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PERSPECTIVE

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President and CEO of
FARROW Commercial Construction

From Blue Collar To White Collar

Changing The Way Construction Gets Done

THIS ISSUE Mexico - A Land Still To Be Discovered, A-List Franz Hanning, Growth In Canada, Exit Strategies For Timeshare Owners, SFX Preferred Resorts

From Blue-Collar to White-Collar Construction Dresses for Success

By Julia C. Watson and Clara Rose



Over the years it has become a common misconception and stereotype that the majority of construction companies across multiple industries are unprofessional, less than trustworthy and derelict in upholding budget and schedule agreements. This is not to say that there are no exceptions to this perception, but all too often customers have experienced poor service from one contractor, resulting in generalizations about the industry as a whole. However, a change is emerging, led by a few innovative leaders, and this is welcome news to those who are paying for and expecting top line turn-key construction services.

To have a look at how this is happening, take the case of FARROW Commercial Construction under the leadership of progressive CEO, John Farrow. Exchanging the metaphorical tool belt for a pressed shirt and tie, FARROW is pioneering a change in the perception of construction management altogether. John Farrow and his team are taking construction from blue- to white-collar by partnering with top client executives to plan, expedite and manage the entire spectrum of the new build or renovation construction cycle. This means complete in-house management of highly qualified project directors,

subcontractors, vendors and suppliers. Providing one-point accountability and turn-key service allows FARROW to completely free up the client to focus on revenue management and facility operations. By aligning with clients, building relationships based in trust, and providing elite turn-key services, FARROW Commercial is moving construction from the job site to the board room.

The need to change the perception of construction can be seen as we look back at the history of the terms blue-collar and white-collar. American writer, Upton Sinclair is most often credited for coining blue-collar and white-collar in his writings during the 1930s. He labeled the manual labor work force blue-collar in reference to the blue work shirts and coveralls they typically wore. White-collar was used to describe workers who held office jobs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-collar_worker). In their origination, the terms simply denoted two classifications of the work force. Societal influence however, would soon morph the terms to heed rank and white-collar would become viewed as the higher level profession.

Albeit Sinclair's use of white-collar refers to the dress code-mandated white collared shirts office workers were required to wear during the 19th and 20th

centuries, and was not intended to undermine the integrity of the blue-collar values that built this country, over time the terms have unfortunately inherited a social bias. As white-collar positions required higher education and paid better wages than the physically strenuous and often dangerous blue-collar jobs, it became the more prestigious and respected affiliation. Additionally, each was typecast as having certain character qualities, with blue-collar being the more rugged and callous classification.

Although many blue-collar positions earn more money than various white-collar ones do today, attitudes about each have continued to pass down through generations and still hold credence. These stereotypes of lacking refinement and professionalism in business have been imposed upon the construction industry and general contractors for decades, but John Farrow recognizes the need to change this misconception and strives to do so through the conduct of FARROW business.

John Farrow's motivation for improving the mindset toward the construction industry is fueled by his own experiences as an employee. Working for employers with the blue-collar construction mentality in the early years, John was disheartened by how workers and clients were often treated. When observing, or directly being confronted by employers or supervisors who carried the old-school mindset that disrespecting employees and strong-arming

national construction corporation that would allow him to inundate the hospitality industry with white-collar virtues.

The idea of the professional, white-collar work ethic and the reputation the term has inherited is what John Farrow brings to his company and clientele. He has created a corporation based on core values of customer service and over-delivering on understated promises. John leads a team who shares in his passion

To aid with lessened cash flow, FARROW has decreased construction costs by offering a Best Price Guarantee, leveraged reduced labor and materials pricing, and extended savings to the client.

clients was the norm, John refused to adopt the same outlook and believed he could do it differently. In the early nineties John established FARROW Commercial, Inc. a

and core beliefs that clients deserve open, honest communication, problems should be approached with a solution-driven attitude, and adherence to these morals and beliefs is



Forging a New Era with Social Media

Clara Rose

Marketing and advertising will always be an important part of any business plan, but the current trends toward social media advertising is forging a new era in customer expectations, largely attributable to its ability to tightly target audiences.

According to Social Media Today, nearly half of all Americans are now members of at least one social network. With increasing regard for online information, the savvy consumer is now demanding more transparency and engagement from the companies they do business with.

Additionally, social media is rated more influential by high income consumers than

by other groups, the question is; how do businesses connect with these customers?

The overwhelming answer is: Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking, collaborative projects, blogs and micro blogs, content communities, social networking sites and virtual communities.

The seemingly daunting task of maintaining each network may be a small feat for the company that has enough resources to hire a social media expert, but if not, it can be incredibly difficult to keep up with the demands of this continually evolving platform. Some companies choose to outsource these tasks to a company that specializes in Social Media, like Sharon Drechsler of Social Media Servicing.

This is not a set it and forget it endeavor, it serves no purpose to ask for consumer input if no one is paying attention or managing responses.

Although the task of managing a continual social media connection is a formidable one, the benefits will outweigh the time and expense.

Social media is intended to be... well, social in nature. Businesses that embrace

it are more likely to open up dialogue with the consumer, getting to know them and building personal relationships with them. Relationships foster and increase customer loyalty and retention, helping to spread "word of mouth" recommendations to potential clients.

As we move forward in the exciting age of online communities and social connections, FARROW Commercial Construction is excited to announce the launch of a Social Media campaign, which includes a monthly newsletter and weekly blogging.

The newsletter, The FARROW Report, features the latest industry news, events and announcements. It will also include fun facts, games, prizes and more! To stay current on the industry and receive the newsletter by email, please visit www.FARROWCommercial.com or email your request to Clara@FARROWCommercial.com.

For articles, press releases and resources, or to connect with other Resort & Hospitality industry professionals, visit our new company blog; The FARROW Connection at www.TheFARROWConnection.com.

Join us as we forge ahead into the new era of social media.



the only path to true success. They carry out John's vision for the direction of the company by upholding customer service, continuing education and staying current on the latest cost-effective and quality-enhancing industry options, while always ensuring projects are executed beyond client expectations.

Today FARROW Commercial is a leader in hospitality construction. Specializing in renovations, ADA compliance, green building, reserve study management, and new-build, FARROW is a turn-key construction expert. Focusing on this niche of the industry has allowed FARROW to hone its skills and create a stream-lined construction process. From conception to completion, FARROW knows how to properly navigate the course of construction amid operations, reducing impact on guests, quickly putting units or areas constructed into revenue-generating circulation, while adhering to budget constraints. If the occasional issue arises on a construction project, FARROW addresses it with immediate action, professional communication and appropriate solutions. The results are uncompromised quality and 100% customer satisfaction.

FARROW's integrity affords clients the ability to access white-collar quality contracting services in the midst of an economic crisis that has afflicted the hospitality industry significantly over the past several years. As leisure and business travel has decreased so have revenue streams and reserves, limiting operators' ability to keep up with renovation cycles as mandated by brand and resident standards. To aid with lessened cash flow, FARROW has decreased construction costs by offering a Best Price Guarantee, leveraged reduced labor and materials pricing, and extended savings to the client. As a result, FARROW has grown their volume of construction projects, client loyalty has improved, and properties have benefited from increased retention and sales.

As FARROW looks to the future their goal remains – to be the best construction company in the industry, not only through white-collar virtues, but also company-wide evolution and best business practices. The hospitality industry is always dynamic and constantly changing. FARROW continues to seek and stay ahead of the curve by anticipating market growth, developing new skills, and increasing value for customers.

Renovation Projects and Low-Bids; Cheap Is Not Inexpensive

Julia C. Watson

We've all heard the expression, "you get what you pay for." This is especially true of construction services in the hospitality industry. It is always advisable to gather several bids when selecting a contractor and you should always negotiate the best price. But taking the cheapest bid can be more expensive than you think. Here are a few tips to consider when comparing providers.

- Make sure the contractor is a hospitality specialist: Hospitality renovations are unique as they are commonly performed while the property is in full operation. A hospitality specialist will know how to properly isolate and contain construction, to minimize impact on operations and guests, reducing loss of revenue.
- Make sure the contractor can adhere to schedule requirements: Hospitality renovation projects are extremely fast-paced. The time required to take a unit (or area being constructed) out of circulation and put it back into operation equates to a loss of revenue. It is crucial that the contractor knows how to perform work quickly. The longer the construction project takes, the more potential revenue is lost. An experienced hospitality-specific contractor is more likely to conform to the demands of a critical-path (phased) or rolling (continual transition) schedule.
- Compare apples to apples: Be sure to perform a comprehensive, side-by-side comparison, of estimates from bidders - to ensure they are inclusive of all the same scope details. Does the low-bid include all elements of the higher-priced bids or will exclusions cost you in change orders later?
- Don't skimp on quality: Do some quick math on the life-cycles of goods and their replacement value to determine real value. For instance; a lesser quality carpet will wear quickly and need replacement in two or three years? Perhaps it would make sense to pay a little more for carpeting now and have it last for five to seven years.
- Do your homework: Ask questions about company protocols for conduct of onsite workers; such as regulation of interaction with guests, smoking, noise and music, or trash disposal and daily clean-up. Make sure the contractor has specific conduct policies in place or the disruption to operations can be costly.

For more money saving tips or information, go to www.FARROWCommercial.com.



The Great ADA Debate

Julia C. Watson

There has been a long-standing debate concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 as it pertains to timeshare. The discrepancy has been whether timeshare falls under the category of “public accommodation” and should therefore comply with ADA guidelines managed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) or that it qualifies as “residential facility” and the rules set by the Fair Housing Act regulated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) should apply.

As of March 15, 2011 amendments to the existing ADA laws will go into effect, which include a revised definition for “places of lodging” that may secure the fate of timeshare as “public accommodation”. The DOJ website, www.ada.gov/regs2010 states that a “place of lodging” is a facility that:

- Provides guest rooms primarily intended for short-term stays and the occupant does not have the right to return to a specific room upon concluding his or her stay
- Provides amenities such as
 - On- or off-site management and reservation services
 - Rooms available on a walk-up or call-in basis
 - Housekeeping or linen service
 - Acceptance of reservations for a guest room without requiring a prior lease or security deposit

Do these parameters sound like “timeshare” in nature?

Currently there is no grandfather clause protecting facilities constructed prior to 1991 and it seems prudent to be proactive in making necessary ADA upgrades to non-compliant facilities now; as it appears enforcement is well on its way.


Additionally, with the new changes not becoming effective until 2012 – this offers HOAs and resorts the opportunity to address any compliance issues. With that being said, accelerating a refurbishment schedule to beat this deadline could be beneficial through the reduced labor and material cost of today’s economy. New refurbishments completed prior to the effective date will be “grandfathered” as compliant, providing they are completed using the existing standards.

Is your property in compliance? Specialists in ADA construction, FARROW Commercial can help. Call 707-591-0225 to speak with an expert today!

One area FARROW foresees an immediate need for expansion is within its ADA compliance division. With recent amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 which made it federal law that all public facilities provide access to handicapped individuals (www.ada.gov), there is likely going to be an increased accountability to resort/timeshare and hotel properties. Rather than waiting to see customers penalized for non-compliance, FARROW is striving to educate the industry about the law and help make necessary upgrades. As an ADA specialist, FARROW will also remain ready in recognition of the huge market potential that offering compliant facilities can bring to a property. FARROW hopes to create awareness in the industry while generating new opportunities for customers.

Another area FARROW anticipates growth is green building. Everyday green materials are becoming more readily available for production and manufacturing, they are also becoming more economical as the demand for these products increase. With increased understanding for the need to reduce emissions and waste, the demand for green building will rise. In response, FARROW will continue to pioneer green building innovations while expanding offerings to clients through their LEED certified programs.

Lastly, FARROW foresees an increasing need for a one-stop service inclusive of procurement and finance capabilities. FARROW will bring added value to customers through additions of a procurement department and capital division, entrenching their status as a turn-key provider.

Adhering to honest business ethics, FARROW is committed to white-collar principles and suiting-up for the new look of contracting. FARROW is changing stereotypes and dressing for success. 

For more information, please visit www.FARROWcommercial.com or call John Farrow, president and CEO of FARROW Commercial Construction, at 707-591-0225.



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The FARROW Advantage



From Tee to Green...Making Construction *easy*.

- Making Renovation *easy*
- Making Construction *easy*
- Making ADA Compliance *easy*
- Making "Going Green" *easy*
- Making Reserve Planning *easy*



Conception to Completion, FARROW Commercial Construction is Making it *easy*!



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From Blue Collar to White Collar, FARROW Commercial Construction is Changing the way Construction gets done.

Call today to speak to one of our specialists!

FARROW Commercial Construction is a national general contracting company specializing in the hospitality industry. FARROW is committed to surpassing the expectations of our clients through quality based, price sensitive and production driven construction services. We make construction *easy*.