

“So You Want To Build Something?”

Know your options, assemble your team, have a successful project!”

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The money is in place, the need is apparent, and you can't wait to get a new building built. Many owners struggle with: What do I do next when it comes to construction projects? They may have an architect on board that will design the project, but is that enough? Owners are very knowledgeable at their core business, but are sometimes intimidated by the construction process or they know less than they actually want to admit when it comes to construction.

One of the first things an owner should do is decide what delivery system they want to use for their project. A “delivery system” is a term the construction industry uses to identify who will be involved with a project and how it will be built. The “who” is the owner, architect, contractors, construction manager, consultants, etc. Three basic options for the “how” part are: Option #1) complete the design, then bid it out, and then build it (design-bid-build delivery system); Option #2) design a portion of the project, start the construction, and then complete the design as a portion of the project is being built (fast-track delivery system); or Option #3) hire one firm to both design and build it (design-build delivery system). There are many more delivery systems than indicated here but these are some of the most common. The ultimate delivery system chosen can be various combinations of the “who’s” and the “how’s” the owner feels best fits their project.

The “who” on these projects can also be different from project to project. Some owners may want an architect to be their designer and oversight for construction. Some owners may

want a construction manager involved from the beginning of design to assist the architect during the design phase and then to be the owner’s “agent” as oversight during construction.

The goal of any owner should be to obtain the best team for their project. Developing this team is an art- *not* a science. The multitude of complexities on a construction project from design to completion is mind-boggling. The owner needs to use the talents of “experts” that can assist the owner in delivering a successful project. Keep in mind that having these experts on a project does not eliminate problems or issues, but it does allow them to be handled efficiently and favorably to the owner when they do arise.

One of the “experts” an owner should take advantage of is the construction manager. A construction manager is one of the “who’s” an owner needs to consider at the start of their project. Again, there are many forms of construction management but we will discuss only the “agency” construction manager at this time as they bring the most unbiased relationship to the owner.

The use of a project team consisting of an architect and construction manager provides the best opportunity for the owner’s construction project to be a success. Being a success is more than being on time and on budget. Being better off for the owner means a new building; better off for the architect and construction manager means a happy owner; and success for the contractor means complying with all the requirements, providing a quality product, and making a fair profit in the process.

An Agency Construction Manager (CM) provides the owner with a professional service. Just as an architect is there to provide a design satisfying the owner’s wishes, a CM is there to provide expertise in managing cost, schedule, and various contractors for the owner. A CM is bound by this professional service to champion

the owner's cause. There is no conflict of interest with a CM, as the owner and the CM are on the same side of the table. The construction process is adversarial by nature. Generally, people want to get someone before someone gets them. With a qualified architect and CM, this is very unlikely since they are there for the owner's best interest.

Did you know the owner will reap the most rewards by having the architect and construction manager together from the start of the design phase? Yes! This will allow for a "true team" to develop. The architect and CM can work together from the start of design to estimate cost and schedule durations of the project. The architect provides the design information and the CM provides the construction information that goes into the cost and schedule development. The team can develop a schedule early on that will give the owner a clear idea as to the time line the project will take.

The Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) defines construction management as "a professional service that applies effective management techniques to the planning, design, and construction of a project from inception to completion for the purpose of controlling time, cost, and quality." They further define "agency" construction management as "a fee based service in which the construction manager is responsible exclusively to the owner and acts in the owner's interests at every stage of the project..." For further, in depth information, the CMAA's website (www.cmaanet.org) provides a wealth of information pertaining to the construction management process.

In conclusion, the owner has the responsibility to develop a team that will give them the best opportunity for success on their building projects. There are many options available to an owner involved in a construction project. That makes it even more important for the owner to consider the options, research the options, and decide on the option that best fits

them. An owner will need to concentrate on their current business throughout the duration of the construction project. How will they be confident that their best interests are being met from start to finish? The inclusion of an Agency Construction Manager allows the owner to have a construction expert on their side of the table throughout the duration of the project.