

## **EXACTLY/SPECIFICALLY.....**

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This is a "heady" task, but let's see if we're up to it.

In your best professional, and knowledgeable demeanor, describe (even if you have to use specifications language and terms) what exactly and specifically you want those around you to be;; to know; to interface with you with; and to provide for you, in regard to specifications?

Certainly we all grouse from time to time (often daily!) about this situation, person, approach, or bit of information. We, of course, have settled into our "specifying stance" and choose really to do our thing, unfettered, unencumbered, and for Pete's sake, without irrelevant, superfluous and "ridiculous" changes--Right????

Well, that may be a tad strong, but we do or would like others to have a little more moxie with regard to specs, specifying, product selection and how we can do things—together—and better. The problem, dear friends, may lie in ourselves!

Don't know how many of you are officers or movers and shakers in your firm, but to effect change we do need support from high. If those in "power" are unaware or reluctant to understand and make appropriate changes, our task is even more demanding.

The fundamental issue is the lack of understanding and embracing the whole of the concept of CONTRACT DOCUMENTS. Relatively few of our colleagues truly understanding the interface of these instruments, and how they simply MUST "play" together to produce a satisfactory project.

Rarely do staffers see or work with the construction contract. But more often than not this is an AIA form document, and rather set "in stone" except for the fill-in items to be entered as the project requires. Of course, the basic effort by the AIA has been to provide such documents to ease the "pain" of the professional in any contract writing they are forced into doing. So we set aside the contract/agreement ("by others" so to speak).

Comes the drawings which from middle school on have been a function most all of us embraced, in one format or another. Drawings were done, and were basically self-contained for the most part, in the academic training we all endured and conquered. CAD, of course, has eased the production but has really not contributed to enhancement of our technical construction knowledge--i.e., how do you put the building together. Many of us have precipitated to those efforts both in the office and in field operations (we were not overly talented or immersed in design, and found ancillary work both necessary and more to our liking).

We all know drawings, to whatever level, and like most layperson, we are much adapt at reading the pictures than the text.

But the SPECS! Those highly veiled, mysterious, suddenly-appearing, gremlin-produced volumes that for some odd reason are part of our projects. All but totally lacking any instruction about them in any academic effort, and with about the same level of exposure in the office, all too many staffers wallow in the unknown, not really understanding the need for, the content of, nor the function involved with the specifications.

Oh, somebody has said they're important, but they're not part of my job description so...

Whether the office likes it or not, any training or education regarding specifications is an OJT venture. Even the orientation and fundamentals in general principles lies with the office. This is no universal use of Specs 101 in the colleges and schools (simply because the drawings are more fascinating, require less detail and knowledge, and there is no practical practice instruction any way) Seems student architects

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and engineers become graduates ad staffers in a vast professional environment that has no definitive dimensions--they just seem to exist (?????) and produce projects.

So back to our charge-- describe (even if you have to use specifications language and terms) what exactly and specifically you want those around you to be;; to know; to interface with you with; and to provide for you, in regard to specifications?

And once you've decided on all that, what do you propose doing to make changes in your office to remedy the shortcomings you find between your staffer colleagues and your EXACTLY/SPEFIFICALLY list?

Then best we go tell them and educate them!