



Zachary Silvia
Vice President/Director of Operations
DJSA Architects

“Zach Silvia is an industry leader because he brings a calm, steady presence, sharp intuition, and strong decision-making ability. He has owned every project from day one and dives deep into challenges, not just at the surface level. He takes the time to understand the underlying what, why, and how before making decisions. His clarity,

drive, and thoughtful leadership set the standard at DJSA.”

What recent accomplishment or initiative are you most proud of, and what impact did it have on your firm, clients, or community? One recent accomplishment I’m most proud of is DJSA’s involvement in the Love Farms project in West Dennis. This is a 10,000 s/f farm-to-table restaurant where food, community, and Cape Cod’s natural beauty come together. It’s not just a restaurant; it’s an experience. In addition to gathering for celebrations, concerts, and workshops, you can tour the fields. The client’s vision for involving local farmers, vendors, artists, and musicians is inspiring. What stands out to me isn’t just the design itself, but how the process strengthened our relationship with the client as a trusted partner.

What daily habit or routine helps you stay focused or motivated as a leader? One daily habit that helps me stay focused and motivated is getting into the office early.

Who has had the greatest impact on your career or leadership journey? I’ve had many mentors throughout my career. The greatest impact has been my father.



Dennis Swart
President
DJSA Architects

“Dennis Swart is an industry leader because over more than two decades he has poured his energy into growing DJSA Architects, and his dedication has truly shaped who we are today. He has always been open, approachable, and a true partner in every sense. His leadership by example and his constant willingness to support others

has made a lasting impact on our entire team.”

What recent accomplishment or initiative are you most proud of, and what impact did it have on your firm, clients, or community? One accomplishment we’re most proud of at DJSA Architects is finalizing our internal leadership and ownership transition plan. After nearly two years of planning, we’ve established a strong foundation for long-term stability and growth. For our clients, it ensures continuity and trusted leadership well into the future. For our team, it creates clear opportunities for professional growth and ownership within the firm.

What advice would you share with emerging professionals striving to become future leaders in commercial real estate? Be proactive and truly own your work. I look for people who dive in to understand the problems, assess the tools available, and develop real solutions. They don’t hand things off or shift blame when they hit a pothole; they push through. That mindset builds trust and leadership potential. Those who understand the why, what, and how, and can connect design, codes, and construction to create real value, grow into the next generation of leaders.

What daily habit or routine helps you stay focused or motivated as a leader? Up at 4:20 daily to work out, it centers me and starts my day with the right mindset.



Eric Peterson
General Manager
Tecta America New England

“As general manager of our Brockton location, Eric has excelled at managing the operation, leading his team, and growing the business. He is respected by his employees, and the entire operation works as a well-oiled machine because of his dedication to the company and his staff.”

What recent accomplishment or initiative are you most proud of, and what impact did

it have on your firm, clients, or community? I’m most proud of our dedication to and focus on service and customer satisfaction. Large, multi-million dollar projects are flashy, and everyone wants them, but the foundation of our business is our commitment to our customers and attending to every commercial roofing need, no matter how small. Being responsive to our clients, whether it’s an emergency leak call or a routine maintenance appointment, separates us from the competition.

What is one major challenge you’ve overcome as a leader, and what did it teach you? Remaining even-keeled as a leader can be challenging but necessary. Success often depends on strong teamwork and the ability to stay level-headed while finding solutions when unexpected situations arise. Construction’s an industry with endless issues, but it’s important to take things in stride. Calm breeds calm; panic breeds panic.

How do you inspire, motivate, or mentor others within your organization? I try to put myself in my employees’ shoes. When you can see things from someone else’s point of view, it gives you a much better angle on how to help them reach their goals or tackle their challenges. Perspective is powerful, and it helps build empathy, resolve conflicts, and create stronger relationships.



Thaddeus Siemasko, AIA
Founding Principal
SV Design, Architecture + Interiors

“As founder of the firm 38 years ago, Thad Siemasko has built an enduring legacy of thoughtful design and purposeful growth. His commitment to community shines through transformative

work like the Cabot Theatre preservation and decades of collaboration with Harborlight Homes, elevating both culture and housing access in our region.”

What daily habit or routine helps you stay focused or motivated as a leader? Design daily, greet the whole office each morning, and fit in as much exercise as possible.

Who has had the greatest impact on your career or leadership journey? My (now retired) partner, Jean Verbridge.

What recent accomplishment or initiative are you most proud of, and what impact did it have on your firm, clients, or community? Transitioning SV from a primarily custom single-family residential firm to one which now includes an equal amount of market-rate and affordable multi-family housing and institutional and commercial projects. This pivot involved doubling the size of the company to effectively handle the project load. It included the opening of two additional office locations to extend SV into a wider geography. The result has been the design of a sizable portfolio of affordable housing units, substantial community facilities such as YMCAs, and numerous institutional projects.



Mary Leahy
Senior Project Manager
Erland Construction

“Mary is a true team builder who leads with empathy, determination, and follow-through. A lifelong learner, she’s grown from an adminis-

trative role to Senior Project Manager over 28 years at Erland, managing some of the company’s largest projects. Clients value her hands-on leadership, perseverance, and commitment to excellence.”

What is one major challenge you’ve overcome as a leader, and what did it teach you? Challenges are part of our business. A mentor once told me that I’d gain more credibility by saying, “I don’t know.” That advice stuck with me. It taught me that humility builds trust, and that leadership isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about recognizing where you are, being willing to learn, and having the determination not to stay there.

What advice would you share with emerging professionals striving to become future leaders in commercial real estate? Be curious and stay humble. Ask questions, listen more than you speak, and never be afraid to admit what you don’t know. Build relationships grounded in trust and respect. Every experience, even the challenging ones, is a chance to grow into the leader you’re meant to be. And remember to celebrate the wins along the way, no matter how small, they’re all part of the journey.



John Halsey
Vice President - Leasing
Cummings Properties

“John is a standout leader whose impact is both measurable and lasting. In just seven years, he rose from an entry-level position to become the youngest member of Cummings’ 11-person executive leadership team, where he plays a key role in shaping company policy and guiding business development. His rapid ascent reflects his deep industry insight, strategic mindset, and

results-driven leadership.”

What recent accomplishment or initiative are you most proud of, and what impact did it have on your firm, clients, or community? The leasing department plays a key role in advancing Cummings’ “All Profits to Nonprofits” model, through which 100% of rental profits support charitable organizations. We’re responsible for new business development across 10 of the firm’s 11 communities, and have maintained occupancy levels that consistently outperform the broader market – averaging 92.6% for the fiscal year ending June 2025. This steady performance reflects a shared commitment to client service and community impact. By continually welcoming businesses to the portfolio, our team helps ensure funding for hundreds of nonprofits.

How do you inspire, motivate, or mentor others within your organization? My leadership style is grounded in collaboration and shared growth. By setting clear expectations and supporting professional development, I encourage the team to build on individual strengths while contributing to collective goals. Involving team members in strategic planning and decision-making leverages their diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering both ownership and engagement. This approach has helped cultivate a cohesive, high-performing department, recognized for strong retention and consistent productivity.