



In This Issue...Why Use A Consultant? – Part 3

Why use a roof consultant?

This newsletter is the third in a series of why using a roof consultant is a better choice than other options, such as architects, roofing contractors and/or manufacturing reps. The focus this month will be on the advantages of using a professional roof consultant as opposed to a roofing manufacturer's representative.

Much of what we have said in previous issues in regard to experience applies also to roofing reps for manufacturers. Reps spend much of their time calling on architects and those who specify their products. The recommendations they make will, naturally, be based on products they sell. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is limiting. Many, if not most, roof applications lend themselves well to a variety of solutions. Roofing reps will not recommend those that they don't represent and often other solutions will work much better (and/or be much cheaper) due to a certain project specific conditions. For instance, one manufacturer of a specific type of single ply roofing product insists that the product only be installed by mechanically fastening. They believe that this method, at least for their product, is better than other means of securing the roof in place. They may be right. But if you are dealing with a building that has a concrete roof deck a special pilot hole must be drilled into the concrete before a fastener can be inserted which is a very noisy operation. (And when it comes time to replace the roof all those fasteners will have to be removed and many will break off, making removal very costly.) The labor cost to install (and remove) the roof goes way up and the noise level inside the building skyrockets to the point that people will typically have to be moved. Phone calls become impossible. So, the product can be installed economically when installed over a conventional metal deck, where no pilot holes are required and normal screws can be used with a minimum of noise. But installing it on concrete roof deck is, in our opinion, a terrible idea. The reps for this product don't mention these things when they "sell you" on using their system. A professional roof consultant may present this type of roof to you as a solution, but he would also make you aware of the increased cost and noise issues.

Here is another example: Coat tar pitch roofs, when properly installed make excellent roofs to install on flat roofed buildings. While they can be used very successfully in new construction there is an issue that makes them far less acceptable in a reroofing situation.

Coat tar pitch must be heated in a "kettle" at the jobsite. The pitch is melted before application and it emits a noxious, caustic odor. If you have people occupying the building, something that does not occur during new construction, you will have complaints and perhaps even people getting sick. How many coal tar reps do you think point out that building occupants may get sick while the roof is being installed?!

Finally, even when dealing with a rep who represents a generic product like EPDM (rubber), there can be issues. There are differences between how different manufacturers require that their products be installed that can yield a significant difference in cost. When a rep writes a spec for you in such a situation, he will certainly write it in such a way so as to give himself an advantage over other competing products that are supposedly "equal". You can easily end up paying more than you need to for a very conventional, so called "standard" roofing system.

Here is a recent bid tabulation for a new roof on a school building:

Contractor	System	Bid
A	F	255,455
B	C	264,000
C	F	226,891
D	C	239,850
E	C	393,300

There is an approximate \$13,000 difference between the low bidder and the second bidder. They were quoting "equal" roofs. When you allow a manufacturer's rep to design your specs for you, you could easily be paying this kind of "penalty".

Here is a different example.

Contractor	System	Bid
F	C	64,645
G	F	115,225
H	F	80,847
I	C	66,400

As you can see "F" is not always cheaper than "C". Unbiased, truly equal specs will only come from professional consultants, who will also insure that you get the best bidders available for all the systems being specified.