

manage the design team to deliver the work for those hours. Change, whether due to scope or schedule change or any number of other variables, must be monitored because it impacts the financial success of the project for both the client and the design firm. Good planning, communications skills, an in-depth understanding of the total design process, and proactive management skills are the keys to financial success.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROJECT MANAGER

The project manager touches every aspect of the project, from marketing the project to closing out the last details of the project. Project managers are typically identified during the marketing of the project, when the design firm makes initial contact with the client, by responding to a Request for Proposal and/or presenting qualifications and a project approach to the client. The project manager is almost always a significant player in these preproject efforts. The project manager is also typically the last person from the design firm to have contact with the client. After the project is complete, the client has occupied its new facility, and the rest of the design team has moved on to other projects, the project manager will still represent the design firm to close out remaining contractual, financial, and administrative issues.

Project management responsibilities fall into eight broad categories:

1. *Understand the client*
2. *Document project goals*
3. *Develop a project work plan*
4. *Establish communication and documentation protocols*
5. *Establish project budgets*
6. *Maintain client relations*
7. *Lead the project*
8. *Manage change*

Understand the Client

In order to complete a successful project the design team must first understand their clients. They must understand their clients' objectives—as an organization and as the individuals they will work with daily on the project. The design team needs to understand their clients' expectations, perceptions, and biases about the project; how they make decisions; their organizational and individual values; and what will make the organization and individual successful. Projects are increasingly complex, and frequently involve multiple client groups. The project manager must implement procedures that enhance the team's capacity to understand fully the clients' and the firm's conflicting objectives, requirements, expectations, and values. These procedures must encourage listening, the exchange of information, and self-knowledge.

The project manager must lead the design team to recognize that they bring their own expectations, perceptions, biases, and individual and firm values to the project. It is important to sort through the differences and similarities between the client's values and the firm's and team members' values. Frequently this sorting happens during the process of selecting the design firm. It is very common for clients to select a design firm they perceive to share values and expectations about the project at hand. When this occurs it can create a very positive and comfortable working relationship from the start of the project, a natural "fit."

Whether this sort of "fit" occurs during the selection process or not, it is critical for the project manager, as the leader and integrator of the effort, to create the conditions of listening and responding in which the sense of "fit" can develop. The project manager must listen carefully to the client and help the design team understand their client. It is incumbent on the project manager to help the design team find ways to tailor their approach to the project to best serve their client. The success of the project depends on the ability of the client and design firm to work together.

Once a design firm has been selected, the best opportunity to begin to understand the client occurs during the dialogue associated with documenting project goals and developing or refining the scope of services and schedule for the project. At this stage, the design firm and the client must address many issues if they are to develop a clear scope of services and project schedule. This conversation offers a wonderful opportunity for the project man-