



Imported millwork and lighting package meant substantial savings for the Wine House Tasting Bar.



Stadium style seating, stepped bulkheads, window treatments and intricate lighting systems were done on time, under budget for FERC.



Shop drawings were produced in four days, a critical component to completing this high end project in record time for Japan Bank.



Barn style, full height sliding doors with translucent glass sidelights and clerestories were fabricated off site to fast-track this job for Wiss Janney Elstner.

12 Steps to a Successful Design, Build and Construction Project

Whether you're embarking upon a small-scale build-out, expansive renovation, historic preservation, lobby upgrade or reconstruction of major components, the image your building presents leaves a lasting impression. You have one opportunity to create the impression you want, with your clients, customers, visitors and tenants.

The basis of a successful construction project is grounded in the efficient use of time and resources before construction begins. How do successful property managers ensure success? They ask the right questions. This comprehensive 12-step Guideline to Successful Construction Projects shows you exactly how to do this.

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How Many Do You Follow?

- 1. Select the right architect.** It's important you hire an architect familiar with local building codes, specializing in interior fit-out work with a keen sense of design. A proven track record and a portfolio of similar projects should be part of their work history. Be sure to look at pictures of past projects and walk the sites these pictures represent. Does the site give you the look and feel you're after? Can aspects of these projects be replicated for your job?
- 2. Understand the process.** End users are typically under strict deadlines to make their space useful in a very short period of time in order to meet lease obligations. Phase I: Preliminary floor plans made to scale. This initial floor plan represents your thinking in general terms. Phase II: Preliminary plans offering a greater level of detail annotated with pricing notes. Phase III: Final construction documents ready for county submission with complete project scope, preliminary pricing and permit expediting.
Your contractor/architect should price each of these phases separately.
- 3. Consider the relationship between the architect and engineering firm working on your project.** Your architect will engage with an engineering company to prepare the mechanical, electrical and plumbing documents and the engineer will become involved with your project during Phase II. A site visit should be performed and an assessment of the mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems should take place. Their assessment is integrated into the pricing notes in order for the subcontractors to provide accurate preliminary pricing for your project.
- 4. Obtain preliminary pricing/bids.** The proposal should be itemized for each specific trade and reflect the contractor's general conditions and fees. Ensure drawings accurately depict your vision and budget. This stage is often rushed, undermining the competitive nature and accuracy of the estimate. Allow two, and not less than one week for an itemized, preliminary bid. The relationship with your contractor should be a meeting of the minds, not a compromise.
- 5. Allow time for contractors to visit the job site with their trades.** The more input your prospective contractor is able to collect during this phase the better. Gathering information and pricing takes time. Build this into the timeframe of the project.

A site visit is crucial. Often, conditions exist in the field that aren't clearly depicted on the drawings or have been overlooked by the architect and engineer.



Partners was invited back to refurbish finishes, replace millwork, paint and carpet 12,000 sf while Shaw, Bransford, Veileux & Roth offices were occupied.



This 25,000 sf complete gut finished in 90 days and included doctor's offices, exam rooms, workstations, lockers, conference areas and extensive millwork in several areas.



Exposing the building structure, using full light glass roll up doors and utilizing a minimalist industrial design, Youth Performance Fitness was able to save \$100,000 from their original budget.

6. Obtain working drawings. Select a preliminary plan, pricing notes and comprehensive preliminary budget with a contractor's bid that best meets your requirements. These details then go back to the architect and final construction documents are created. Because these are the plans your local jurisdiction will review, they should include complete job scope. If the architect is faithful to the preliminary drawings, the final pricing on the actual working drawings should be within 10% of the initial budget.

7. Allow enough time for the permit review process. Most contractors work with an expeditor who procures permits. Although this incurs an additional charge, few people complain. This is money well spent, especially if you're unfamiliar with the process, which can be time-consuming and frustrating.

Two factors influence the permit process: (1) size and scope of the job and (2) the backlog in the jurisdiction where the permit is being processed. County offices have been known to take months to process a permit. Using a permit expeditor gives you the advantage of working with someone who understands the process and the system. In many jurisdictions, "demo permits" are available, which allow work to begin prior to obtaining the appropriate building permits.

8. Keep your contractor working while the county reviews your plans. While your drawings are being reviewed by the local jurisdiction, your contractor should be busy compiling a final proposal. All trades should be provided a complete set of drawings to prepare their final proposal. Be sure to review the final construction documents with your architect. Become comfortable and familiar with the drawings.

9. Formally award the job. If the contractor's proposal and construction documents are true to each other in scope, it's time to formally award the job or issue a Notice to Proceed to your contractor. Request a schedule of activities, including start and completion dates.

The American Institute of Architects has a variety of contracts which represent all parties fairly. Although activities may vary from day to day, the start and completion dates are critical and should be agreed to and understood by everyone involved. Ask to see and review the contractors' state and county license and certificate of insurance. Each of the trade groups working on your job should have their own permits as well, once the building permit has been issued.

10. Understand the role of the superintendent. Regardless of project size, scope and duration, a superintendent should be on site every day. Progress should be continually monitored, activities coordinated and safety procedures enforced.

A superintendent brings an experienced eye and ear to the construction process. Writing daily reports provides the project manager with insights and updates needed to stay on task and on schedule.

11. Schedule weekly project meetings. Weekly meetings keep your project on time and on task.

These meetings are the only way the architect, owner, project manager and superintendent can identify concerns that can manifest later as problems. Issues should be documented in meeting minutes which are then updated in a weekly progress report format. All change orders should be included in this document. When administered correctly, it becomes a paper trail for the entire team.

12. Get final sign-off from the project owner. At the conclusion of every project the architect, contractor and end-user should walk through the newly constructed area and make a list of issues, commonly referred to as a "punch list." Once this list is compiled and everyone agrees it's complete, the contractor should correct each item according to the documented list and schedule a second walk-through. The end-user should sign off on the completed punch list which acknowledges the work has been done to their satisfaction. This is easier if performed prior to move-in.

Finally, the owner should be presented with a closeout book, which details the finishes, operating manuals, warranty letters, permits, inspection stickers, as-builts or changes made that were not part of the original scope but completed with the build-out.

Call us for your next construction build-out and experience the Partners Contracting Difference.

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