

THE ROUND TABLE OF CONSTRUCTION

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King Arthur, Lancelot, Guinevere and the lot have had their many days--from ancient time to the tuneful "Camelot" of late. All had a charm and a wonder about them, what they did and how they worked. Perhaps 'tis time to reflect and compare--as the "round table" remains!

In lieu of a single-wide trailer, our project meeting today is in a location complete with round table of such size as to seat ALL who should and need to be there. 'Tis a formidable lot, but in just naming them we see the breadth and depth of what a project attracts, and what, indeed, it requires. The list: Owner; design professional; specifications writer; discipline consultants; staff professionals; interns; contract administrator; contractor; all sub-contractors; superintendent; crew chiefs for each trade; trade workers; apprentices; suppliers; distributors, manufacturers (or representative); construction manager; LEED® consultant; the local authority with jurisdiction; at least one attorney (1 per participant?); ancillary parties in varying roles.

In the center of the table is not Excalibur, but rather the Contract Documents! If the legendary sword epitomized the Knights, then the Contract Documents do the same for our "Knights"--they are the fundamental clarion calling of the collective group--their claim to fame and glory, if only for a modest project in a remote location.

This is not all an "eat, drink and be merry" gathering (OK, coffee with donuts or bagels suffice; maybe lunch among some later) but one of serious consideration and common cause. The project shall be (note spec-like wording!) a coordinated and cooperative effort, directed toward a single goal--a successful and faithful construction of the design concept, a profit for all, and fully satisfied Owner! Here we begin to approach the "daunting quest", much as the Knights, in their camaraderie and resolution, and with singular purpose and goal, expressed their shared support and give-and-take common confidence.

But no! The collected expertise of the "Knights" brings to the fore and lays square out the necessary ingredients for full success. That is, to meet conditions as they arise, resolve them and never veer from the directed and dedicated path! As Knights swore allegiance to their mutual covenant, to be upstanding, courageous, and true, so our project team has a covenant to the project as expressed in the Contract Documents and all participants should be aware of the common goal - a great project. When the Knights had sworn to their covenant, it is written they "gave loud acclaim"; perhaps project teams can voice their intentions toward the Project, proclaiming to provide their best to the end; to come together and rely on each other to support, augment and communicate information and effort to the needs of the project. Much like a mythical dragon, this is quite flexible and unpredictable, but it can be slain with proper dedication, quality technique, and due care among the collected force.

We may choose to call it "team" today, but it is the remnant of Arthur, et al., emphasizing and supporting individual exploits. And yes, this is something that needs to engulf and pervade the whole of the group and the youngs soon-to-be, and their understanding and correct use of their weapons--the Contract Documents!

The battle is NOT among ourselves! It is to create a good and positive result from virtually nothing! That has been done before! With extreme effort and dedication to the end of "life". True, we need not give our lives (as did they), but merely our best efforts, in a most amiable style! Salute!