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Professional

Top 5 Mistakes Made by Design Firms — and How to Avoid Them

Providing design services can be a risky business. Architects and Engineers frequently face the prospect of being sued for an allegedly negligent act, error or omission. There are, however, a number of business practices firms can adopt to help prevent such disputes and reduce losses. Here is a checklist of 5 mistakes commonly made by design firms.

1. Failure to document key decisions.

One of the biggest challenges in defending our clients involved in a claim or dispute is the lack of documentation of key decisions made as the project unfolded. [Learn More](#)

2. Specifying materials or products you don't fully understand.

While performance specifications are frequently used, sometimes you still are specifying actual products. Perhaps a contractor may suggest a change to the specification under the guise of "value engineering" and you may be unfamiliar with the proposed product. [Learn More](#)

3. Not aligning client's objectives with your Scope of Service.

With greater frequency, Scope of Service is a major contributor to claims and disputes. In many cases the scope is narrowed down to save the Client's money—but in the end, this practice limits your ability to deliver what the Client really needs. [Learn More](#)

4. Lack of focus on client selection.

Did you know that in 7 out of 10 claims it is your Client that pulls you into a dispute or litigation? Good client evaluation and selection can go a long way to protect your firm and its hard earned reputation. [Learn More](#)

5. Mishandling disputes.

Very few if any projects unfold with any problems. In about a quarter of our claims one of the underlying issues is the firm did not handle the dispute effectively. [Learn More](#)

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