

# Building BLOCKS

## How Three Little Letters Can Make a Big Difference to Your Next Restaurant Project



John Klakamp

*This column is part of a continuing series designed to help you avoid common pitfalls in planning and building your new restaurant.*

by **John Klakamp**

**T**oday I had the opportunity to meet with a group that operates a number of very successful fine dining establishments throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. I've patronized their restaurants on occasion and had even spoken to members of their team, but had not previously worked with them.

It didn't take me long to understand how they earned their reputation for success. Within the first five minutes of the meeting they informed me that they had "checked [Encore] out" prior to meeting with me by speaking with contacts in the industry. Next we reviewed their plans for a new restaurant, including their basic concept and vision. They went on to say they wanted to work with us and wanted the owner, architect (who was also present at the meeting) and contractor to function as a team in order to bring the most value to the project to meet their budget goals for both projects.

As they went on to explain this process in great detail, I must have telegraphed a bit of confusion, and was prompted by the restaurant owners to share my thoughts. I explained that this is how Encore builds projects all the time. What was unusual was having a client approach us and want to use this method; usually, we are the ones telling the client about it!

### The ABC's of IDP

Every once and a while a new product or method comes to market that is truly superior to what has been established tradition for years. Integrated Project Delivery (IDP), the industry term for this type of collaborative and team-based approach, appears to be just such a product and is predicted by many to become the industry standard.

The fact that a client requested to use this process just goes to show that it is quickly becoming more mainstream. In

fact, the American Institute of Architects recently recognized IDP and has developed contracts to specifically facilitate this process.

### That Was Then...

Prior to the advent of IDP, a project owner and architect would collaborate and finalize the design, and then a contractor was brought in to price the project. With this late start, it wasn't unusual to present pricing to the owner just hours before the project was planned to start. This left very little time to react to any problems identified by the contractor. It also led to a number of other issues, including:

- Discrepancies between the design and budget that could lead to additional cost and lost time to redesign
- Unforeseen problems that weren't identified until late in the process
- Devalued design intent due to well-intentioned value engineering
- Inevitable delays as a result of the time needed to resolve problems identified during construction

### This is Now

IDP, on the other hand, brings the owner, architect and contractor together as a team from the project's inception to bring the greatest possible value to the project.

The owner, architect and contractor function as a team from the very beginning. Designing the project to meet the budgetary goal is an absolute objective. The contractor is part of the due diligence process, performing site surveys and developing control budgets so problems are solved when they are small and when there is time, reducing stress and anxiety. Additional benefits of IDP include:

- The contractor provides segmented pricing and checks it against the budget as the design is developed.

- The process is completely transparent.
- The contractor provides input to improve and bring value to every step the design.
- "Typical" construction problems are eliminated or greatly reduced thanks to a highly organized process.

### A Better Mousetrap

IDP is truly a great process, especially for independent owners and companies that do not have an in-house construction department. Considering that cost is of paramount concern for virtually all owners, it's always troubled me to see

contractors left out of the process, since the contractor is responsible for pricing and building the project. In our industry, IDP is the better mouse trap that maximizes efficiency and productivity.



*John Klakamp has more than 30 years experience in restaurant construction and is owner of Annapolis, Md.-based Encore Construction ([www.encoreconstruction.net](http://www.encoreconstruction.net)), a firm that specializes in providing pre-construction, construction and project management services to the restaurant industry.*

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