

*When should you select a Building Delivery System for your Church  
Building Project ?*



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When faced with the prospect of a building program of any kind, most church building committees assume that the first step is to hire an architect. It's pretty rare at this point in time for any of the committee members to think about the *building delivery system* they will use for their project. Yet this decision far surpasses even the importance of choosing an appropriate architectural firm. It is the one decision that has more influence and impact on the successful outcome of your project than any other!

Why is this decision so important to you and your congregation? It is because different building delivery systems carry different degrees of risk for your church. The higher the degree of risk for your church, the greater the opportunity you have for failure. The lesser the degree of risk, the more opportunity you have to succeed.

Amazingly, in a recent survey of churches that had already selected an architect, 93% of these churches had given no consideration at all as to the building delivery system they would use. The majority of the respondents did not even know this was something with which they had to be concerned. Perhaps this is the reason there are so many failed church building programs.

By definition, a *building delivery system* is the **method** by which all the principal players (owner, architect, engineer, builder, trade contractors) of the building project are contractually related to one another to deliver and complete the project successfully. It also takes into consideration the **responsibilities** of each principal player to one another, and the **sequence** in which these responsibilities are to be performed.

Perhaps the easiest way to relate the importance of this decision is to compare it to a sporting event. The first question to be answered is: *What game do we want to play?* Will it be football or basketball? You have to know what game you're going to play before you can make your player selections. And all of this must be decided before the game can begin! If you choose a player to be your quarterback, but that player is planning to play basketball...you'll have confusion, frustration, and conflict! Somebody is going to be penalized!

The same thing is true in the choice of a building delivery system. That decision is made at the very beginning of the project. You and all the other principal players have to be aware of what game you're playing in order to play by the rules of the system chosen. But unlike a football game, the penalty in this case affects both the success of your project and the ministries of your church!

And, the final important thing for you to do is not to file the contracts away and never review them again until problems pop up. Most church building programs stretch over several months. You are going to forget what the contracts say. Most contracts state what the obligations of each party are as you progress through the major stages of your building program. So, as you go from one major stage to another, review where you are and where you are going in the next phase. The more knowledge you have about any contracts you enter into, the less likely you are to have any legal problems. And, legal problems are to be avoided not only because of the great expense and frustrations that come about, but because it is the right thing to do when you are doing God's work. Refer to *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1-8*.

There is a guide published by Construction Publications, 4552 East Palomino Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85018, that is a great reference listing of all types of books and other publications regarding construction-related contracts. It is called "*Guide to Construction Contracting Legal Information Resources with Technical Construction References*" written by Jack W. Ward. It can lead you to a great deal of information.