



## **Integrated Project Delivery: the new Plan of Work.**

By Richard Saxon.

The American architectural profession has discovered Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) and is enthused by it. At the recent AIA Convention in Boston there were numerous meetings about it and its closely related subject, the Building Information Model (BIM). The AIA has just published its guidance on IPD at [www.aia.org/ipdg](http://www.aia.org/ipdg) .

What is IPD? To British ears it sounds like the Egan Agenda: clients select their design and construction team from the start, work with them as a team and design to target costs rather than tendering. Everything goes quickly and relatively easily and better value is delivered. Sir John's recipe of 1998, elaborated subsequently by the Strategic Forum for Construction as Integrated Teamworking, has singularly failed to spread rapidly across the UK. It has got tangled in PFI, where the contractor's integrated team has great difficulty in getting close to the client before selection and hardly improves on that afterwards. It has been limited by weak client skills or lack of good advisors as it takes a confident client to get the most from it. Contractors have often failed to involve their principal subcontractors, the real co-designers of buildings, until it has been too late. Tendering on cost is still a fixation, right down the chain. Lawyers have preferred clients to hand-off risk through bespoke contracts to its virtual elimination through partnering. Architects have been lukewarm on contractor leadership because they want to be appointed by clients and to work closely with them on the brief and concept to have a hope of any design quality emerging. Integrated working in the UK is thus beset with doubts.

So why are American architects suddenly so enthusiastic? Two factors stand out:

- Construction Management is still well regarded in the US and allows the confident owner to form and run an integrated team on a pre-contract, consultancy basis. The CM in the US is now prepared to join a risk-bearing contract team once the design and cost are signed off by all. After all, risks have been almost eliminated.
- BIM: the Building Information Model concept allows everyone to contribute far better than did CAD, removes great amounts of the risk and moves the majority of design effort to meeting the client need rather than creating huge volumes of contract documents. Troubleshooting on site almost disappears.



The AIA likes IPD because it is a partnership of equals. Architects get to work with client, contractor and specialists from the right moment to create best value. In the process the project team is remarkably stress-free and risks to the designer are minimised. The AIA thinks architects need to embrace IPD with BIM. Architects sell radical change to their clients but seem reluctant to buy it for themselves. It does involve eight big changes for practice:

1. It means true design collaboration, with no more 'ivory tower' working by the architect;
2. It requires the use of BIM, a big step for some offices;
3. Contract Documents (the BIM) are now the actual execution plans, not a statement of design intent; they result from the collaboration.
4. Team assembly is quite different and all at the front, forming either an informal partnership, a virtual organisation or a legal single purpose entity;
5. There is an Integrated Project Coordinator, a facilitator, who orchestrates the teamwork and coaches everyone;
6. Principals of the team member firms need to meet regularly to check on progress and nip problems in the bud;
7. Money becomes a design tool, using the BIM to produce quantities (UK style!). A target cost plan, based on benchmarked exemplars, steers the design on a weekly basis;
8. Team-based decision-making is used, facilitated and fact-based. All voices are heard.

Successful examples of IPD are there to be seen. They were fast, defect-free, accident-free, low-waste, with extra profit potential for the team from savings shared with the owner. The client gets more attention paid to design value for the fee. There is still no accepted model for IPD which would pass all the tests for public and some corporate procurement. Team members, including the client, have to sign away their right to sue. There is no insurance solution yet. But those converted wont work any other way if they can.

Integrated Project Delivery, US style, is a far more positive model for the future than the language of Integrated Teams in the UK. Yet it's the same idea at root and should be re-launched. We need to share learning and research and break through into this far better way of working.



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