

Milestones are important, and increasingly more so, because they are often attached to payments that are attached to schedules that are attached, in turn, to agreements with authorities. Milestones can either be “percent of completion,” requiring the design firm to issue drawings to the client and program manager when design development documents are 40 and 80 percent complete, or benchmark presentations. Design development is the phase of the project that is characterized by progress—moving the project to completion. Therefore, the design development phase has an important list of deliverables attached to it:

- *Floor plans annotated with general partition types and extent of finishes*
- *Visual representation of the spaces through models or perspectives*
- *Details reflective of general design/construction intent*
- *Telephone and electric layouts*
- *Reflected ceiling plans annotated with quantities and fixture types*
- *Design detail hierarchy clearly delineated*

THE REALITY OF DESIGN DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES SPECIAL PEOPLE

At Skidmore Owings & Merrill, during the design development phase the team that was originally assembled for the schematic design phase is supplemented with additional team members who have specific technical, financial, detailing, research, and coordination expertise. Through the integration of these people with specialties, the design team is enriched and design decision making is facilitated.

Because design development is the phase that articulates the design direction, the progress made in this phase becomes the foundation for the next phase, construction documentation. The proximity of design development to the construction document phase places immense pressure on the team,

to continue to focus on solutions that meet the pre-established budgets and project schedule. However, the project team does need to remain flexible during this phase. Sometimes a client will have a new requirement that will necessitate having the team study a particular area “off line,” or perhaps new information is discovered that affects previous decisions. When this occurs, the team may find itself investing additional time and resources not originally anticipated or budgeted. This investment can adversely affect the schedule and fee.

When new or unexpected items find their way into the project, such as adding an additional department on a floor that has already been designed and approved, it is all too easy to start redesigning. Proper management techniques help avoid this. These techniques include keeping all team members informed about the project’s exact scope of services. It is also important to advise the client of any requests that are beyond the original project’s scope so that an adjustment to the fee can be agreed on prior to moving forward on the changes.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION

Both designers and clients

Both designers and clients consider the completion of the design development phase to be a project milestone. The amount of progress that occurs during this phase is immense and the best way for the design team to communicate the progress to the client (and to get the client’s approval to continue to move forward) is through a design development presentation. Comprehensive design development presentations are critical to the success of the project, are incredibly involved, and can take weeks to accomplish. It is very important to make the most of this opportunity. Presentations are beneficial not only for informing the client about the progress of the project but also for the project team, who work closely together and share ideas.

At SOM, a typical design development presentation will usually include:

- *Theme boards*
- *Related market analysis*