Bayland Buildings, Inc.

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HOW TO:

CONSTRUCT A BUILDING USING A COMPLETE DESIGN–BUILD APPROACH

You've decided to construct a new building for your business; now what do you do?

There are several ways you can accomplish constructing your building. As a business owner you can elect to hire an architectural firm to design the structure. An architectural firm can also be contracted as the project manager.

Another option you have is to contact a design–build general contractor to help you with your project from start to finish. There are numerous advantages to choosing to construct with a design–build firm. First, the company that designs the project will also be constructing it. They will know the most efficient way to design and construct your project.

Second, design–build companies generally work with a core of subcontractors that they work well with, not just the cheapest subcontractor that may just need the work. The fact that the design–build company consistently works with this core of subcontractors creates a team effect. They will traditionally work from one project into the next, understanding each other's needs along with the customers' needs. Your project will go smoothly, without delays, and be completed on time.

Working with subcontractors that have not worked together in the past could lead to chaos in your project resulting in overruns and time delays.

Your company should also be very careful in selecting a design–build contractor. This choice should depend on the size of your project. You will want to make sure the design–build contractor has an in-house design–build team led by a registered architect/engineer on staff. Things will go much smoother than if they subcontract these services out.

You will also want to visit their headquarters to see how they operate. Ask about the system they have in place to make sure your project runs smoothly. You'll want to meet the in-house architect/engineer along with the rest of the design department. Once you elect to build with them, a project manager should be assigned to you and your project. The project manager will also work with an in-house expediter to make sure products for your project are ordered correctly and on time remembering, most items have long lead times. The project managing team needs to hold weekly job site meetings with all subcontractors involved, and you; the customer should be invited to attend these as well.

Ask to see the scheduling rooms to see how this design builder will keep your project on schedule. Chances are they will have several projects going at the same time. To be organized, their project managers and sales reps should be meeting on a weekly basis, making sure all projects are staying on schedule. This is very important to you, the customer. It gives the design–build team members time to discuss any problem that could arise on your project before it actually happens.

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Lastly, depending on the size of your project, make sure the design builder is capable of handling your project. A good rule of thumb: the cost of your project should not surpass more than 25 percent of the total sales volume of the design–build company you have chosen. For example, if your project cost is approximately $6 million, the design builder should have a total annual sales volume of at least $24 million.

It can be a little work choosing the correct design–build contractor but it's definitely worth the effort. You will get the best layout for your project, you'll get the most efficient price for what you are buying, and you will get the project built on the best time schedule. All of this will happen if you work with a good reputable design–build contracting team. Think smart, build smart! ■