

Title: Why Hire an Owner's Representative?

Author: Brit Vipham, Communications Manager, ARCH Consultants, Ltd.

Introduction

Adding another consultant to the project team might sound like more dollar signs floating out of the organization's checkbook, but this is one expense early on that will pay off in the long run.

Tales of projects gone wrong involve: inexperienced team members, regulatory complications, faulty workmanship, miscommunication, cost overruns, missed deadlines, lost opportunity costs, and a final result that falls well short of expectations.

That is why many organizations choose to engage a construction consulting firm—often referred to as the **Owner's Representative**—to provide expert guidance from the earliest stages of project planning through the final details of the occupied space.

When should you hire an Owner's Representative?

The sooner the better. Why wait until a project is derailed to bring in a 'clean-up crew', hiring an Owner's Representative from the start ensures the best interests of the Owner are considered from the very beginning. A successful Owner's Representative can assist in compiling an experienced team, each at the proper stage of development, to ensure the Owner's best interests are considered while managing cost and budget controls.

No project is too small or large for an Owner's Representative. Regardless of the project size, organizations' leadership teams have day-to-day tasks to manage that if asked to also manage a project, can take away from necessary business operations. The amount of resources an Owner's Representative dedicates to a project can be adjusted to best suit Ownership needs once the project scope is determined. Even a small project may require regulatory approvals that an Executive is not expected to understand.

What skills should an Owner's Representative Possess?

An Owner's Representative will possess a toolbox of qualities that enable them to lead project teams with specific skills at the forefront: communication, proven process, organization, anticipation and motivation.

They will lead the project team, communicating constantly, serving as a single point of contact for all stakeholders involved, and ensuring that the communication channels remain open and that all dialogue focuses on the Owner's ultimate benefit. The number of meetings required to develop a project large or small can quickly add up. With all the various parties needed, the Owner's Representative is responsible for coordinating and facilitating productive meetings throughout the process. Strong communication skills enable clear guidelines on what topics will be discussed and who the responsible parties are.

OWNER'S REP TOOLBOX

- Communication
- Proven Process
- Organization
- Anticipation
- Motivation

Experience demonstrates that comprehensive planning and a proven process result in superior outcomes on every project. With so many moving parts, having a detailed plan will ensure the project schedule stays on track. A proven process results in superior outcomes on every project. With so many parts, staying organized and having someone to ensure all the proper documentation occurs throughout the project is important. Any project will bring on an abundance of paper work to be completed and filed.

The ability to anticipate the unexpected comes from years of industry experience. In construction, no matter how well laid the plan, the unexpected can happen. Anticipating such challenges with sound judgment and problem-solving skills acquired over decades of experience, enables Owners' to make fully informed decisions before an issue even arises. Through the depth of experience, Owner's Representatives understand the nuances of, and ensure compliance with the unique regulatory, licensing, and permitting requirements of each industry they serve.

Motivating team members to stay on task is essential with so many moving pieces and often tight deadlines. One task or deadline missed can cause a domino effect and delay the whole project. Encouraging team members to work together in the most productive way possible makes for a final product on time and on budget.

Conclusion

No matter what industry your organization is in, an Owner's Representative provides a solid plan, a proven process, and a highly skilled team leader working toward a common purpose to deliver results Owner's seek. They ensure all the right pieces are in all the right places at every phase of planning and execution.

An Owner's Representative makes Owner goals and priorities their own and complements organizations' capabilities. They will identify the level of support your organization may need to execute the project, ensuring team members are not brought on too early or late in the development process. Their professional judgement is required to filter minutiae from important issues so that Owners can focus on its core business and operations. This is one talent you will not want to leave off your next development.