

Managing Your Project – First Steps

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Designing and building your new office is a major undertaking. Become educated in the design and construction process before getting started.

Important First Steps

- Pick people who are easy to work with and are experienced with your project type.
- Get a review of any site you are considering buying **before** you do so. Go to the county or the city zoning department or permit center and ask for a pre-construction conference before closing on any property deal.
- Start planning early! The design can take up to three months, and construction can take between six and nine months. Start at least a year ahead of your desired move-in date. Do not force the architect and contractor to accelerate their schedules if at all possible. This can lead to added costs.
- Gather information. Talk to others that have been through the process. Contact architects and contractors to get their ideas.

Project Mistakes to Avoid

- Buying a piece of land without certainty of whether it will meet your needs.
- Purchasing too small of a site with inadequate space for parking.
- Underestimating the time for design and construction.
- Building the office space too small.
- Choosing an architect with little or no experience.

Don't Get Taken Advantage of

- Check with past customers and your banker regarding the contractor's cost and performance record.
- Check the architect's references.
- You can require a performance and payment bond from the builder (add approximately 1.5% to 2% to the cost of the building).
- You can require lien releases from the builder.
- Pick the contractor and the architect with whom you have confidence and work best.
- Consult with your attorney.
- Request copies of invoices if you are using a cost-plus contract.
- Talk to your friends and associates that have previous experience.

The best protection is to deal with reputable companies with a history of satisfied customers.