

This phase, which generally takes about two months, is usually part of a complete architectural and engineering contract and would be considered the first phase in the traditional approach of A&E. When this portion of the project is complete, newspaper execs would sign off on this with a pretty clear idea of the look and feel of the facility, and the design development would begin.

Phase 3: Design development consists of ironing out the major facility design issues. The structural systems are selected and shown, the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems are shown, the site plan is resolved and the scope of the project is clearly defined enough to make a very good cost estimate. The materials and finishes are defined in the drawings and preliminary specifications. With this phase complete and the costs reviewed, the newspaper would sign off on this and its involvement would lessen during the next phase. Assuming no major changes are required in this phase, this segment should take about two months.

Phase 4: Construction documents primarily consist of the A&E firm detailing the job out for construction. With most of the client decisions made at this point, the goal is to bring the drawings up to final completeness to enable a very clearly defined scope for the bidding process. This phase takes approximately two months.

Phase 5: Bidding and negotiating consists of sending the complete set of drawings and specifications out to bid to several general contractors. (We typically involve several contractors in the previous three phases to ensure they are familiar with the drawings prior to receiving the bid set. This allows for multiple value engineering prior to bidding.) There are many questions being answered and shared with all bidders during this process. This typically takes about six weeks.

Phase 6: Construction is just that. The facility gets built during this phase. There are certain things that can be done to get a newspaper building completed a little quicker during this portion, such as preparing the press hall first. This will enable the press manufacturer to portion, such as preparing the press hall first. This will enable the press manufacturer to start the press installation sooner. Due to the fact that the press is the piece of equipment requiring the most time to install and commission, preparing the press hall first is fairly common. This also allows training to take place a little earlier as well. We have had projects built in eight months to 24 months. The major variables affecting the construction duration are project size, complexity, permitting, timing, phasing, site conditions, weather and the local economy. Average construction time: 12 to 14 months.

Phase 7: Training and commissioning consists of the newspaper getting up to speed (no pun intended) on the press, packaging equipment, computers and building systems. For what it's worth, do not expect the press to be running smoothly for at least six to 12 months. This is probably one of the most common disappointments in a new facility. It is not a press manufacturer issue, but rather vendors are always there to help the paper's press operators learn to use the equipment, but new presses are so sophisticated that it takes more than a few months for operators to become proficient. We recommend a refresher course after about six months. You would be surprised how much those little tricks that were either too many or too trivial to pay attention to at the initial commissioning can really help later on. This phase can take from two months to six months, depending on the phasing of the construction and amount or complexity of the equipment.

Add up the numbers: 30 months.

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