

Construction and Marriage

By

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How naive is it to think that a good marriage will never encounter problems? Those that believe this are blinded by love. Lasting marriages are not those that went through fewer problems. On the contrary, they probably experienced more. So what is the difference between a relationship that lasts through the storms and those that become ship wrecked on the rocks?

Having a realistic understanding of what is ahead will be important to minimize the expectation gap that many newlyweds have. If a married couple understands that problems are inevitable, as well as needed to strengthen the relationship, the problems are seen in a different light.

Your relationship with your Design/Build firm will replicate a marriage in many ways. There will be problems, misunderstandings, anger, laughter, crying, hurt feelings, forgiveness, victories, and this is when the construction project is running smoothly. A lot of time is spent working through the design, bidding, and build stages, but no time is ever spent in preparing the Owner and Design/Build team (newly married couple) for what to expect in the very near future. Design/Build firms assume that the owner already knows about the challenges ahead, however, the owner is so excited about their new building that love has blinded them. Most owners are new to a building project and so counsel is needed to prepare the ship for the storms ahead.

As an owner, do yourself a favor and sit down with the company you have hired and engage in a relationship counseling session. This will prepare everyone, especially you, for the marriage by establishing realistic expectations about the challenges ahead. During the courtship and honeymoon period in any relationship, nobody wants to talk about the ugly realities of what can lie ahead. However, if these issues are not addressed early in the relationship, serious consequences can occur. Here is the consequence of what happens when the owners don't understand the challenges during the design/bid/build stages. The owner can love the new facility, but will despise the company they fell in love with in the beginning. This breakdown in the relationship is caused by unrealistic expectations by the owner and the failure of the experienced firm to educate and counsel their new partner.