



CTBUH Research Paper

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Meet the CTBUH

(As of June 27, 2019)

CTBUH COO John Jacobs



John Jacobs, CTBUH

John Jacobs joined CTBUH in September 2018 as the chief operating officer. He is responsible for the Council's day-to-day operations. He previously served in executive roles with

the Telecommunication Industry Association (TIA) responsible for membership, marketing and business development.

What drew you to CTBUH?

One, I saw a great growth opportunity for an organization that has great roots, in its 50th year, and for the industry at large. Also, coming from the telecom and technology industries, so many conversations we're having in technology are around urban environments and tall buildings, it was a natural fit to end up in an organization like this. Thirdly, to have a leadership position, at this moment, in this organization, presented a fantastic opportunity.

So far, what do you see as the hardest or most interesting, part of the job?

The most interesting part of the job is the transformative nature of the organization. This is the youngest 50-year-old organization I've encountered. It's creating a more centralized management structure to scale the organization, and to implement a strategic plan that will give us the direction for the next 50 years. Those are the biggest challenges, and they should be, because they are the most important things.

You've been to two major CTBUH conferences already. What did you see that you liked and what do you think could change?

I've been really impressed by the level of the speakers and the attendees and the conversations that I joined, both at the 2018 Middle East Conference in Dubai and at the 2019 Tall + Urban Innovation Conference in Shenzhen, China. I'm learning so much, having come from a different industry. The opportunity to see the leaders of the

industry gather together and be in conversation with them and to listen to them, that's like being in the green room with the leading actors on stage. I'm having this opportunity to interface with the most senior, recognized and renowned architects, engineers, and planners around the world.

Coming from a different industry, you've now had a crash course in tall buildings, architecture, engineering, and construction disciplines. What are your strongest impressions on what you have learned thus far?

This industry has a rather clear value chain. People know who supplies what to whom, and what those relationships are. I'm also really impressed with the intricate nature of the relationships. When you look at our Skyscraper Center for example, which is chock-a-block full of data, you can see how a given company might be involved in 13 projects, and so are these other four companies. You begin to see the family tree of the building industry. I find that fascinating.

How do you see the strategic plan playing out so far?

We are building the right plan at the right moment for this industry, because we are the best organization to serve the industry for the next 50 years, as we have for the last 50 years. We are adding greater value for our core constituency: architects, engineers, urban planners, and all those associated. But we are also adding new segments to our member base who help fill out the table of relevant conversations. The strategic plan will help reposition the organization for growth, by adding value to the existing base, attracting new segments of adjacent markets. And, the strategic plan puts a significant focus on digital transformation. It's important to the growth of the organization to get value to members digitally. And then there is the opportunity to create new services. This is pivotal to our success in redefining the positioning of the organization and expanding the services that we offer today. ■

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