

## **WHO ARE THE SPECIFICATIONS FOR?**

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Who do we write the specifications for—really?

The Owner? The Contractor? The Subcontractors? The Superintendent? The Project Manager/Estimator/Expeditor? The Trade workers on-site? Ourselves? Our attorneys?

The Lenders? The Bonding companies? The investigative news paper reporter? The bird in the cage? The “end-users” whoever they might be?

It seems reasonable that the specifications should be written to facilitate the work of the reader(s) and those end-users—those folks who really “use” them to understand what to use, how to install, and what is expected of what they do. Agreed?

Now for those many years CSI has directly contributed to the scenario of making information more easily available, locating in predictable places within the Project Manuals, and in language, while foreign to many, is still straight forward, directive and informational. Those are the drivers behind “clear, concise, and complete. MasterFormat, while a diversion and distraction in a way (we all love status quo) it does open new avenues to clarity, and an even better arrangement for information; truly a betterment of the entire process.

But still in the tiny arena of those who openly and often express themselves and their views on various forums and venues, we have discussions that appear to be so utterly confounding where words, phrases, and their combination are bandied around, in an intellectual guise, obviously exposing a tremendous level of insight and expertise.

BUT, again, where is this leading us? Do we still not understand that perfection is a quest and not a destination? Do we not understand that while we don’t try to be sloppy, improper or perhaps inadequate, we also are not squeaky clean, absolute, and infallible? Do we not understand that it is ill-advised to completely change a program, in such dramatic fashion as to require a virtual stop in work and re-tooling, to accommodate the new approach?

Certainly we all recognize that people of good will can discuss a topic and use different words for the very same item or work. We seek to move to a commonly acceptable nomenclature whereby we all can at least talk to each other on the same terms. It is when we try to create our own singular approach that we come a cropper of others. Each of us, within our purview, do things, and write things in a particular fashion, that we feel is correct and proper. Fine! But that does not mean that every one else is going to accept or use the very same approach.

We are a stubborn lot, we are. We walk that thinnest of line between expertise/professional, and arrogant/obsessive. It may that what we do makes us what we are. “Fighting” continually on many fronts to achieve minimal acceptance and creditability, we hold tight to what we do that succeeds. We have a wealth of information, knowledge, learning, brutal results, misgivings, war stories, valid experience, and a penchant toward good advise. So strive to avoid the bad, facilitate the current, support the good, and protect the unwitting.

All valid pursuits, but one question lingers--well, may be two.

Bottom line, for whom do we write the specifications? (This may have several valid and interconnected answers). End-user/clients are our commonality, even though they are quite different in type, size, intent, direction, status, and requirements. Smart we are if we work to both serve them well, and please them

So, why do we dabble, quibble, wordsmith, lexiconize, and logomachize so damn much, for what appears to be no real productive end?