

# Managing A New Construction Project

*Editors' Note:* The following column is intended to serve as a "primer" for channel partners when a client (or owner) is planning an expansion, new building or extension.

**R**egardless of whether clients self-operate or outsource foodservice operations (restaurant and catering), we recommend that they identify a project team to be involved in the process from start to finish. This project team should include: a project architect; a project manager (who usually acts as the owner's representative for the overall project); an owner representative (there should be one primary owner representative, but others who have a stake or interest in the foodservice operation might also be involved at various points during the planning process); a foodservice facility designer (one who has specific experience within the industry/market); an interior designer; the operator (the client's on-site foodservice general manager or, if foodservice is outsourced, a district or area representative from the foodservice contractor); and a management advisory services (MAS) consultant who has background and operational experience with the type of client involved (college/university, corporate dining, museum, zoo, arena and the like).

The first step is to have an initial project meeting at which the architect presents preliminary plans for the foodservice (restaurant and special events) operation including areas blocked out for the purpose, and the owner representatives set forth their objectives and needs for the restaurant(s) and special events. This meeting should provide the design team (foodservice facility and interior designer or restaurant designer, foodservice manager and MAS consultant) with the necessary input to begin development of the spaces required to support restaurant and special event needs.

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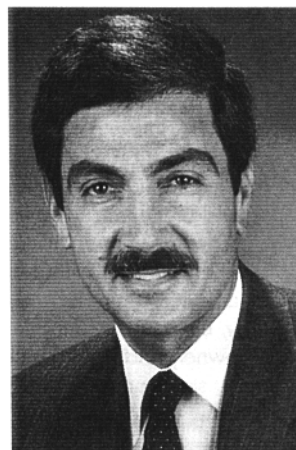
Experienced MAS consultants and foodservice facility or restaurant design consultants can take the lead by working with the owner and the on-site foodservice manager to determine potential daily customer counts at peak hours and related

historical or projected (in the case of a new facility) information to develop a "Programming Statement" for the architect.

After the initial project meeting and the finalization of space programming, the architect or project manager should develop a "Project Schedule" for all team members to review and approve. This schedule will set forth key activities and critical dates through the completion of the project. It is very important that all involved parties review and provide their input into this schedule.

As a design project moves forward, it is essential that the project manager maintains tight control over the schedule and the project team's activities and involvement. The most common problem we experience arises when the architect, foodservice facility and/or restaurant designer, for example, are not directed to be certain that the on-site foodservice manager and MAS consultant are copied on all drawings and communications. The result is that plans are drawn and specifications written that require last-minute changes, costing the client dollars and time, not to mention the unnecessary stress and strain.

As for catering and special events, it is important to determine whether catering services will be provided exclusively by the on-site restaurant or by members of an "approved caterer list." If provided exclusively by the on-site restaurant, it is likely that the kitchen, storage and support areas will have to be larger to provide for catering activities. If approved outside caterers are being employed, in most instances they should not share a restaurant's kitchen. In this circumstance, planning should include pantries and staging and/or prep areas for the caterers to use. Still more space will have to be allocated if several outside caterers are hired,



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to 28 ▶

## consultant's viewpoint

◆ from 27 rather than an exclusive on-site caterer.

### Selecting Project Team Members

**Architect & Project Manager:** These professionals are usually chosen by the client (or owner) long before the other team members are on board. Note that architects often have specific foodservice facility designers with whom they prefer to work. This is, of course, satisfactory, but we recommend that a client at least ask foodservice facility designers about their background and experience with similar projects before accepting an architect's recommendation.

**Foodservice Facility Design Consultant or Restaurant Designer** (if the interior and foodservice facility designs are to be combined and provided by one firm): It is not as important where this design firm is located in the United States as its experience with similar projects. The client should select a design firm that has extensive background and experience in his specific industry and contact at least several of the firm's clients for personal reference checks.

**Owner Representatives:** These are the parties within a client organization that have primary responsibility for foodservice. These individuals may delegate the responsibility, but it is very important that they speak for the client (or owner) and all of the client's interested parties (students, staff, faculty, visitors, guests, special events coordi-

nator, depending on the type of client). These persons should bring in owner special-interest representatives (special events personnel, for example) for selected project meetings and be sure that all special interests are represented and are clearly articulated to the project team throughout the planning process.

**MAS Consultant:** A management advisory services (MAS) consultant usually "only" provides management advisory services, and does not do foodservice facility design, but has a relevant operating background and experience in the client's foodservice area (independent restaurants, college/university, corporate dining, museums or other markets), and is independent and objective. For clients planning new foodservice facilities, a MAS consultant should act as the client's "operator" until the actual operator is on board. A MAS consultant should provide input throughout a project with the express purpose of being at least reasonably certain that the owner winds up with a restaurant and related foodservice facilities, support and infrastructure that is "client specific," not "operator specific," with facilities that will function well for the client regardless of who eventually serves as operator. A MAS consultant should be selected based on relevant experience and only after careful reference checks have been made with other, prior clients.

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