

Five Steps Towards Creating A 'Change Order Culture' In Construction

Reenvisioning Change Order Management To Minimize Risk, Disputes & Litigation

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, May 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Although today's hot topics in construction management deal with incorporating artificial intelligence, robotics,

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*James F. Gallagher, P.E.,
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drones and other advances into practical use, managers would do well to prioritize their focus on an age-old function, that of change order management, because of its potential to immediately benefit the organization by minimizing risk, disputes and litigation.

A change order is a legal document that specifies changes to the initial contract. It can affect scope, timeline, scheduling, pricing and more.

Although in most construction projects, change orders are inevitable, the manner in which they are handled can lead to disputes among stakeholders and even litigation.

According to James Gallagher, Principal at Resolution Management Consultants, a leading construction

consulting firm specializing in dispute management and litigation defense, issues relating to change order management continue to be one of the leading causes of disputes in the construction industry. Gallagher recommends that one of the most effective ways to prevent disputes is to embrace that changes are inevitable and envision change order management within an organization to create what he calls proactive “change order management culture.”

Gallagher says, “A culture is an environment of shared values and beliefs. By elevating change order management from the tactical to the strategic, one changes the conversation from simply managing the change order process to the strategic, that of managing organizational risk and disputes. From that new perspective, one can transform change order management into a dynamic component of organizational well-being.”

Gallagher recommends the following five steps towards creating a “change order culture” within one’s organization:

1) "Change order culture" starts at the top. Defining and prioritizing a "change order management culture" must emanate from the c-suite. Only when a "change order culture" is embraced, supported and promoted by both management and staff will it lead to more successful outcomes.

2) Commit to change order training and continuing education at all levels. In addition to an educational program for new employees, develop a continuing education curriculum designed to refresh and update change order training at every level, one that covers how to resolve issues, as well as covering the best practices to minimize their impact on performance of the base contract work.

3) Prioritize change order management and make it top of mind.

Develop protocols that make gathering information, writing, reviewing and implementing change orders a priority not an after thought. Allow for the time and oversight that staff requires to make this elevated standard happen.

4) Develop institutional memory.

Install computerized programming that facilitates documentation & tracking of change orders and quickly ties them into all relevant aspects of the project at hand. In addition, develop an institutional database of activities and results. Continually review data to fine-tune your program and measure progress toward reaching organizational goals.

5) Review institutional performance, as well as the team members who make positive results happen

Turn the change order process into a positive initiative where team members can be proud of their accomplishments and even rewarded for helping reduce risk and disputes.

Said Gallagher, "By adopting a 'change order management culture', one can create a win-win-win environment for the organization, for employees and for customers, ultimately making the organization more efficient while improving customer satisfaction."

About Resolution Management Consultants, Inc.



James F. Gallagher, P.E. F.ASCE, Principal
Resolution Management Consultants

Resolution Management Consultants, Inc. (RMC) is a nationally recognized consulting firm headquartered in Marlton, NJ. There are two sides to the business: the construction planning and management aspect – helping clients build more successful projects – and the litigation aspect – should matters go to court, providing analysis and testimony as expert witnesses. Founded in 1993 by veterans in the construction, contracting and engineering professions, RMC has assisted numerous private owners, public agencies and contractors in either achieving project goals or resolving cost and time disputes between the contracting parties.

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