

My 10 Favorite Lessons Learned for Successful Design-Build Projects

M. R. Davenny - Boeing
425-477-0070
March 25, 1998

My Top 10 List

1. Develop a partnering relationship between the principals (owner-designer-contractor(s)).
2. Build relationships based on trust, respect and being equals.
3. Start the project (with principals) together, in the planning phase if possible.
4. Take the time up-front to develop a complete work breakdown structure.
5. Have one common schedule (and scheduler) for all parties to use.
6. Develop a detailed, well thought out schedule.
7. Track labor hours against their planned expenditure.
8. Take the initiative to make things happen successfully.
9. Bring issues to the table as soon as they are identified.
10. Celebrate and recognize achievement regularly.

Lesson Learned # 1 - Develop a partnering relationship between the principals (owner-designer-contractor(s)).

Reasons Why Important:

- Reduced learning curve
- Identification of roles, responsibilities & expectations
- Eliminate or decrease adversarial relationships
- Establish communication lines for dispute resolution
- Common understanding of the "real" project goals

Lesson Learned # 2 - Build relationships based on trust, respect and being equals.

Reasons Why Important:

- Having respect and being equal facilitates communications
- Encourages creative solutions
- Puts focus on overall objectives vs. individual agendas
- Earlier identification of issues
- Makes "human side" of project much better ---more enjoyable, successful

Lesson Learned # 3 - Start the project (with principals) together, in the planning phase if possible.

Reasons Why Important:

- Establish effective communication from start
- Common understanding of scope
- Consistency and continuity of team
- Establish responsibilities in the beginning

Lesson Learned # 4 - Take the time up-front to develop a complete work breakdown structure.

Reasons Why Important:

- Defines & communicates scope of project
- Basis of control systems, i.e., cost & schedule
- Forms the common goals

Lesson Learned # 5 - Have one common schedule (and scheduler) for all parties to use.

Reasons Why Important:

- Consistency, common & agreed schedule
- Team building and buy-in
- Common purpose
- Cost efficiency
- Effective resolution of changes
- All understand how it works
- Identifies milestones

Lesson Learned # 6 - Develop a detailed, well thought out schedule.

Reasons Why Important:

- Track progress
- Establishes understanding of sequencing
- Integrity of completion date

Lesson Learned # 7 - Track labor hours against their planned expenditure.

Reasons Why Important:

- Track & verify efficiency & productivity
- Include owner planned commitments to track timeliness
- Identify time/schedule impacts in timely manor
- Develop historical database for future projects
- Identify if scope or productivity issue

Lesson Learned # 8 - Take the initiative to make things happen successfully.

Reasons Why Important:

- More rewarding if successful
- Sum can be greater than parts
- Taking initiative -- less is left to chance

Lesson Learned # 9 - Bring issues to the table as soon as they are identified.

Reasons Why Important:

- Quick resolution of scope changes
- Procrastination strengthens negative positions
- Lowers costs -- maintains schedule

Lesson Learned # 10 - Celebrate and recognize achievement regularly.

Reasons Why Important:

- Reinforce morale & positive thinking
- Increase communication positively
- Communicate achievements throughout the work force