



TOP TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME CONSTRUCTION PROJECT OWNERS

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Top Tips for First-Time Construction Project Owners

Introduction

Embarking on a construction project for the first time can be both exciting and challenging. Whether you're building a home, developing a commercial space, or expanding your business, understanding key aspects of project management can help ensure success. This guide provides practical advice tailored to new project owners, covering both residential and commercial projects.

For further clarification, contact Brewington Management.

1. Set a Realistic Budget

A well-planned budget is the foundation of project success. Ensure you account for both expected and unexpected costs to keep your project on track.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Hard Costs vs. Soft Costs:** Hard costs include materials and labor, while soft costs cover permits, design fees, and administrative expenses.
- b. **Contingency Fund:** Set aside 10-20% of your budget for unforeseen expenses.
- c. **Financing:** If securing a loan, confirm the terms, draw schedules, and interest rates.

2. Understand Timeline Expectations

Construction timelines vary based on project complexity, permitting, and unforeseen delays. Plan for flexibility while setting clear expectations.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Permitting Delays:** Approval processes can take weeks or months. Start early.
- b. **Material Lead Times:** Order critical materials in advance to prevent supply chain delays.
- c. **Weather & Site Conditions:** Factor in seasonal changes that could impact progress.

3. Evaluate Internal Team


A strong team ensures seamless project execution. Determine which roles you need in-house and where external expertise is required.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Project Manager:** Responsible for overseeing budgets, schedules, and coordination.
- b. **Architect & Engineers:** Essential for designing and ensuring structural integrity.
- c. **Contractors & Subcontractors:** Choose reputable professionals with relevant experience.

4. Regular Communication is Key

Consistent updates prevent misunderstandings and keep all stakeholders aligned. Schedule regular check-ins.



Key Considerations:

- a. **Weekly Progress Meetings:** Review milestones, changes, and upcoming tasks.
- b. **Use Project Management Software:** Tools like Procore or Autodesk help track progress.
- c. **Clear Documentation:** Maintain records of decisions, approvals, and revisions.

5. Choose the Right Architect

An architect shapes your project from concept to completion. Select one who aligns with your vision and communicates effectively.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Experience with Similar Projects:** Ensure they have completed comparable residential or commercial buildings. Request and verify References.
- b. **Design Compatibility:** Review their portfolio to ensure their style aligns with your goals.
- c. **Understanding of Local Codes:** A knowledgeable architect helps navigate zoning and permitting requirements.

6. Choose the Right Contractor

The right contractor is crucial to a successful project. Look for experience, strong references, and a proven track record.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Licensed & Insured:** Verify credentials to protect your investment. Request and verify References.
- b. **Transparent Bidding Process:** Obtain multiple bids and review cost breakdowns.
- c. **On-Site Management:** Ensure the contractor has dedicated supervision for quality control.

7. Plan for Quality Control

Regular quality checks help maintain high construction standards and prevent costly rework.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Hire a Third-Party Inspector:** Independent inspections provide unbiased assessments.
- b. **Set Quality Benchmarks:** Define acceptable tolerances and material specifications.
- c. **Monitor Workmanship:** Address issues promptly before they escalate.

8. Prioritize Safety

A safe construction site protects workers and minimizes delays. Ensure all safety protocols are followed.

Key Considerations:

- a. **PPE Requirements:** Ensure workers wear appropriate safety gear.
- b. **OSHA Compliance:** Adhere to local and national safety regulations.
- c. **Emergency Plans:** Have protocols in place for accidents and site hazards.



9. Keep the Vision in Focus

Your project's success depends on decisions that align with your end goals. Every choice should support your vision.

Key Considerations:

- a. **Avoid Over-Customization:** While unique features add character, excessive customization can impact resale value.
- b. **Stick to Core Objectives:** Avoid scope creep by staying true to your original goals.
- c. **Think Long-Term:** Design with future needs and expansion possibilities in mind.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

First-time project owners often make avoidable mistakes. Learning from others' experiences can save time, money, and frustration.

- a. **Underestimating Costs:** Not allocating enough contingency funds can lead to financial strain.
- b. **Skipping the Due Diligence Process:** Hiring an unqualified contractor can result in project delays and poor workmanship.
- c. **Neglecting Permitting Requirements:** Failing to secure proper permits can lead to stop-work orders and legal issues.
- d. **Making Last-Minute Design Changes:** Late-stage alterations can cause delays and increase costs.
- e. **Ignoring Quality Control:** Overlooking inspections can lead to costly rework and compliance issues.
- f. **Poor Communication:** Lack of regular updates can result in misunderstandings and project misalignment.

How to Apply This Knowledge on the Job

Applying these principles to your construction project will help ensure a smooth and successful process. Here's how you can integrate these tips into your approach:

1. **Create a Project Checklist:** Track key milestones, budget allocations, and deadlines.
2. **Hold Regular Meetings:** Keep all team members informed and aligned.
3. **Hire Trusted Professionals:** Work with experienced architects, contractors, and project managers.
4. **Monitor Work Progress:** Conduct periodic site visits to ensure quality and adherence to the plan.
5. **Seek Expert Guidance:** For further support, contact Brewington Management Company.

Conclusion

Being well-prepared as a first-time project owner will help you navigate the construction process with confidence. By setting realistic expectations, hiring the right professionals, and staying engaged throughout the project, you can ensure a successful outcome.

For further clarification, contact Brewington Management Company, (240) 392-2748.