

# Construction and Careers

During my 33 year law career focusing on construction law and the construction industry, I have learned how the approach taken to design and construct a magnificent project is similar to the approach taken by successful people to build their careers.

In construction, someone has to take responsibility for the project and decide what is wanted and how it will be designed and constructed. Likewise, you must take responsibility for your career. Only you know what you want and what you are willing to commit to achieve your aspirations..

When architects or engineers design a project, they actually start their work with a vision of the completed work.. They focus on what purpose it will serve, what it will look like and how it will function. You should approach your career and personal life the same way. Think about what you really want. What are the things most important to you? Write why those things are most important to you. Trying to answer the *why* question will help you determine if you have identified what is really important to you. You will be able to better understand your life purpose and how your career fits with that purpose.

Once the design of the construction project is completed, the construction contractor takes over. The contractor will establish goals for the project, including profits and schedule milestones. Contractors who do this by the seat of the pants are generally not successful and do not stay in business very long. As the old saying goes: “Proper planning prevents poor performance.” The same is true in your life and career. Once you know what you really want, it is time to set goals and work on a plan. Carefully think about it and write down a list of goals. Some may be quantitative and others qualitative. For example, in 2004 my goals included how much weight I wanted to lose, how much business I wanted to generate, and how many times I wanted to visit my mother and my daughter. I also established goals on what I wanted to learn and what I wanted to experience.

Once contractors establish their goals and before they begin construction, they develop a plan and schedule. Many begin by listing activities they must do to successfully build the project; then they prepare a schedule and sequence of those activities.

When you have established your goals, write down a list of what you must do to achieve each goal. Then prioritize your list of activities and put them in a sequence. This forms the basis of your written plan.

Once construction begins, contractors constantly review where they are or how they can improve.

Construction in the field is never actually the same as it is in the planning room. In many cases the field conditions are different than expected, necessitating change. You should also review your plan, what you have accomplished, get feedback and look for areas where you can improve. As events take place during the year, it is okay to make changes in your plan.

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I have loved working for the construction industry. It is filled with people who take responsibility for what they want, establish goals, prepare a plan and are flexible enough to make changes to accommodate unexpected events. I love working with young lawyers who approach life and their careers in the same way. I have helped many shape their careers in this way and witnessed their enthusiasm and success.