

We're In This Together

LARRY BROUGHTON

Founder & CEO, broughtonHOTELS



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If you've been in hospitality development and management for more than a few minutes, you've likely seen the good, bad, and ugly among those who touch a development, design, or renovation project

When it's time to meld form and function, we assemble top notch teams of high-achieving architects, designers, operators, and suppliers to successfully bring a project to fruition by offering expertise and value to a very complicated process.

Too often, however, hospitality owners and developers postpone bringing on one or more of the key trades only to find out later that the shortcut meant to save a few bucks on the front end has cost the project millions in overruns, change orders, or operational inefficiencies that can drown a deal. Most of us have seen or heard of firms working development, design or renovation projects who have never asked for, nor been given, a budget to guide them.

Collectively, our goal should be to increase the value of every asset we touch, yet we've all seen individuals placing their ego, pride, and agenda in front of the economic viability of the project in order to boast their firm's profile at the expense of everyone else.

I understand the concept of leveraging success and sexiness of one project to get future projects. It's part of everyone's growth strategy. But we should remember that it's a rather small, incestuous industry. We've all heard the juicy backstories of those nightmare projects. Why not join forces with fellow project professionals to ensure success for everyone?

There's a mantra that goes "individuals play the game, but teams beat the odds." There are countless forces outside our control in the development and design space that can derail a project. Why aren't more folks speaking the reality of time, budgets, and risk assessment into their conversations with owners and developers? Perhaps it's the fear of losing the gig.

Here are five tips to minimize conflict among professional firms to build a rockstar team ready to tackle any project.

1. Listen to the perspective and experience of other professionals on the team. Needing to be right and in control will often discourage progress toward our goals rather than propel the team forward.
2. Define and work within stated timelines and budget goals. The adage, "time is money" is especially true in development and renovation work—prove value by mitigating risk against missed deadlines and budgets.

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3. Admit mistakes and make corrections quickly and professionally. Mistakes are common in business— it's confronting them head-on with a can-do spirit that's rare.
4. Publicly praise the good work of fellow team members. It's easy to identify the mistakes of others, but to build bridges, don't neglect the praise by catching fellow professionals and trades doing something right.
5. Set an example. If you expect team members to follow through with clients and the team, set a positive example by fulfilling your own promises.

Treat team members like they make a difference, and they will.

Larry Broughton is the award-winning founder and CEO of Anaheim, California-based broughtonHOTELS, a leading operator in the boutique hotel industry. With 30+ years in the industry, his current portfolio of a dozen hotels include the iconic Sportsmen's Lodge Hotel in Studio City, California; Spanish Garden Inn in Santa Barbara, California; Ivy Boutique Hotel & Suites in Chicago, Illinois; and the recently opened Park James Hotel and Oak + Violet Restaurant in Menlo Park, California.