

# The Recession: Turning Lemons into Lemonade

One of the biggest hurdles to performing comprehensive constructability reviews is finding the time for them. Though constructability reviews have proven invaluable even when performed late in a project, many project teams are hesitant to take this step after the bid documents have been issued. Traditionally, the design documents are rushed to completion and bidding periods are cut as short as possible. As a result, many project teams forego this important cost and quality control step because there never seems to be enough time during the design and bidding phases of a project. Utilizing this down time while our projects are on hold to complete comprehensive constructability reviews is an excellent, and inevitably profitable, way to take advantage of these disadvantaged times.

## THE TOP FIVE WAYS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE RECESSION

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- 1) **Design Document Quality Control.** Project schedules do not begin at the start of construction; they begin at the onset of the design phase. Because preparation of the bid documents has a day for day impact on the project schedule, design teams are consistently pressed to meet tight schedules. In the mad rush to design completion the critical step of performing a comprehensive quality control review prior to issuing the bid documents is routinely neglected. When a project is postponed we acquire the time to perform this critical review.
- 2) **Prepare Solid Bid Packages.** Once the design team has issued the bid documents, the general contractor is pressured to complete the bidding process as quickly as possible. Like the design process, the bidding process has a day for day impact to the project schedule and owners are not commonly willing to grant any extensions to this phase. However, when projects are postponed we are provided ample opportunity to complete a thorough review of the drawings, identify obscure subcontractor scope issues and prepare solid bid packages.
- 3) **Procure Long Lead Materials.** Procurement of shoring piles, structural steel, mechanical equipment, elevators and many other items plague construction schedules around the world. Though the bulk of the funding for a project may be unavailable during this recession, owners are often willing and able to provide partial funding to expedite critical long lead items.
- 4) **Value Engineering.** In addition to design document quality control and preparation of solid bid packages, a value engineering review will always generate methods of reducing the cost and increasing the quality of a project.
- 5) **Quality Control Program.** Due to the aforementioned time constraints, effective quality control programs have become a rarity in the industry. Effective quality control programs are comprised of a list of items that may easily be missed or constructed improperly. Placing these vast myriad of items in a matrix organized by trade and phase of construction is an invaluable project management tool. During the down time of a postponed project an effective quality control program can be prepared.

*Collectively, items 1, 2, 4 & 5 are defined as a “Constructability Review”*

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