

WHY ARE THE SPECS NEVER FINISHED ON TIME?

by Ralph Liebing, RA, CSI
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Well, maybe not "never", but all too frequently for some Project Managers. We start work early, and work late, but...

Yeah, BUT, let's consider the *true* reality:

- Information from our colleagues is often late:
- Repeated requests for information and clarification go unanswered, information provided is incomplete, irrelevant, questionable, fluid, contradictory or unrealistic.
- Standard details suddenly become new and parochial.
- Project suddenly revived but no notice to specifications writer.
- Deadlines are fore-shortened (then specs lay around for several days).
- At five minutes 'til the deadline the header date has to be changed.
- The project name is revised to conceal its true nature.
- Increased or revised scope of work requires changes in specs.
- 28 alternates "suddenly" appear as the client wants to check pricing on all sorts of strange things (???)
- Client review is both tardy and massively "redlined" (what happened to the program?).
- Specifications on "hold" as client decides if it wants them or their own "engineering standards" (out of date. replete with discontinued products. unenforceable).
- The Project Architect's new baby arrives, prematurely (flow of information on hold).
- PA drags in series of Sections from old project (at client's request) that must be re-formatted and re-numbered, along with all references.
- The Project Manager is out of town and hasn't gotten the front-end revisions back.
- The client wants to use their documents for Terms and Conditions in lieu of the AIA's'.
- There is an power outage (storm or accident takes out transformer) and hand-written specs won't do.
- An expensive seminar you were urged (like directed!) to attend comes up.
- The cleaning crew (???) spilled your coffee mug (luckily only 1/3 full) on the mark-ups.
- Your street/town is "iced" in by a small, unpredicted storm (yea, small but nasty).
- New product included requires a new-from-scratch Section, and sure enough, it evades MF04 numbering; same with manufacturer's 50-page "spec"--wholly "out of whack"!
- A one-hour meeting, becomes a three-hour endurance test.

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- RediCheck doesn't, and isn't.
- Copy machine is down and needs a part.
- Assistant comes down ill.
- Indecision and vacillation reign--final decisions delayed.
- Interiors and others want to put everything on the drawings, and then at the very end, request a bunch of last minute CYA stuff to cover their drawing notes (??).
- Other in-house disciplines and managers lag back in passing needed information and/or in coordinating until pushed to action in the end, or discovered to be remiss.
- Information from consultants is late, not easily forthcoming and wrongly formatted.

Why share all this? Gosh, can't we all be miserable together???