



Ωmega Church Consultants, Inc.

architectural • financial • consulting
construction management

Allowances

In last month's column we discussed architectural specifications, including "brand", for lack of a better term, and "performance" specifications. The third option available for the architect and owner is to specify an "allowance". Allowances are included in the project manual or on the plans along with other specifications. Allowances are utilized when the scope of the work is not known at the outset. For instance, the owners may not know what light fixtures, sound system, flooring, or pews they want to utilize on the church project. In this case, it is best to establish a dollar value to allow for this work.

All bidders on the project would include the allowance in their proposals. The church benefits by knowing that money is included in the project to cover the anticipated cost of the work. The church also gains time to "shop around" before deciding which products to use.

However, there are some potential pitfalls to allowances. Allowances inject some uncertainty into the project, which translates into risk. If the kitchen oven is not yet determined, it is difficult for the cabinetry, electrical, ventilation, etc. to be determined. More coordination and communication is required of all parties on the project. Inadequate allowances can result in a shortfall in funds at the end of the project. In the end, the use of allowances is often necessary, and does allow the church to take advantage of the best deals on products even after getting the project underway.

Jeff Thomas is Vice President of Omega Church Consultants, Inc., Church Designers and Builders, located in Indianapolis. You may contact him at info@omegachurchdesign.com or (317) 359-6248 or visit the Omega website at <http://www.omegachurchdesign.com>.
Copyright 2001 All Rights Reserved.