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The benefits of hiring a construction management firm: A strong, qualified and competitive team

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More than a decade ago, cm&b's founder and CEO, Kevin Puopolo, prepared an article for the NEREJ describing the philosophy of and listing the benefits the construction management method provides owners in all sectors, including retail. Promoting a practice and mindset that was still forging its way to the forefront in 2009, Puopolo advised potential clients to shop for construction management firms in the same way they would architectural, accounting and legal services. He advised owners to keep in mind that the range and quality of services offered would vary from firm to firm, and that purchasing services based on an "initial low price" would not translate into an attractive final project cost. The benefits to hiring a construction management firm are:

Early involvement allows the construction manager and architect to work together and avoid potential design issues thereby negating potential change order costs. The budgeting and value engineering assistance provided by the construction manager during every phase of the design process ensures that project costs can be properly controlled. Hiring a construction manager can help owners minimize costly construction delays and provide a significant cost benefit from an accelerated construction time frame. A construction manager focuses on critical management activities including subcontractor selection, scheduling and quality control.

Flash forward to 2010 and that philosophy and those benefits still drive cm&b today and are the foundation for the firm's success. Despite the unsettled economic climate, cm&b has continued to grow and provide construction management services to an increasing number of retailers, many on a national level. Being able to consistently deliver exceptional service and quality has helped build and maintain our relationships with these clients. Price conscious, value oriented retail owners understand that the collaborative construction management approach provided by cm&b will prove invaluable as they maneuver through the economic downswing.

Many in the retail sector have been focusing their efforts on repositioning and renovating current facilities rather than investing in new development. Reducing footprints, being creative with existing space and targeting offerings are frequent alternative solutions retailers are employing to increase market penetration. A hopeful sign of things to come, new store construction is making a cautious comeback. Retail clients know that early involvement of a construction manager in the preconstruction process and successful collaboration during all design phases of any retail project presents the opportunity for the construction manager to provide feedback on constructability, alternate building material and other key factors resulting in effective construction solutions and cost control.

The collaborative construction management approach to construction projects allows retail and other owners alike to see first hand the value of a team approach to the building process. Not only does this practice create synergy between owner, design team and contractor during every phase of

construction, but it also promotes a single vision and addresses the two core principals of every construction project - to turn the project over on time and within budget.

Working with a construction manager, owners get a snapshot of the construction budget in various phases throughout the project design. This allows the team to manage a budget as well as manage design. The alternate approach typically does not allow an owner to see such snapshots until the project is out to bid by which time the design is typically 90% complete. If the project then comes back over budget, there is significant cost associated with re-evaluating the design. Providing prequalified subcontractor pricing is a challenge, especially visible in today's economic environment. Construction management allows for a detailed subcontractor prequalification to take place to ensure that a strong, qualified, and competitive team is put in place.

Clearly, the philosophy of assembling a team of qualified professionals to work together on behalf of the owner and maximize the value realized throughout the entire construction process has proven it is here to stay. To find out more about cm&b please visit our website at www.cmbteam.com.

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