

Integrated Project Teams Boost Success on Construction Projects

Business Development Best Practices Series

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Clients' needs and expectations relative to the services provided by their design and construction partners are evolving. Savvy clients have increased their demand for turnkey services and a higher level of detailed information far earlier in the project planning process. Beyond programming, owners are looking to understand milestone dates, disruption of ongoing operations, and a firm cost for the project, all earlier than this information is typically provided.

This has led designers and contractors to increase their focus on collaboration to provide not only planning and design services, but also the budgeting and constructability support that helps guide and define the design. With this new dynamic, there are elements that designers and contractors must keep in mind when targeting future work.

The Best Partnerships Are Intentional

Because of the complexity of planning, budgeting, and executing a project, owners are increasingly seeing a risk management benefit in using integrated design and construction teams to deliver a turnkey service. As such, it makes sense that owners look for teams who have experience working together. Designers and contractors should align themselves strategically with partner firms who share expertise and maintain similar corporate cultures and chemistry. The most successful partnerships (and projects) are those composed of firms that have identified each other as a cultural fit and are deliberate in looking for opportunities to work together.

The Delivery Method Doesn't Matter

IPD, CMR, GC, D-B. You can play acronym bingo with the number and variety of delivery methods that exist in the market. What's important is that no procurement or delivery strategy prevents the early engagement of a turnkey team. Owners will find that intelligent design and construction firms are willing to provide upfront support and counsel, regardless of the planned procurement or delivery method, because it is the best opportunity to learn and understand

the client's business. This enables them to show maximum value during the selection phase of the project and win the customer's business.

Master Planning and Conceptual Estimating Are the New Normal

On the design side, owners aren't just looking for architectural or engineering services; they also want to understand how a new or upgraded facility fits today's business needs and how it can accommodate future growth. Is the project demand-driven? What will this demand look like in the future and are the facility enhancements scalable? Designers must be capable of providing this long-term planning support as a baseline service offering.

From a construction standpoint, the ability to provide real-market feedback on both price and schedule is an invaluable planning tool for the owner's financial forecasting. To provide this support with the little information available at the master plan phase, contractors must become more sophisticated at conceptual estimating, providing detailed cost data by filling in the blanks of the design and making educated assumptions about the project. An in-depth understanding of the designer and the facility type are critical components of performing this type of work successfully, while using virtual design and construction as a support tool.

The construction industry continues to evolve as owners require more in-depth planning and data to inform their near- and long-term facilities needs. Companies that can understand the key points discussed above and can embrace this new normal will provide clients with the best service and solutions.

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