



## **IFMA hosts project management for facility managers event**

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How to successfully manage a project was the topic presented by Robert Cottrell, CFM, at a recent IFMA evening event attended by 40 members and guests. The event was held at the Newsweek offices on West 57th St. and included a networking cocktail hour.

Cottrell, who owns Facilities Management Partners, LLC, has twenty years of project management experience and has refined the project management process to identify key ingredients to successful projects. He has found that communication and managing the expectations and responsibilities of all project participants lays the groundwork for success.

Cottrell defined project management for the attendees as "the combination of people, systems and techniques required to coordinate the resources needed to complete projects within established goals." Further, he stated that a successful project is on time, on or under budget, and meets everyone's expectations.

Generally, project participants include senior management representing the owner, the facility manager, a project manager, architects and engineers, and the general contractor or construction manager & respective subs. Cottrell said managing such a diverse group with, at the surface, competing interests, was the biggest challenge to success. He explained that getting each constituent to see that they were all working to achieve the same success was no easy task.

However, success for each participant needs to be defined and managed. For the owner, meeting budget and schedule objectives is success. For the facility manager, getting a product that functions properly and operates efficiently is a big part of success. For the architect and engineer, having an owner and facility manager who communicate precisely what the project entails both physically and operationally leads them to success. The GC or CM and their subs achieve success when they can build it right due to good architectural and engineering plans and specifications.

Cottrell did say, nevertheless, that the center of a successful project is managing the budget process so that the budget was realistic and accommodated contingencies, under-estimates and major changes. The second most important element is scheduling in a realistic, holistic and trackable fashion. Together, the budget and schedule were important project management tools.

Cottrell used a PowerPoint presentation and a lively delivery interspersed with interesting anecdotes to keep the audience entertained while getting his educational message across.

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