

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious,
than to be able to decide.

- Napoleon



DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Every residential construction project eventually becomes a **HOME** where families celebrate holidays, birthdays, graduations, and retirements. The ultimate goal of the Design/Build process is *to create a lifestyle which meets the needs of the family*. For this reason, the Owner should be at the center of all decisions. Each construction professional--Construction Manager, Architect, Trade Contractors, Suppliers, Plan Examiner, Field Inspector--should dedicate their activities toward serving the Owner's best interest.

There are a variety of roles to be played on the construction stage, and the Owner's vision as project director is the guiding influence for everyone's performance. A listing of the principal players will help orient Owners to the cast of characters:

Construction Manager

Responsible for assisting Owner in planning, organizing, and controlling the Design/Build process to ensure Owner's best interest is maintained from start to finish.

Architect/Designer

Responsible for creation of Drawings and Specifications following requirements provided by Owner orienting house and site to family lifestyle prior to and during construction.

Trade Contractors and Suppliers

Responsible for providing material and/or labor at each phase of construction adhering to Drawings and Specifications, and accountable directly to the Owner.

Plan Examiner and Field Inspector

Responsible for reviewing Design/Build criteria both prior to and during construction process to maintain compliance with applicable codes and ordinances in your area.

We hope the Owner will act as the General Contractor playing the role of leader to the entire construction organization. With the possible assistance of a Construction Manager, the Owner contracts all activities in order to save money, maintain standards for quality, and provide personal attention to all phases of the Design/Build process.

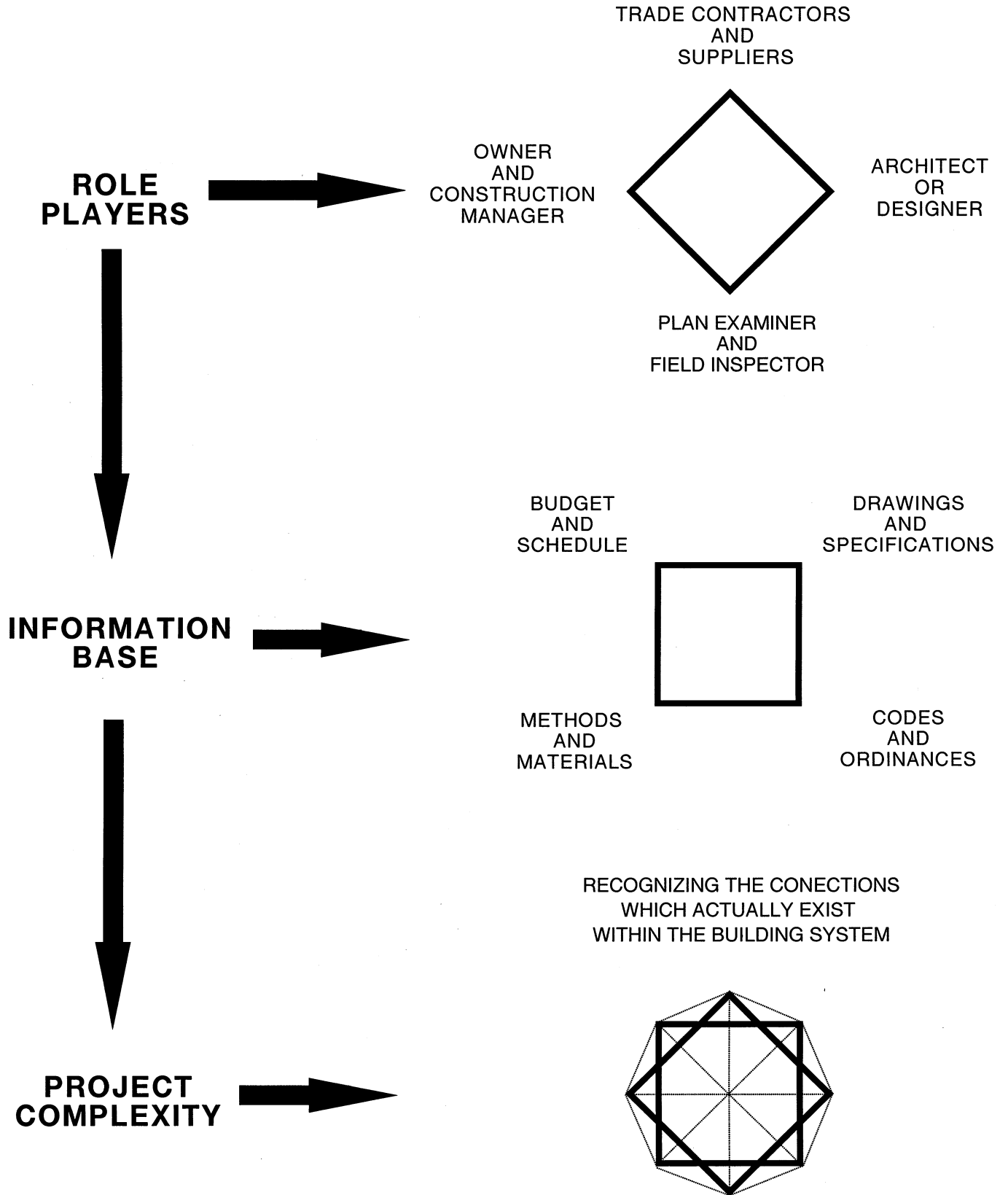
The figure on the following page illustrates how the decision making process shifts from the simple desire of the Owner to create a new home to **utilizing the complex information base of the construction industry**. Each professional provides specialized information to the Owner from years of education and experience to create the best results possible for the decisions to be made. All information is interdependent as each role player relies on the other for guidance during the Design/Build process.

Although an optimistic "*can do*" attitude by the Owner is to be admired, one should be mindful that the existence of these various roles and specialized bodies of knowledge is born of necessity. Defining the requirements of your lifestyle, generating Drawings and Specifications, determining a Budget and Schedule, and locating Trade Contractors and Suppliers are overwhelming tasks which may be considered **shared responsibilities in order to simplify decision making**.

Decision making begins early in the Design/Build process so make every effort, if necessary, to collaborate with a Construction Manager, Architect, Engineer, Suppliers, Trade Contractors, Lawyer, or Accountant. Be aware of the "systemic" qualities of Project Management; in other words, all parts of residential construction comprise a unified whole. For instance, where one locates their home on site determines logistics for material delivery and utilities layout. A terrific location may create a logistical nightmare, or, worse yet, denial of a building permit. **By recognizing the connections which actually exist within the building system, the Owner accepts the roles of the various players, the contributions they make, and proceeds cautiously when decision making.**

Another consideration for the Owner is **how to record information throughout the Design/Build process in order to make decisions efficiently and effectively**. The choice is between a manual or automated system for information storage and referral. A manual system relies on manila files, checklists, and a traditional use of paper and pencil techniques. An automated system incorporates computer hardware, software, and an electronic approach to information processing.

DECISION MAKING MODEL



For the purposes of this guide, the Owner is encouraged to use a manual system. For a one-time use on a construction project, a considerable amount of time will be dedicated to training for and development of an automated system geared toward building construction. Rather than expend the time and effort, not to mention hardware and software costs, to develop a proficiency in the use of an automated system, the Owner should concentrate on the primary goal of Project Management: ***to create a homestyle which meets the needs of a lifestyle.***

Following a manual approach to information processing allows the Owner to begin immediately with the Design/Build process, analyze the circumstances of the project, and concentrate on decisions which directly relate to Project Management. However, if the Owner is proficient in the use of an automated system, by all means, put your hardware and software skills to use.

For a manual approach, there are several products which will improve the efficiency of decision making. The "Construction Master IV"[®] from Calculated Industries (See "Information Resources") is a hand-held calculator which lets you solve building problems in the feet-inch format when checking material quantities, unit costs, stair and roof layout, square footage, and volume calculations. The instructions are easy to understand, and the Owner can begin using the calculator immediately.

Another indispensable tool is a word processor like the Brother Model WP-5750 DS (See "Information Resources"). With minimal training, the Owner produces letters, memos, and documents which can be stored in "memory" as a diary of all communications with Trade Contractors and Suppliers (See "Job Diary" on Page 129). This portable word processor also functions as a standard typewriter so Owners with basic typing skills easily begin with what they already know and progress into more efficient word processing applications.

The result of supporting a manual system with a construction calculator and word processor creates a hybrid method combining small-scale automated equipment with traditional paper and pencil techniques. When analyzing and recording information for decision making, ***the Owner should utilize available technology yet realize the need to get on with the tasks of Project Management.***