

Project and Design Review

The owner and service provider must understand each other's needs.

By David Daugherty ■ *Korcett Holdings*

The design review is the first and arguably most important step in the communication process between the developer and the service provider. This is where you confirm that the operation of the property communications infrastructure is consistent with your business objectives and clearly understood. This is also where you make sure any design and operational guidelines are clearly understood and incorporated into the deliverables portion of the service agreement.

To make sure the design and operation of the network will be consistent with your business objectives, use the deliverables portion of the service agreement as your meeting agenda. Over time, this will help establish consistency from one project to the next.

Basic Elements of a Design Review

Your network engineers, project manager and legal counsel will probably want to tweak this list of topics:

Construction: Logical and physical network design, installation and functioning. Don't forget to include

- **Location of communications closets:** Make sure the closets are properly positioned and allow for adequate power and floor space.
- **Infrastructure continuity testing:** Failure to perform continuity testing can be costly. Make sure your contractors provide certified testing results before you pay them.
- **Air-conditioning:** Failure to air-condition communications closets (and maintain the air-conditioning) will inconvenience your residents and could result in unexpected costs for equipment replacement.
- **Front office, common areas and computer labs:** Make sure the front office, computer labs and property common areas have adequate wired and wireless service.
- **Project timetables:** Review the deployment process, equipment lead times, fiber construction estimates, resident-specific time constraints and status of any Internet service agreements. Allow adequate time for legal review of service agreements.
- **Storage:** Don't use communications closets for storage. You don't want to make a building full of residents unhappy just because your management staff can't find a place to store cleaning supplies.

Operation: Though Internet access is a mission-critical amenity, infrastructure operation and maintenance are usually either relegated to the service provider or overlooked entirely. Retain a reputable third party to help ensure that planning and

Pre-deployment	Sequence
Request for Proposal (RFP)	1
Site Survey	2
Network Design	3
Design Review	4
Proposal and BOM Submission	5
Proposal Review & Acceptance (Project Authorization)	6
MSA Submission, Review & Approval	7

budgeting, construction oversight and ongoing operations are addressed before you sign the ISP's service agreement.

- **Customer support:** If customers can't get prompt, technically competent help, they will leave. Make sure everyone understands how customer support works, and establish a means of periodic testing to ensure ongoing compliance.
- **Resident communications:** Infrastructure-based messaging/alert systems allow front-office personnel to interact directly with residents on a day-to-day basis.
- **Problem escalation procedures:** The only certainty about infrastructure is that problems will occur. Make sure you have clearly delineated lines of communication.
- **Performance metrics:** If Internet service degrades, residents become unhappy and leave. SLA provisions should be tied to resident satisfaction with the services.

Service providers and developers must understand each other's business models – for example, service providers must understand the importance to owners of keeping apartments rented. A better mutual appreciation of business models will result in mutually acceptable business performance. **BBP**

About the Author

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