

A CLIENT'S GUIDE

WHERE TO START

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10 Advantages of Design Build

WHERE TO START

Welcome

We prepared this guide after seeing so many people struggle with understanding the differences between the Design-Build systems of project delivery versus the traditional system. Design-Build has many advantages over the traditional system where an owner himself hires an architect for design, engineers for technical trades, interior designers and a builder for construction. These are all independent people running independent businesses. Coordination between these individual teams while keeping track of the overall performance and progress of the project can get very challenging, often long and tortuous.

The roots of the Design-Build system came from the nineteenth century figure of the Master Builder men (in that century only men were involved in construction) who had the highest respect from their peers and clients, due to their mastery and knowledge.

In the twentieth century most projects were being executed under the traditional system and professionals continued to receive training under this system. However, Design-Build has been gaining more and more leverage as clients and architects have started to understand and realize several benefits that the system brings.

Not everyone can be a Design-Builder. It takes an architect with qualities and talents as a designer, while being pragmatic, practical and technical as an engineer at the same time. It takes deep knowledge and understanding about various systems, construction process along with an unquestionable honesty and reputation. Here we will focus on ten reasons why the Design-Build system is better and the advantages it brings the owner.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

1. More comprehensive site evaluation

One of the first key steps to a successful project is proper site selection and evaluation. Owners often make the mistake of buying property without consulting a professional who can help them make the right choice.

Buyers usually turn to one of three kinds of people for advise when considering purchasing a property – realtor, architect or builder. Honest realtors who don't sweet talk buyers just to make a sale may be able to give the right advise at times. However, this will usuall depend on the kinds of homes or buildings the realtor has seen built on properties previously sold. Although realtors might have some level of vision, they might not have the professional training necessary to give overall well informed advice that covers various critical aspects.

More savvy buyers will turn to either an architect or a builder for advise when evaluating a property. This is of course the recommended course of action, where the buyer will be able to get advise from professionally trained individuals who are from the field of creation or construction. The single drawback of this is different advise ma be given depending upon the type of building professional. For instance, if the advise comes from an architect, then they will probably be evaluating and imagining what kind of project can be put on the property and how it could be designed. If the advise comes form a builder, then they will be evaluating more the ease of construction of the site and the logistics of being able to put a structure on the property. Ideally, you want a professional that considers both aspects of the property evaluation.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

2. More comprehensive site evaluation

Architects can focus very strongly on their ability to create good designs and that is what sets them apart. When architects are hired separately from the engineers it could cause problems. There may be differences in opinion how to solve a structural issue for example. This may cause delays in a project as the two different entities communicate back and forth pushing their own agenda.

An architect lead Design-Builder resolves those issues while not compromising the client's needs for the new building, the aesthetics or the budget. He has the ability to create and design while taking into account the structural and environmental engineering challenges. He also has an in depth understanding of the intricacies of construction and how overall systems are supposed to work. This allows the design-builder to properly design a project while keeping all technical aspects in mind. Since the design has already taken into account and addressed potential issues at the concept stage itself, it becomes easier for the project thereby move on smoothly without any delays due to differences of opinions amongst the team of professionals.

The owner or client emerges a winner in this case, since not only is the project executed in a shorter time frame with proper provisions for systems that are integrated, the solution is a smarter finished project.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

3. Better construction through understanding design

In traditional construction delivery systems, the architect hands over the design to a contractor or a builder who will eventually construct and execute the project. This requires the contractor to builder to read and learn everything on all of the drawings, interpret the design and build the project from a combination of information acquired from various different resources and teams.

This could lead to problems arising from the contractor who may or may not have fully understood the drawings. If there are issues that were not properly solved or addressed during the design phase but surface during the construction phase, then those need to be addressed during the construction phase. Usually in such cases the contractor will have to go back to the architect and wait for a solution. It may take the architect's office days or weeks to create the design revisions needed which in turn will cause delays in the overall duration of the project and the final cost.

A Design-Builder however will be able to perform construction of the project without any of these glitches or drawbacks, since they already know the project inside out right from the start. There is nothing new that they need to understand or interpret. The project execution will be fairly straightforward and simple since in most cases any potential issues will have been addressed during the design phase itself.

If surprises do come up during construction, they are minimized and solved relatively easily and sooner since the design-builder himself has in-depth knowledge and training for both the overall design as well as its technicalities.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

4. Enhanced client communication

In the traditional system, the owner has to go through a series of hoops to be able to finally build and complete his or her project. First the owner would select an architect who will design the project and start the construction drawings development phase. The client would have to hire several engineering firms for the various systems in the building. Once the construction drawings are complete the project would go out to bid for various contractors to estimate their proposals to the client for the construction phase.

With the involvement of so many different offices on the project it becomes difficult for the owner to coordinate and decipher the different time frames and concerns of the various professionals and contractors. The owner ends up spending much more time involved in the workings of the process than he or she would prefer.

Since the design-build system involves having a single firm coordinate the entire process, starting from design through construction drawings, construction and execution, the client has to interact with only one single point of contact for all communications on the project making his or her life much easier and hassle free. Coordination between professionals specializing in various individual aspects of the construction process is smoother since they all are from the same team or firm and know the project inside out right from the start. In the event coordination issues or any other technical issues arise, it is the responsibility of the design builder and not that of the owner to tackle them.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

5. Better chances of getting the project built

The traditional design-build system can also save time and money by more accurately estimating costs. Typically, the finished constructing drawings are supplied to the owner who then puts it out for different contractors to bid upon. These bids may come back with higher quotes than the owner had initially budgeted for. As a result the owner has to go back into the negotiation process with contractors to determine who will provide the best price with minor changes. This however can get tricky and even dangerous, since chances of the lowest bidder compromising on quality in order to meet the budget arise.

Even worse situations arise when the project costs shoot beyond the owner's original budget owing since in the tradition system the architect and the contractor are not working together through the design process. This may lead to the need to redesign the entire project. This can set the project schedule back months and leave the owner disappointed that the original design cannot be built within budget.

A design-builder has the first hand experience, detailed information of costing and overall a much better understanding of the real costs involved in a project. This gives the design-builder a better ability to design a project within budget constraints. Usually, the percentage of design-build projects that end up coming in over budget is much lower than projects done by the traditional method.

Overall, projects utilizing the design-build system end up having a much better chance of completion than projects utilizing the traditional system.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS

6. Value based project design and results

In a traditional project, the owner must often manage different personalities and agendas of the independent service providing professionals as each of these professionals have only their personal interests in mind. The designer wants the design to excel even though it may be overlooking some technical issues, engineers often concentrate on their systems alone, even if it's detrimental to the design. The owner is left to evaluate and decide the best option from alternatives given to him or her and has to do so without formal training, simply based on their best judgment or common sense.

In a design-build project, the design-builder performs a careful balancing act, weighting in design, technical as well as budgeting aspects at all times and thereby providing the owner with the best possible solutions. They take into account all aspects and criteria in order to make an informed decision. This combination of factors proves beneficial for the owner as they can now rest assured that the project is being completed on time, with minimal compromises and headaches and most importantly within budget.

7. Faster overall delivery

We have already seen some of the problems that commonly face projects done in the traditional system. The budget disconnect of the traditional process, lack of agreement between designers and engineers, the delayed timeframe due to redesigns and the selection of a contractor within the budget etcetera, which all lead to an extended timeframe and possible cost over runs.

A design-builder project does not lose so much time due to miscommunications between the teams, budget discrepancies, back and forth between contractor and architect. The project is often able to overlap activities of costing and budgeting with that of the design process thereby making the overall timeframe shorter.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

8. Single point of responsibility

When a project is executed in the traditional system, it is usually hard to determine who exactly is responsible if and when something goes wrong. None of the employed parties would want to take responsibility single handedly in order to avoid penalties of any kind and thus causing delays in the progress of the project.

In a design-build project however the client has a single person to deal with and that person is responsible for the entire project. This not only makes things easier for the owner, but it also adds additional responsibility and pressure on the design-builder to make sure that everything is done right and mistakes are held to an absolute minimum.

In this business, word of mouth is extremely essential for growth of business, therefore a design-builder has a vested interest in making sure that the project is executed as smoothly as possible and is eventually successfully completed.

9. Decreased administration burden

In the traditional system the client ends up spending a large amount of time in administration issues, managing large amounts of paper work and bills for the project coming in from all directions. Often the owner ends up spending so much time tending to paperwork and bills that he or she is left with little time to devote to the project itself. If a owner's confusion delays the payment of bills it could cause project delays.

In a design-build project the administration burden for the owner is reduced since all bills come from a single source; therefore the amount of time spent on checking and reviewing information is greatly reduced. The owner thus has more time to dedicate to the project itself, enabled them to make quicker choices and decisions.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

10. Tighter knowledge and control of the project

In a traditional project the owner will be solely responsible for management of various aspects of the entire project including design, technical decisions, budgeting etcetera. Most owners are not good at balancing all of this at once since their time is already invested in their own professional commitments. All hired professionals will handle only their part of the job and will perform within the boundaries of their trade. Often, especially in the design and construction of custom homes, the owner ends up being the one who makes all the decisions.

In a design-build project a single firm handles everything, which creates a huge advantage for the owner as the coordination and management of the entire project is now the responsibility of that firm's lead. If need be, the owner only needs to manage this single point of contact. This firm or its team has an integral knowledge about all aspects of the project from the start including design, budget, structural aspects etcetera. This allows the team members to have a better understanding and grip on the overall project enabling them to work hand in hand with each other and giving the owner a project experience that is smooth and enjoyable.

CLIENT'S GUIDE: 10 ADVANTAGES OF DESIGN BUILD

WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

Congratulations! You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for understanding the design-build system.

Unfortunately, we can't include every important piece of information about the design-build system of project delivery successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors. However with the 10 reasons explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help understand the advantage of the design-build system.

If you are interested in going the design-build route for your project, let's talk. We can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. We offer a custom **Needs and Options Review** where we can identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically the **Needs and Options Review** saves my clients *thousands of dollars* and *weeks* of lost time, not to mention the stress and headaches of getting something wrong.

To read more about the **Needs and Options Review** as well as the cost of this service and why its critically important to your project's success visit our website. If you are ready to talk now, please give us a call.

Best wishes for the success of your project.!