

POWER *Players*

G. Wesley Jones, *President/Principal*



aiDESIGN GROUP, INC.

Established: 2003
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❖ **Give us a brief synopsis of your business.**

We are a mid-sized architectural and interiors group, working on a national scale, best known for corporate office, retail, racing and entertainment projects. There's a good chance you've seen our great design work. In Charlotte, there's evidence of it everywhere from the Ballantyne Village and ZMax Dragway to the Charlotte School of Law and Time Warner Cable's regional headquarters. Our integrated and collaborative approach to every project, and our commitment to high-quality design solutions, is valued by our clients and sets us apart.

❖ **What is your business philosophy?**

I believe in pushing hard every day and sweating the details, which is why we insist on principal involvement on every project.

❖ **What is your definition of success?**

I define success as striking the right balance between family, work, personal goals, spirituality and ambitions so that, in the end, one area is not over-emphasized to the detriment of the others.

❖ **What is your biggest accomplishment?**

On the business side, launching aiDG and seeing it flourish while maintaining my key client, personal and working relationships over time. On the personal side, being a husband for 20 years and a father for 16 of them.

❖ **What are you most proud of?**

My clients, partners and team members who have stayed with me from the beginning and the support my family has afforded me to pursue this passion.

❖ **What is the best thing about your job/company?**

More than anything else, aiDG is a fun and energized place to work. We are located in the heart of the new Uptown cultural complex and work in an environment free of walls and doors, which allows for a great deal of interaction and creativity. With nowhere to hide, we are highly accountable and accessible to each other and to our clients. Because we work on such diverse projects, everything from large-scale racing and entertainment projects to retail centers to high-end corporate headquarters, we remain sharp and working "outside the box."

❖ **What is the toughest decision you have had to make?**

Deciding to launch aiDG was certainly my toughest decision up to that point, although looking back with a great deal of success behind us, it is hard to recall the angst. More recently, like most business owners in this tough economy, I have had to face tough decisions relative to staffing and benefits to ensure the solid health of our firm.

❖ **What do you think was most important in preparing to run a business?**

Making sure I had a realistic understanding with, and commitment from, my long-standing clients and making sure I assembled the right team of people to deliver what those clients needed.

❖ **What do you wish you knew when you were getting started in business that you know now?**

Sometimes good people are forced to do things they would otherwise not want to do for purely business reasons beyond their control.

❖ **What advice would you give other entrepreneurs and business owners?**

Don't be afraid to jump off the edge, just do it with your eyes wide open and have a spare parachute ready.

❖ **What is your favorite book?**

I just finished Doris Kearns Goodwin's book on Lincoln, "Team of Rivals," and it is my current favorite.

❖ **If you weren't doing what you are doing, what else would you want to do?**

If money and time was no object, I would spend my time traveling the world with a good book and my trusty travel guitar.

❖ **What do you want others to know about entrepreneurs and small-business owners?**

Small businesses make up such a large part of the economy. They are run by people who are not afraid to take a chance and have taken their fate into their own hands. They are an interesting and energizing group of people to interact and work with.