

# The Critical Link Between *Design* & Construction

The bond of any successful endeavor or relationship is clear communication. The critical link between Architectural Design and Construction is the "Communication Bridge." This bridge unites form and function, designer and contractor, concept with reality. If there are barricades on this bridge, if communication on either side is nebulous or faulty, the project is at risk, quality is in jeopardy, and ultimately, reputations are at stake.

The success of each individual project is determined by the effectiveness and clarity of communication. To this end, the design professional must create plans that are so well-defined that the construction professional can easily translate the concept into a tangible reality. The construction professional must accurately interpret and communicate while implementing the plan.

Barricades, however, often block our way and impede progress. Both design and construction must be ever diligent in recognizing and removing these communication barriers because they undermine the mutual goals of the common project. These barricades are:

The third barricade we encounter is **Redundancy**, our tendency to be unnecessarily repetitive. We stumble over redundancy when we are too intent on capturing a collective understanding on the project. In order to ensure that everyone involved understands the drawings and specifications, we repeat the same information in several places and often in several ways. The result is confusing and ambivalent interpretations of the same drawings or specifications. Document changes are at risk when we become redundant because when one document is changed, others may often be overlooked. The solution is a singular document, one that encompasses both the drawings and the specifications in a complementary document. With this solution, copying costs may be significantly reduced.

The last barricade we encounter that blocks the communication bridge between design and construction is **Brevity**. Within every culture or profession, insiders have a tendency to use

abbreviations, acronyms, and specialized jargon for brevity in their speech writing. Ours is no exception. How easily we fall into the trap of insider lingo, where not everyone on the project will understand us. The solution is to be specific and to the point. We must use appropriate, sensible language in all of our communications, both verbal and written.

If we can remove these barricades, communication between design and construction will be clearer, and disputes will be fewer. Deadlines will be easier to meet, working relationships will prosper and confusion will be eliminated. We will all benefit from singular documents that are specific, consistent, carefully edited, and well-defined. The structural integrity of the communication bridge will be strengthened by our efforts. Both designer and contractor will benefit and it will be reflected in the superior quality of the finished product. Just remember V-I-R-B and you can't go wrong.

- **Verbosity**
- **Inconsistency**
- **Redundancy**
- **Brevity**

The first barricade we encounter is **Verbosity**, our tendency to use more words to explain something than is absolutely necessary. We must learn to cut out irrelevant information. Instead of explaining what we don't want, we must remember to simply explain what it is we *do* want and leave it at that. Lengthy, repetitious documents cost extra time and money to write, as well as to read and interpret. Instructions should be brief, clear and to the point.

The second barricade we encounter is **Inconsistency**, our tendency toward contradiction, disparity in terminology or language. When we use trade names and generic names interchangeably for product descriptions, we stumble over inconsistency. It is an easy habit to fall into, but again, we put clarity at stake. The solution is a single document, that uses the same terms consistently throughout.