



# RHarper Consulting Update

## Who Needs to Be on Your Project Team and What Do They Do?

In today's environment having the right team members is even more critical to your project whether it's new construction or renovation. Just having an architect is not enough – design requirements today as well as litigation risks have increased the requirements for specialists to supplement the Architect. The Architect still has the overall responsibility for coordinating the information from other team members to produce the construction documents and permit submissions.

While the Architect's scope of services includes structural engineer, mechanical, electrical and plumbing design, who are the other team members you may need and what do they do?

**Pre-Construction Services** - With increased construction costs and the heavy demand for contractors it is now imperative to select a qualified contractor and engage them as team members early in the design process. The Contractor provides budget updates, schedules, and logistics input during the design process. Generally, the intent is to develop a negotiated contract for the construction of the Project.

**Civil Engineer** – Responsible for all site related functions including site utilities, storm water management, zoning/entitlements, land planning, parking design and overall compliance with site building requirements. The Civil Engineer should be one of the first team members included in the design process and often will precede the Architect. Coordination between the Civil Engineer, Architect, and Owner is critical during the initial planning phase to achieve the Owner's goals for the Project.

**Environmental Engineer** – If you are developing a project on a new site or an area previously undisturbed, a Phase I Environmental report is likely required by your lender or local code authorities. The Environmental Engineer performs this task and identifies any environmental issues that may need to be addressed as part of the project. The Phase I Environmental report is typically a component of the due diligence process and the Environmental Engineer is directly engaged by the Owner.

**Geotechnical Engineer** – For projects requiring new structures or renovations that will be bearing upon new foundations, a geotechnical investigation will be required. This generally takes the form of soil borings which are analyzed for weight bearing properties. The Geotechnical Engineer makes recommendations to the Structural Engineer for foundation design. Typically, the Geotechnical Engineer is engaged directly by the Owner and as one of the initial due diligence tasks.

**Interior Designer** – Provides interior finish and furnishing selections and specifications. In addition, the interior Designer will work closely with the Architect on developing the interior spaces, casework detailing, reflected ceiling plans, and fixture selections. The Interior Designer procures and installs the furnishings as part of their services.

**Accessibility Consultant** – In today's environment meeting the requirements of ADA and Fair Housing Law is complex and ever evolving. This has spawned a new design specialization dedicated to providing Owners the design input to address these requirements. Typically, the Accessibility Consultant provides plan reviews as well as onsite inspections during construction. The Accessibility Consultant is generally contracted directly by the Owner.

**Food Service Consultant** – Projects that include food and beverage functions usually engage a Food Service Consultant to provide design services and operational consulting with respect to design and equipping the kitchen and dining service areas.

Assembling and managing the design team is the most critical step of having a successful project. It can be overwhelming, and most Owners need the assistance of a qualified Program Manager or Owners Representative to identify, qualify, and make recommendations on selection of team members. As you begin planning your project, start with expert advice to assemble the best team.

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