

Project Managing Your Self Build Home

If you are reading this, you are probably in one of two camps; you may wish to build your own dream home, and believe that you can save money by managing the project yourself. Alternatively you may be starting out as a developer and want to manage construction projects as a means of income. You could of course be well established in the role, and are just comparing notes, but we'll not count you if that's the case!

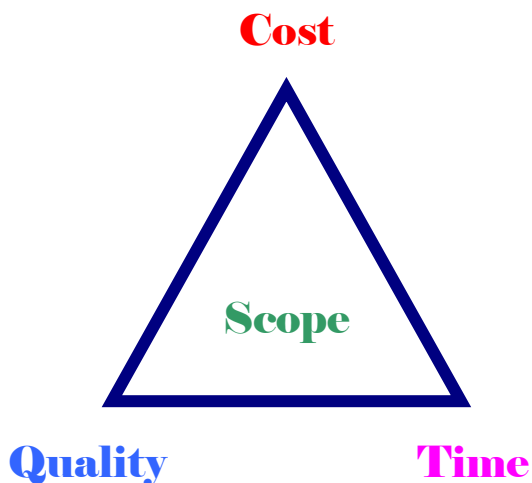
The art (or science) of Project Management (PM) lies in the ability to consider the impacts of one action on another, and in organising events to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative ones in order to create a unique product (your house). Without needing to delve too deeply into the technicalities of project management, it is fair to say that 'events' can include just about anything in house building, from architect's deadlines to accurate and timely excavations.



Traditional PM considers three measurable constraints:

- Time
- Cost
- Quality

There is actually a fourth measure: Scope. When you finish building your home you will more than likely be amazed at how different it appears from your initial idea. However, given that it's your project, you can subject yourself to 'Scope-creep' as much as you like, as long as you remain within the bounds set by the other measurable constraints.



Quality, cost and time are inextricably interlinked. If you set a rigid deadline for the project, but suffer delays due to weather, it is obvious that you will need to pay more (money talks when you need tradesmen at short notice), or accept a lower quality. If you accept the delay so that you can guarantee maintaining your high standards, you will need to spend more on scaffold and portaloos hire, living in rented accommodation for longer, and so on.

You will also need to remember that whilst Cost and Time cause short and medium term pain, if you compromise on Scope and Quality, you are stuck with your decisions forever (until you build an extension and upgrade the kitchen for example).

The Project Management 'Triple'

Such are the strategic decisions you will need to take; it makes great sense to consider these heady issues off-site whenever possible. There is an awful temptation to make rash decisions when standing in a rainy, muddy building site in front of tradesmen who are waiting for answers. The successful Project Manager will have considered as many options as possible, so that these choices are carefully thought-out beforehand.



It is almost certain that the majority of your headaches will not be caused by the higher level issues. You should expect to receive daily demands for information, materials, plant and tradesmen, all of which will take up time and energy. Again, the key to success lies in thinking ahead and carefully researching lead-times for everything. Whilst you can have screws delivered to your door the next day, it can take a month to get a floor tiler to turn up, and some specialist joinery items can take even longer; no good if you are trying to

secure the building and you have no doors. Almost as bad as lateness is earliness; five packs of roof tiles will be in the way if you haven't completed your foundations!