

Studio Site

Repair and Maintenance at the Studio

Hire Good Help For Your Station

by Gordon Carter

Once the decision has been made to move your radio station, you will have many months of work before you and your co-workers can realize your dream. Finding the right kind of help will make that dream happen. Finding the wrong help will turn the dream into a nightmare.

Most stations will need three different individuals or types of firms to help them relocate: a real estate agent, an architect and a studio consultant. These three will all fulfill different and unique roles in the move and their importance cannot be underestimated.

Three Distinct Roles

In very simple terms, the real estate agent will work with you to find the right place — one that meets your needs. A good agent knows the territory and the market. He or she can direct you to a suitable place that is within your budget.

The architect will then take the building or location the real estate agent has helped you find and make it a practical work space and aesthetically pleasing. The architect will also work with designers from various disciplines to make sure the electrical system, heating and air conditioning, and various other structural aspects are correct.

The studio consultant will work with you and the architect to design a suitable suite of control rooms and studios that are acoustically as well as electronically correct.

Don't Cut Corners

Many radio stations try to save money by not hiring a studio consultant and either doing the studio design themselves or having the architect do it for them. This works fine...sometimes, but certain conditions must be right.

First of all, the person doing the studio design (either your own engineering staff or the architect) must

facility and the ability of the designer, this can take days or weeks to do well.

A good consultant can also help avoid a lot of mistakes that may cost hundreds or thousands of dollars and extra time to correct. If you do not have the expertise yourself, the price of a consultant can be money well spent.

The Right Skills For the Job

Choosing the right people or firms for these roles is very important. While each one has special talents and abilities, all must fit into the big picture. All three must be able to work with you and your co-workers, as well as each other. They must be able to ascertain your needs and translate them into the realities of space and hardware.

Many radio stations that are planning a move find a real estate agent fairly early in the process, and then hire an architect and consultant after a building has been chosen. Unfortunately, this can sometimes create serious problems, especially if your needs have not been properly evaluated before selecting the space.


A better process is to find an agent, architect and consultant before making any decisions other than to move. The three can then work together to ascertain your needs, define the various work areas that will be needed,

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of mistakes.**

have a knowledge of the acoustical concerns unique to a radio station. Isolation of one room from another, quiet air handling and good monitor and microphone acoustics are all important in order for your station to sound professional on the air.

Then, the designer must know how to put together an efficient array of equipment and make it all work well together. Depending on the size of the

(continued on page 29)



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Studio Site

continued from page 28

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and then find a suitable space. In this way work can proceed smoothly and with minimum delays.

When choosing these people or firms, do your homework. Check their references carefully. Just because someone gives you a long list of clients, don't assume that these are all happy ones. Call at least some of their clients and talk to the person who most closely worked with them. Ask pointed questions about how well they performed, and especially how happy the client is with the work.

Also ask the reference for other clients that you can contact. Sometimes you will dig up information in this manner that may indicate that you won't be able to work with that person. Remember that you are hiring these people to serve you, and if they don't do it or don't do it well, they are going to give you unnecessary headaches.

A First-Hand Look

After you have checked the information and talked with clients, try to evaluate the work they have done for any clients with needs similar to yours.

In the case of the real estate agent, try to find out how well the budget and time schedules were met. For the architect and studio consultant, check out their work, either in person or at least through photographs. An architect may do a fine job for one client, but not be able to serve you well if your needs are vastly different.

Check the work of the studio consultant to make sure the rooms sound good and the equipment layout and wiring is usable, especially after a few years. Of course, make sure they can work within your ideas of what will look good.

Eventually you will be at the point of signing a contract with the various firms. Make sure that the contracts contain clauses that will release you from the commitment if you find you are not working well together or other guidelines are not met.

Also, be sure to check the payment schedule to see if it can work within your budget and cash flow. If you have a problem with any of these, discuss them openly with the service provider to see if changes can be made.

When you have selected your real estate agent, architect, and studio consultant, and have signed contracts, you are ready to begin looking at your needs and conceptualizing your dream radio station. Next time, we will look at this process.

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Radio Guide Page 29