work. And now I'm a general contractor and I have a client that asked me to recommend architects. So they could interview the three architects for their new home and may I recommend you as one of the three. And I said, yeah, Tim, thank you. That would be my honor to interview. Well, that turned out to be Les and Pam Muma."*

Fleischman later described an award won for the

Judy Genshaft Honors College at the University of South Florida and attributed that project to his relationship with the Mumas by adding,

> *"And one of the reasons we probably got selected for that project is because of my relationship with the Mumas."*

Professional Networking: Fleischman's relationship building has also significantly impacted his professional success. His early connections through family friends helped him secure his first job, and his intentional actions toward networking (through social events, board meetings, and sports) have been instrumental in creating business opportunities and expanding his firm.

> *"I was fortunate that my dad belonged to Palma Ceia Golf Club here in Tampa, which is the in town, a private club. So I met a lot of kids and adults... And that not only the kids that I play golf with, but adults who were friends of my dad's at Palma Ciea Golf Club, who are very successful business people or professional people in Tampa and a lot of them became my lifelong friends when I grew up as they got...much older and they became clients. Some of them became clients. Some of them were on, like the Aviation Authority that you know, gave architectural work at the airport. Some were on the school board. Of all all these relationships impacted my business positively..."*

> *"You just never know if you show up, who you're gonna meet, what relationship you're gonna build, what it could lead to. I'll give you a quick example …One Saturday my opponent was out of town. I had a choice... I could stay home and hang around the house and do nothing, take naps... I elected to drive out to Avila, 30 minutes north of where I live, and get a golf game. So who do I get a golf game with who I had never met before, but this guy named Ken Feld... Ken Feld owned Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus… That led him to hire my firm to do a ton of work for him."*

Mentorship and Community Engagement: Fleischman's engagement with the community has also been reciprocal. He has benefited from relationships, and those around him, such as young professionals and community members, have made gains.

> *"It's really important to give back to the community that's been really good to me and started back in 1975, 74, 75 of the mayor that time Dick Greco first time he was mayor, who was a friend of my dad's and I knew him casually appointed me as the founding board member of Historic Tampa, Hillsborough County Preservation Board, and I served on that for 20 years and most of that time I was chairman."*

Additionally, his approach to mentorship invokes a strong work ethic. It instills continuous engagement with the community, reflecting his dedication to giving back.

> *"I tell them all the same thing. Show up! What do you mean show up? … go out and attend things, get involved."*

Using sense-making, we explicate how Fleischman's relationships are strategic tools for navigating his professional and personal life and reflect a solid commitment to his community and goodwill. This analysis helps us interpret the deeper meanings behind Fleischman's interactions and connections. We interpret relationships as more than mere social bonds; rather, they are critical to providing support networks, creating and cultivating business opportunities, and fostering individual and communal growth. By examining Fleischman's accounts, we see how his intentional development of relationships has driven his success while symbiotically and positively impacting his community. Sense-making helps us understand the nuances in which relationships shape and are shaped by Fleischman's lived experiences.

Discussion & Themes

Through the coding process, we identified Relationships (Figure 3) and Active Engagement as the primary overarching themes and Family, Community, and Profession as three subsequent themes that interconnect to create the foundation for understanding Fleischman's experiences and professional philosophy. These themes emerged from individual coding we conducted, which were then analyzed and merged to construct a cohesive narrative. This thematic analysis offers a rich understanding of Fleischman's lived experiences and contributions.

The primary themes of Relationships and Active Engagement encapsulate the essence of Fleischman's experiences and contributions. Relationships were further broken down into Family, Community, and Profession sub-themes. At the same time, Active Engagement was explored through the lenses of Profession and personal engagements.

Key Themes: Relationships and Active Engagement

The interviews revealed two major themes, Relationships and Active Engagement, reflecting broader theoretical perspectives on social capital. Relationships, including family, professional connections, and community ties, were central to Fleischman's narrative. These relationships provided the social capital necessary to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve sustained success, aligning with the Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social networks for personal and professional growth (Xie et al., 2021).

Active Engagement, such as sports, community involvement, and professional engagements, were crucial in building and maintaining these relationships. Fleischman's active participation in sports facilitated networking. At the same time, his involvement in community projects and professional events allowed him to contribute to and benefit from his community. These Active Engagements enhanced his social capital by creating opportunities for meaningful interactions and collaborations.

Fleishman's life and career illustrate the interplay between Relationships and Active Engagement, showing how they collectively build a robust foundation for personal and professional success. His story demonstrates that social capital, built through strong relationships and active participation in various activities, is essential for achieving and maintaining success. Sol exemplifies how interconnected Active Engagement and Relationships create a well-rounded approach to life and work by engaging in community active engagement, fostering professional relationships, and maintaining strong family ties. His narrative provides valuable insights into the importance of social capital in personal and professional development, ultimately leading to a fulfilling and successful life.

Relationships

Family: Fleischman's family played a pivotal role in shaping his career and personal values (Figure 4). His father's career as a sportscaster and his mother's entrepreneurial spirit provided a supportive and inspiring environment. Fleischman recalled his father as a celebrity sportscaster who taught him the value of hard work and community engagement. His mother was a businesswoman, who founded and managed her children's clothing shop from 1955 to 1985, and he learned entrepreneurial skills from her. These influences were foundational to his development, illustrating how familial support can foster professional and personal growth (Bourdieu, 1986).

> *"From my mother, she was a great business woman and I got that sense of how to run a business. How to again treat people that come in with respect and customer service."*

Community: Community involvement is a cornerstone of Fleischman's philosophy. His extensive work on community projects reflects his commitment to enhancing Tampa's social and physical landscape. Fleischman emphasizes,

> *"I think it's really important to give back to the community that's been really good to me... We've made a huge difference in the quality of our education in Hillsborough County for our kids."*

His efforts in historic preservation and civic projects demonstrate a deep-seated belief in the importance of community engagement and its reciprocal benefits (Putnam, 2000).

Relationships: Mentorship and professional relationships were crucial in Fleischman's career. He emphasizes,

> *"Go out, attend things, get involved… you just never know if you show up, who you're gonna meet, what relationship you're gonna build, what it could lead to."*

Fleischman emphasized how relationship building is important to the firm's business development. He explained his current role as

> *"So I kind of do what I want to do which is...design work and business development, which is probably the most important thing that I do for the firm. It's about relationships and it's...kept us really, really busy for many years."*

Fleischman explained how a friendship of his brother's turned into one of his first job opportunities.

> *"Then I get a call one day from a lady who I had met at the University of Florida, who had been friends*

with my brother, who's three years younger...So Amanda calls me out of the blue and says Sol I have a friend who's looking for an architect. And I think that it would be a good match with you. Would you like to meet him? And I said sure. So I went to her friend's apartment the next night. She was there and I met Bobby Walter, who I didn't know...his dad was Jim Walter, who was Tampa's most successful industrialist, Jim Walter Corporation...So his Dad gave him a piece of property in North Tampa that was zoned for 300 apartment units and said Bobby, go develop this property. So Bobby had long hair and been to Yale. He was a hippie, too. So Amanda thought we would be a good match...So Bob kinda hired me to do some conceptual drawings for a 300 unit apartment project on this property."

He discussed how business relationships have also turned into social relationships for him.

"They were very happy with it and from that business relationship it turned into a social relationship, which is enriched my life in many, many ways..."

This highlights the role of social capital in professional development (Figure 5), where networks and mentorship provide support, opportunities, and growth (Coleman, 1988).

Active Engagement

Profession: Fleischman's professional journey is marked by significant milestones and achievements. Reflecting on his early career, Fleischman shared his experience before his first full-time job, stating,

"Between high school and my senior year in college, I worked for 3 different architectural firms during the summers gaining valuable experience. I advise aspiring architects that they ought to do the same thing to better understand what an architect actually does."

This led to his position at Dean Rowe, where he, in a pivotal moment, met his future business partner.

"After college, I returned to Tampa and accepted a position with Rowe Architects headed by H. Dean Rowe. Soon after, the firm merged with Gus Paras' practice and became Rowe-Paras Architects. Dean was a talented designer and a wonderful guy and I learned much from him. Dean put me with his Associate Principal, Eduardo (Eddy) Garcia, a Cuban refugee who came over from Havana in 1961 with his brother and his parents. Dean knew I would benefit from Eddy's experience and design ability."

The partnership with Garcia proved transformative, as Fleischman explained,

"Eddy and I hit it off. He was a fun guy to be around and his wife made terrific Cuban food which I enjoyed. We collaborated on the design and management of several projects as he was a great talent and was a fun guy to be around. About a year later, I had the opportunity to be the architect of a 300 unit apartment complex in north Tampa. As I had no experience in apartment design, I suggested to Eddy that we work together on the project nights and weekends and, if looked like it was for real, we'd leave Rowe-Paras and form our own firm as 50-50 partners. About a month later, Dean Rowe found out about our moonlighting project, fired us, and forced us to hang out our shingle. The 300 unit project was soon abandoned by our client when Hillsborough County put a moratorium on construction in north Tampa due to lack of sewer capacity….but we were on our way."

However, their successful bond was tragically cut short.

"In 1984, 13 years into our practice, Eddy, at 46 years old, had a cerebral hemorrhage …. went into a coma and, two days later, his family turned the machine off and I lost my business partner and best friend. At that time, we had grown to about 20 employees and he was managing half the work with

> *clients, some of which, I had no relationship with. Through the great efforts of our staff and the trust of our loyal clients, we carried on. That was 40 years ago…..I miss him every day."*

In reflecting on going out and getting involved in activities, Fleischman discussed how a dinner party turned into a job.

> *"Because Les and Pam invite invite me and my wife...to dinner parties at their house. Umm, several dinner parties, Judy and Steve were at the table. Uh Joe Malmberg, who is now retired who was a head of development for USF. Wonderful guy. I met Joe became friends with Joe. He was on the selection committee for the project, so all these relationships... you know, have a have a important part in getting the project and people say you know what's the most important part of architecture and I say getting the project."*

These professional activities underscore the importance of perseverance, skill development, and the ability to seize opportunities (Schön, 2017).

Personal: Reflecting on his childhood and personal activities, Fleischman reminisced about the various activities that bonded the community. From playing sports to neighborhood events, these Active Engagements played a significant role in his development. These personal engagements fostered a sense of community and teamwork, which later influenced his professional collaborations. Fleischman provided an example from high school impacting his future professional life.

> *"When I was in high school when one of the special days of my life was when Jim Trezevant and Walter Baldwin invited me to play golf with them one Saturday at Palma Ceia. That was kind of right of passage. That's two of the best golfers in the city and at Palma Ceia Golf Club asked me to join them on a Saturday at Palma Ceia. I didn't embarrass myself. I played pretty well." Then several years later, "So Jim Trezevant bumped into me at the old Colonnade restaurant on Bayshore Blvd. Right after I got out of college, I was having dinner there with my mother…Couple days later he calls me and says 'let's have lunch'... I want you to design a house for me..."*

This aligns with the social capital theory, where personal networks and Active Engagement contribute to one's social and professional well-being (Lin, 2001).

Integrating Themes: Relationships and Active Engagement

Integrating the Relationships and Active Engagement themes captures the interplay between personal engagements and professional development. Fleischman's life illustrates how personal and professional activities are interwoven with relationships that provide support, inspiration, and opportunities. His story reflects the broader theoretical perspectives on social capital, where relationships and community involvement are seen as critical components of success and personal fulfillment (Bourdieu, 1986).

Fleischman exemplifies how interconnected Active Engagement and Relationships build a robust foundation for personal and professional life by engaging in community activities, fostering professional relationships, and maintaining strong family ties. This holistic view aligns with contemporary understandings of career development and social engagement, emphasizing the importance of a well-rounded approach to life and work (Super, 1980).

Conclusions

In a series of structured interviews, Sol Fleischman Jr. shared his life and career story, revealing significant insights into his success as a prominent architect in the Tampa Bay area. The interviews, part of a qualitative research course, employed Irving Seidman's (2019) phenomenological method to explore Fleischman's personal and professional experiences. The following are the key takeaways from the sense-making around Fleischman's lived experiences:

Formative Family and Educational Influences

Fleischman attributes much of his success to his family's influence and educational experiences. His father, a renowned sportscaster, and his entrepreneurial mother instilled in him a strong work ethic, creativity, and community engagement. These early influences laid the foundation for his future achievements.

Career Path and Professional Growth

Fleischman's journey into architecture involved significant milestones and challenges. His early professional experiences and travels broadened his architectural perspective. Shortly after graduating

from the University of Florida, he co-founded FleischmanGarcia Architects with Eduardo Garcia. Despite the setback of losing Eduardo, Fleischman's resilience helped the firm thrive, maintaining high standards and navigating business challenges.

Engagement in Sports and Community Activities

Active involvement in sports like golf and tennis and community activities played a crucial role in Fleischman's personal development. These activities facilitated networking and relationship-building, which were essential for his professional success.

Memorable Experiences and Social Interactions

Fleischman shared various anecdotes highlighting the importance of social interactions and memorable experiences. These interactions shaped his social skills and professional opportunities, illustrating the interconnectedness of personal and professional experiences.

Personal Traits and Values

Fleischman's narrative revealed vital traits such as responsibility, hard work, creativity, and relationship-building. His commitment to "do the right thing," "don't burn bridges," and considering his actions' long-term impact has been integral to his success and reputation.

Influence of Relationships on Professional Success

Fleischman emphasized the significance of relationships in his career. Mentorships, partnerships, and client relationships provided support, opportunities, and growth. His ability to cultivate and maintain these relationships demonstrates the power of social capital in career development.

Community Involvement and Legacy

Commitment to community service is a cornerstone of Fleischman's philosophy. His extensive work on community projects reflects his dedication to enhancing Tampa's social and physical landscape. Sol's efforts in historic preservation and civic projects demonstrate his belief in the reciprocal benefits of community engagement.

Mentorship and Leadership

Mentorship and leadership are central to Fleischman's approach. He mentors young architects within his firm, passing on the knowledge and values he has learned. His collaborative leadership style fosters a supportive and dynamic work environment, encouraging innovation and excellence.

In conclusion, throughout the exploratory interview process, we aimed at sense-making of Sol Fleischman's lived experiences. Through his storytelling we were able to draw out the major themes of Relationships and Active Engagement. Fleischman provided examples of how actively working to build a network of relationships allowed him to achieve success both personally and professionally, as well as contribute to the community of the Tampa Bay area. Through a review of literature, we identified the Social Capital Theory which describes how people use networks of relationships to achieve success in society. Furthermore, we provided empirical evidence of this theory by tying Fleischman's lived experiences, specifically purposeful building connections to people (building capital) to his achievements.

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Review

This article was accepted under the ***constructive peer review*** option. For futher details, see the descriptions at:

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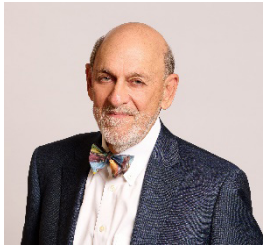
	**Christofer Pacheco** is a DBA student at the University of South Florida and the managing member of Pluma Construction, a regional construction company he owns. Christofer's diverse background includes real estate development across retail, office, medical, and residential sectors, as well as leading sales teams as a corporate sales director for a Fortune 500 company in the Southwestern United States. A former U.S. Army Officer, combat veteran, and Bronze Star recipient, he holds a bachelor's degree in mathematical economics from West Point and an MBA from Boston University. Christofer embodies a philosophy that success stems from vision, discipline, and persistent execution.
	**Anthony Vigil** is a business systems and transformation principal specialist at Raytheon, where he focuses on IT procurement, asset management, and process optimization, driving cost-saving strategies and operational improvements. With nearly 20 years of experience in IT, he has held key roles in the public and private sectors, including overseeing programs for the State of Colorado and Jefferson County Public Schools. A first-generation college graduate, Anthony holds a bachelor's degree in technical journalism and a master's in public communication and technology from Colorado State University, as well as an MBA in IT management from Western Governors University. Currently pursuing a DBA at the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business, he combines technical expertise with strategic leadership to advance organizational success.
	**Sol Fleischman, Jr.**, a third generation Tampa native, is founder and senior partner of FleischmanGarcia Architecture (now FleischmanGarciaMaslowski Architecture)based in Tampa with branch offices in Sarasota, Pinellas, and Pasco counties. He is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Florida College of Architecture and a member of the UF Hall of Fame and Florida Blue Key Honor Society. Sol has been a prominent architect in the Tampa Bay area for over 52 years and has served on many community boards including the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board, the Historic Tampa Architectural Review Commission, the H.B. Plant Museum Board, and the Hillsborough Education Foundation Board .