

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT: FOR AND AGAINST

*For your interest, we are presenting a new Column called “something to say”. In this column we will be publishing articles of the most major players of the office industry. To insure the topic will always be presented as objectively as possible, we invite their opponents too – the companies that have an expert point of view. In this issue Mark Smith, managing director of the Sunbury Heights Group will be disusing the need of employing a project manager at the office-outfitting stage. His opponents will be Studi-A and OLSON ENTERPRIZE.*

When developers, owners or tenants contemplate the design of a new building, site or office it is typical to assume that the essential partner to lead that design process through to a successful conclusion is the architect.

The architect, after all, has the ability to put into a detailed and documented design all of the various and often vaguely expressed aspirations of the client for the space. Only the architect understands the use and utility of various available materials and how those materials can be used to create an environment that can both represent the users brand or company identity and provide a functional working environment in which employees are likely to spend the majority of their working time.

What is not quite so immediately obvious however is that the design choices you make during the process of discussion with the architect could seriously effect both the overall costs of the project, the timescale, and even your ability to get the design built at all.

But let's start at first principles: what are your objectives for the project as a whole? Typically these objectives revolve around simple time, cost and quality targets, but the prioritisation of particular goals within this general target list is vital if any of the goals are to be met. A project manager during the design process, and before, can help you set these targets and understand the specific pressure points that affect you, mapping out a project structure and methodology accordingly.

An architect cares deeply about the functionality and utility of the premises, and

will no doubt bear in mind difficulties with receiving some materials within a specific marketplace, costs of some materials etc.

However, these considerations take second place to an architect's overriding mission – to provide you with a facility that achieves all the functional objectives you want from it, while designing something which matches simple utility with attractiveness, making the design aesthetically pleasing, beautiful.

The Project Manager however is a person grounded in the real world of local construction and a pragmatist by nature. The ability to get things done and to achieve the triad of client goals – cost, program and quality – are uppermost in his mind. To every significant design proposal the Project Manager will ask:

- How much?
- How long to procure?
- How difficult to build?

The answers to these questions should always temper the enthusiasm engendered by the proposal of a new exotic materials or state-of-the-art installations. This is not to say that the Project Manager is a gloomy nay-sayer, reining in the designers for a mediocre result, but he is a professional schooled in the art of the possible.

The role of a Project Manager in the design process though, begins before the actual design begins at all, with the tendering and choice of an architect and design engineer. The Project Manager will take the objectives discussed above and use them to grade a set of other decision criteria for the choice of an architect.





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These criteria always involve, to varying degrees of importance, the cost/value of a particular architect's services, his reputation, his ability of give multi-site support – vital if you intend to roll-out the design to more than one building or location, his local presence – no use employing an international architect with no knowledge of Russia and no local partner for the final stages of design, for instance; the relevant experience of the architect, his responsiveness to queries, and, finally, whether he understands and has experience of the role of design leader.

This final point is crucial in the structuring of any design team. The architect is usually only one part of that team, which comprises also the design engineer, maybe an IT designer too, with various other contractors having an input into the process, including audio-visual companies, furniture companies, security vendors, etc. Add to this the need to get the design approved by multiple authorities and you begin to understand the multiplicity of voices that need to be heard as the design progresses.

For this reason the process needs someone to fulfil the role of design leader – taking

## Igor Gorodetsky

head architect at Studi-A

“ Если в штате заказчика нет специалистов по управлению процессом проектирования и строительства, то профессиональная проджект-менеджерская компания должна привлекаться на самом раннем этапе – например, на этапе выбора здания или разработки архитектурной концепции будущего офиса. Это позволит избежать ошибок (как, например, выбор помещения, не отвечающего нуждам клиента), управлять возможными рисками и удержаться в рамках бюджета и сроков.

Безусловно, проджект-менеджерская компания должна отвечать основному требованию – быть профессиональной. Под профессионализмом мы понимаем: специализацию на услугах управления проектами в строительстве, знание рынка, наличие узкоспециализированных экспертов (для составления и анализа бюджетов, контроля затрат, выполнения функции технадзора и т. д.), независимость в принятии решений и подготовке рекомендаций для клиента. Все недостатки работы с РМ-компанией появляются, если она не соответствует этим профессиональным критериям.

Конечно, любой проект требует управления. Привлечение профессиональной компании должно привести к экономии бюджета и времени клиента. Причем экономия может быть не только прямой – затраты на проектирование, строительство, мебель, но и косвенной, например, экономия от сокращения периода, в течение которого клиент платит двойную аренду (за старый и новый офис). ”



KINNARPS

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responsibility for coordinating all design works. This has to be the architect. The architect starts the design from concept, with all other vendors following and therefore only he is capable of maintaining and taking responsibility for the coordination of the design process and its multiple participants.

Another issue foremost in the mind of a Project Manager during the design process is his ability to get the finished design translated into reality, to employ a contractor with the skillsets either in-house or readily available to be able to both interpret and build on the basis of the design plans. This cannot be readily assumed.

While construction labour is in plentiful supply in Moscow, for instance, even during these boom years, skilled carpenters, stone cutters and other craftsman often need to be brought in from surrounding regions or even other countries. This involves extra cost, extra time, and can present both coordination and even language challenges. Knowing this during the design process is vital if client objectives are not to be jeopardised.

The identification of long-lead or hard-to-procure items needs to take place at the earliest possible time, and the Project Manager will identify and develop a special procurement strategy for them, safe-

guarding the project program. The Project Manager will also ensure that the input of the landlord (where appropriate), the local authority approving authorities and the utility companies (where appropriate) is made and taken into account. Involving the approving authorities only at the last minute, after the design has been developed to a detailed stage only increases the risk of rejection, amendment and the accompanying abortive design work.

Similarly, a lack of understanding of the importance of identifying long-lead items can lead, at a late stage, to changes in the design or excessive and unpredicted delays.

The cost of a professional Project Manager is typically less, per month of work, than the architects, engineers, contractor or other vendors on a similar basis. Conversely, the value of having professionals lead the project provides not only peace-of-mind for the client, but also the knowledge that the entire project is being overseen and managed by someone who has been through the process many many times before.

Having said this, choosing the cheapest Project Manager purely for that reason is akin to choosing a CEO for your business purely on the basis of who is cheapest from the available candidates – not a decision you would readily want to make!



The fact that the Project Manager is not purely focussing on the design process also helps him see the bigger picture. Design decisions and the reasons for them, noted and recorded, provide a running guide to all the key participants, discussions and decisions made during what could be your biggest corporate expense of the year. At the successful conclusion of the project, the collected set of these documents helps you view what should be a smooth process from procurement, to design, to procurement and then to construction and finishing.

Neglect the importance of Project Management during these stages and the narrative will instead be one of reverse, redesign and restructuring as design decisions are altered late in the process and extra costs and time incurred. This is in noone's best interests.

## Vladimir Bolshakov

marketing manager at OLSON ENTERPRISE

“ If the client has no project management or construction specialists on staff then a management company should be hired at the earliest stages, for example when choosing the building or developing the architectural concept for the future building. This will allow the client to avoid mistakes (such as choosing a premise that fails to meet his needs), manage potential risks and stay within budget.

Without a doubt, the one thing a project management company should be is professional. We consider professional to include the following: project management specialists in construction, market knowledge, highly refined experts (budget analysis, expense control, technical inspections), independence in decision making and preparations of client recommendations. The minuses of working with a project management company come when it fails to meet the above-mentioned professional requirements. Of course, any project requires management. Hiring a management company should ensure the client saves time and money. Economizing can directly include designing, construction and furniture and indirectly include reducing the period of time in which the client pays double rent (for both the new and old office). ”