

## Access Center Planning & Construction

### Budget:

- “The Budget” - expands or contracts depending on creativity throughout the entire process. Some of the key points that effect the budget are:  
Selection of site, lease negotiations, contractor negotiations, design and oversight/cost overruns
- Timing - Parlaying up the amount
- Make your budget work
- Community approach in all negotiations
- Costs to consider:
  1. Site: Rent/mortgage, facility design, renovation and oversight
  2. Equipment: Package design, purchasing, deinstallation & installation
  3. Furniture: Office equipment and supplies
  4. Contingency funds
- Federal Grants, other grants and capital campaigns

### Site Selection:

- Develop Site Parameters
- When possible develop several sites - Estimating the cost to renovate each
- Dealing with Realtors
- Rent, Buy or Building from scratch
- Other options: Regional access centers and surplus public property:
- Fallback Options:
  - Town halls, libraries, public schools, community colleges, colleges/universities and other nonprofits
- Build a relationship with the Landlord

## **Negotiation: "Lets make a Deal"**

- Mutuality
- Lease stipulations
  - Term of lease, repairs, additions, responsibilities, capital improvements, build-out, amortization of renovation cost to reduce rent, free months during renovation, escalator / de-escalator clause

## **Once You Have the Site - What Next?**

- Designer, Architect, or Design-Build Contractor?
  - You are hiring a negotiator, a designer, an engineer and an overseer all in one
- Check references and look at what they have done:
  1. The details, the quality, the sense of overall movement. Walk in as a perspective producer, staff person, and trainer and see how it feels. Are access needs understood?
- What was the actual cost vs. initial cost estimates? What were the overruns (%)? What was the design intent vs. actual result?

## **Contractors:**

- Finding the possible contractors - Talk to: Landlords, board & staff, building inspectors, other subcontractors, other businesses
- Initial phone conversations - Get references, brochures, volume of business
- Start with 4 to 6 then weed down to 3-4
- Create the initial design/floor plan then invite the contractors (one at time) to the site - Give them all the same material to work with and ask the same questions. You are looking for:
  1. Creativity, flexibility & interest
  2. Sensitivity to a community project/budget
  3. Reputation - Trust & Timeliness
  4. Problem solving ability
- "Making the Contractor your friend while there is still time!"
- Keep impressing the contractors with the principles:
  1. Working with a lay board

2. Working for community
3. Can not go over budgeted amount by much at all
4. Must keep cost down and quality up
5. "This is a commercial project that must have a residential finish"

### **Design:**

- Know what your town requires: Town/city site review, town permits - signs, awnings, etc.
- Working with and involving the building inspectors from the beginning
- Basic Rule: "A good design costs the same amount to build as a bad design"
- Design/Renovation timeline
- Walking through the design as it is being developed, flow and Feng Shui (Fen-Shway)
- Accessibility questions - "Accessibility for people with disabilities = Equipment Accessibility"
- Utilize standard materials to meet specialty needs
- Acoustics: Soundproofing and Sound absorption - "More than just curtains"
- Work to cover all the details - HVAC, Electrical, A/V distribution systems, Facility and Studio Details, Alarm System, Etc.
- Complete, detailed, room-by-room specifications
- Color scheme, furniture & placement of all objects are all part of the design concept and flow
- Plan for future expansion
- Creating a gallery concept
- Including a flexible "work area/computer area" - consider: flexible signal distribution, computer networking and clean power

### **Putting the Renovation out to Bid:**

- Finalize plans and specifications
- Put out to bid - 3 to 4 people - fixed bid and penalties

- Negotiate for final price and terms
- Create renovation contract

### **Renovation Oversight:**

- Pre-build meeting with all sub-contractors
- To make sure that the design intent is translated into reality:
  1. Weekly, or more, site visits by designer
  2. Who should be the Clerk-of-the-Works
  3. Daily site visit by Clerk-of-the-Works
  4. Daily phone communication with Clerk-of-the-Works and contractor
  5. Address questions
  6. Problem solving
- Change orders - “here’s where you lose it or maintain it” - leg work & develop options
- Finish work

### **Equipment Selection and Installation:**

- Designing the Equipment Plan to create an integrated whole
- Survey existing equipment and computer platforms
- Create equipment package that fits needs and budget and avoids unnecessary complexity, features and functions
- Final equipment list to multiple vendors for bidding then negotiate for pricing, terms and delivery schedule
- Custom designed equipment consoles vs. “Winstead”
- Install equipment so that it is: easy to learn, comfortable to use, allows for flexibility, expansion, and ease of maintenance
- Ergonomic task chairs at all workstations - A good place to spend money.