

## Lessons Learned: Part I

### *Insight from Project Managers who have seen it all!*

With over 130 years' combined experience, our Project Management team has been around the block. We polled them to get the details about their top lessons learned and got so many great pearls of wisdom, we decided to spread it out over a series. Here is Part I.

**It may be a cliché, but don't underestimate the power of doing the "Three C's" well.**

The resounding agreement among our seasoned Project Management team was that **Communication**, **Collaboration**, and **Coordination** are the biggest keys to a successful construction project.

**COMMUNICATION** is the immediate response we got when asking our Project Managers about the biggest lesson they have learned over time. Says Senior Project Manager Ted Miller, "Communication is key at every level of the project team. An Owner can guide success by clarifying needs and priorities, while a Superintendent can contribute by facilitating communication and bridging gaps between the field, office, owner, and subcontractors. Maintaining open lines of communication at every level of the team is critical to ensure understanding of design intent, owner goals, and expectations."



"Supplying information and contact details to the neighboring community - both individuals and local businesses or organizations - can make all the difference in an overall impression of a project. Simply giving neighbors a head's up about what to expect, how it might impact them, and an overview schedule can make neighbors feel at ease and eliminate many frustrations."

*- Jake Moyer, Senior Project Manager*

One often overlooked value found in solid communication is in the development of strong relationships with neighboring community members and residents. This outside-the-box thinking can help guide more successful outcomes and a smoother process for everyone.

**COLLABORATION** was another common answer among our Project Managers. A collaborative focus naturally leads to a more efficient and positive experience for the entire project team. One of the tools we utilize here at Horst is the Team dashboard

and portal through our Viewpoint technology system. It is a great tie-in for all participants to stay on the same page and share information. "On my most successful projects, I have maximized collaborative thinking by using lean construction techniques. It is a way to ensure different perspectives are considered and all project team members are heard,"

says Ted. It is also a way to specifically send a clear message that we respect and appreciate the expertise each member of the project team brings to the table.

That collaboration can also play a huge role when it comes to problem solving. Pulling everyone - the design team, owner, contractor, and subcontractors - into a room together can eliminate compounding issues and allows the team to steer together toward a resolution.

Rounding out the final C is **COORDINATION**. This lesson has certainly been one our Project Managers have learned in their roles, but it is also a lesson that many project Owners learn the hard way. The impact coordination has on the success of a project cannot be overstated - and ignoring its importance can have devastating results.

One of the reasons we are such proponents of the Design-Build method here at Horst is because of the immense challenge Owners face in coordinating efforts with some other project delivery methods. When project documents have been created in “silos” by the individual project players such as civil, architectural, mechanicals, etc., there is a great potential for running into issues. This makes it critical to bring the entire team together throughout the design process to ensure project documents align properly. While your design partners certainly would not intentionally exclude something, it is common for very capable professionals to have a focused mindset that does not account for the other disciplines. This often leads to change orders, delays, and price increases for the Owner.

The good news is, this can be largely avoided by implementing proper planning, coordination, and intentional communication between the team. It requires being very attentive to the process and an understanding of the potential pitfalls. It is a large burden for an Owner to take on, especially because they have their own businesses or organizations to run. The Design-Build method is a great solution to this particular problem because the selected Design-Builder will take over as advocate for the Owner and act as the point person for these critical coordination matters. It becomes the Design-Builder’s responsibility to gather the team and ensure appropriate coordination of drawings and specifications.

Another valuable tool for coordination of documents is utilization of an overlay methodology. This essentially means the drawings from various disciplines are layered over one another to ensure important aspects of the project such as mechanical and electrical details line up with the structural and architectural designs. According to Special Services Project Manager Josh Kaska, “Overlays are a great way to ensure everything is coming together the way it should. Taking the time to do this step can save tons of headaches down the road, when it will be much more costly and difficult to correct any discrepancies.”

**We hope you have enjoyed Part I of our Lessons Learned Series. Stay tuned for Part II next month!**

*Horst Construction is proud to provide our Clients with comprehensive, honest, and straight-forward information and deliver a “no surprises” construction experience. We would love the opportunity to discuss your project goals and how to best match your vision with your resources.*

*Please feel free to contact us to schedule a phone call or consultation.*

**“Problems often compound. If you fix one issue using a narrowly focused mindset, you are not considering the long-term impact on other disciplines. It’s easy to snowball. In my experience, it is much easier to take the time and effort to get everyone together and minimize a problem’s impact on the big picture.”**

**- Ted Miller, Senior Project Manager**