

# Inevitable Change

We often are so busy with our daily routines that we lose track of time. I'm not referring to the amount of time we spend at work or the span between winter and fall. (Although I already do wish spring would hurry up and get here.) Rather, I am talking about the last time we stopped to check our specifications and make a significant update. If we measured time by the incremental updates to our master specifications, life would fly by in decades, not days.

A few years ago I heard a rumor that the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) was reviewing the then-current specifications format and was anticipating making a change. Then one day it happened: New section numbers were added. Not just a few new section numbers were created—we now have entirely new divisions. I admit that I was skeptical, and maybe a little perplexed, when I first heard about the proposed change. But then other things—day-to-day project work and responsibilities for professional societies—once again inundated me, and I forgot that change is inevitable.

However, this change is for the good and actually will

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help the coordination efforts required in specifications. Plumbing formerly was part of and directly associated with the mechanical sections of the specifications. Thankfully, that now has changed. Plumbing has its own division. Thank you, CSI.

Before this change, we were forced to coordinate between the plumbing and mechanical designers for the shared specifications sections. Inevitably the plumbing designer's modifications were affected by the mechanical designer's modifications. Now plumbing designers are required to write their own sections for everything. Personally, I think this will be good for our projects because plumbing designers know what they are specifying and can ensure that all the needed sections are actually in the project manual. This eliminates a common quandary: I was supposed to write that one too?

Change allows us to take the time to review what we do and how we do it. We specify many things on a regular basis and take items from here and there because we know that we added a particular fixture to a particular project. The next thing you know, you are not using anything that resembles the master except the section number. So sometimes you have to feel the pain and make the change, no matter how painful that change may be.

For my company the change started 18 months ago, and we have been anticipating and working toward implementation of the new specifications. We updated many of the sections, but procrastination had left me with one daunting task: plumbing fixtures. I did not think this task would be much of a challenge. After all, I edited the plumbing fixture section the last time it was updated almost six years ago. Do you have any idea how many things have changed in the past six years? Product numbers were the very least of the issues when I tried to assemble this information. Entire new product lines have been developed. Embracing sustainability has provided a new adventure that must be addressed in today's built environment that we were only discussing in vague terms six years ago. Opportunities abound with innovative ways to solve old problems, but our specifications are one of those necessary evils that we change only when forced. (Thankfully, someone else in another office is writing the other sections of the new specifications.) Change is good, but sharing is better. Change can be a very frustrating thing. Often after changing something you have a completely different outlook of the issue than when you began the modification. However, when this section is complete it should be more user friendly than the old section and hopefully easier to edit.

Change is inevitable, but embracing that change is worth the challenge. Embracing change is what allows us to grow and be better people. The task is not usually easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. I look forward to our new specifications when we roll them out, but I guess I better get back to work so we can debut them soon.

Take the initiative and check your specifications. You may be surprised at what needs to be changed. Until then, I have to get back to those plumbing fixture specs. **PSD**



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