



Unlike many other businesses, construction can be one of the most complicated to manage. Every project – and every day – presents a different set of challenges and unforeseen issues that must be addressed in prompt fashion, lest they cause delays in the project's completion. Professional construction consultants exist to serve as subject matter experts, advising and acting in a building owner's best interest to effectively manage all aspects of the construction process.

Then why is it that when embarking on a construction project, some owners hesitate to bring this expertise to the table?

First, let us define construction consulting. The scope includes the overall planning, coordination, and control of a construction project from beginning to completion. The service ensures a client's requirements to produce a functionally and financially viable project are met. The construction consultant provides comprehensive management of every stage of the project, beginning with the original concept and project definition, to yield the greatest benefit to owners. Should a project not go as planned, construction consultants may be engaged to resolve issues or provide an opinion on who bears responsibility. As professionals, construction consultants have a responsibility to advise and protect a client's interests, even if the advice may not be what the client wants to hear.

Building owner clients who view the construction manager as a trusted advisor, such as an accountant or lawyer, find that the guidance provided can be most valuable before the project commences and a great asset in the planning process. Financial matters are an ongoing business function that may rely on the independent advice of an accountant to guide a company in financial decisions. Legal matters are another ongoing business function that requires the independent advice of an attorney. The key with reliance on these two professions is that their services are ongoing.

Construction may be once-in-a-lifetime, or a once-every-10-years event that occurs when an organization has a planned capital expenditure. If construction, for most owners, is a unique event that occurs infrequently in the course of a company's growth, why not seek the advice of professional consultants to provide independent expertise?

One of the key factors is that the owner may not be aware that the professional construction consulting services exist.

Another may be that an owner perceives the service as redundant to the architect or contractor. Some owners may have stakeholders who are armed with some knowledge of construction and do not find the process complicated enough to seek outside advice.

Today, parallel growth in both the educational and medical markets has created more opportunities for professional construction project management. Growth in the volume and complexity of projects in these sectors has forced many institutions to seek the expertise of consultant construction managers. Projects are increasingly complicated by inclusion of Building Information Modeling (BIM), Integrated Project Delivery (IPD), advanced Building Automation Systems (BAS); the use of drones; and the requirements and certifications for sustainable design, including Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), GreenGlobes, and other programs.

No longer can design and construction teammates agree that if the building is still standing, they did an OK job. Financial and environmental metrics, occupant satisfaction, and other criteria now weigh heavily in determining project success. The benefits to the owner and team in terms of project organization and accountability make the services and guidance of a professional construction consultant more valuable than ever.

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