
METHODOLOGY—BUILDING A DESIGN CONCEPT

Our design firm's key mission

Our design firm's key mission is to create innovative spaces. Successful spaces depend on the delicate interplay between several factors: function, aesthetic, and the client's goals. Yet, the critical element is assembling a team of individuals who will listen to the client, analyze the structural and spatial needs, and translate the values into visuals. This is the design team.

THE DESIGN TEAM

From the inception

From the inception of the project, the principals select the team members whose talents and expertise best fit the project needs. Each project is assigned a project principal, a project manager, technical support, and one or two other team members; these constitute the core design team. This team participates in the design effort through all phases of the project. The additional team members may be needed based on the scope of work, size of the project, and possible schedule requirements.

The project principal is responsible for the overall success of the project from the perspectives of both the client and the firm. The project manager acts as the design lead for the project. This aspect of the project manager's role is unique to our firm. The project manager is also the day-to-day contact for the client and internally manages the project team. A technical support individual is an integral part of the team, providing a code, detail development, engineering coordination, and budget perspective.

These specified roles clarify responsibilities and lines of communication and accountability for the client. Yet, good design comes from strong, well-rounded individuals who understand all aspects of the design process. Thus, our firm's strength comes from the depth of experience and knowledge that renaissance design professionals bring to a team.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES—ESTABLISHING A SET OF CLIENT GOALS

From our first discussions

From our first discussions with the client, the design team begins assessing the client's goals for the project. In the programming phase, the design team gathers and documents quantitative or measurable information and qualitative or intangible issues. Personnel quantities, projected growth, departmental or room adjacencies, support functions, furniture requirements, and equipment requirements and storage needs comprise the bulk of the qualitative information. The client's image/brand, culture/personality, and the desired mood and perception of the client by its peers, respective industries, or communities represent the major qualitative issues.

Often the quantitative information is more easily accessible than the qualitative. Many discussions will be needed to draw out the intangible goals of the client. A space that "creates energy," "encourages interaction," or "establishes an egalitarian environment" may be initially unknown to the client, yet exactly what is wanted for the space. Not only is it critical to identify these qualitative issues, the team must also encourage the client to imagine the possibilities that change can effect in their culture. Thus, some goals open more possibilities than others might.

Once these client goals are firmly established, they become guiding principles for both the organizational and visual aspects of the project.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT

After the team

After the team has established the client's goals, the next step is to fully analyze the fixed elements unique to that building that affect the space organization within. Development of an organizational concept is critical to the design process as it lays the foundation for on-going decision making. Building orientation, the location of relative building core functions, ceiling height availabilities, and window placement and sill conditions will all determine