



Selection of an Acoustical Consultant*

If you have not already established an on-going relationship with an acoustical consultant, the National Council of Acoustical Consultants (NCAC) recommends for your consideration the following method of selection and retention tested through many years of successful application:

1. Determine, to the extent possible, the nature and scope of the problem or assignment involved.
2. Through contact with mutual acquaintances who have previously utilized acoustical consultants, or from directories of qualified independent consulting firms provided by an organization such as NCAC, identify one or more acoustical consultants, who, by virtue of previous experience, stated capabilities, availability and proximity of location, as well as other relevant factors, appear to be generally qualified to undertake the project.
3. Provide project details to the consultants so identified and request from each statements of qualification, including a complete description of the firm, previous assignments and clients, names and biographies of persons who would be working on the project, anticipated time schedules involved, and other factors which relate to the quality of work to be performed.
4. After thorough review of applicant firms, credentials and experience data, possibly including direct contact with firm representatives if such can be arranged, identify the firm which appears most qualified to service your specific requirements.
5. Contact representatives of that firm believed to be most qualified and open negotiations to establish a mutually acceptable consulting fee arrangement and payment methodology. Most consultants are experienced in at least several types of retention agreements, including hourly fixed rate, fixed fee, cost plus fixed fee, percentage of overhead, etc.; usually one of these will be most suited to the type of work involved.
6. If the negotiations prove satisfactory, the client should at this point retain the consultant to ensure availability for the project. If negotiations are not successful, they should be terminated and opened with other qualified firms, one at a time.

The NCAC encourages open and frank discussion of financial concerns between the client and consultant. Experience demonstrates that mutually satisfactory client-consultant relationships rest predominantly on the consultant's ability to deliver cost effective services on time and within the scope of the agreement. It is urged strongly, however, that discussion of fees be totally divorced from the ranking of qualifications to prevent financial considerations from biasing the selection process. True economy results only when services provided are cost-effective in the long-term, helping ensure results that satisfy the client's needs from an overall standpoint. A consultant who is fully competent to undertake the work is the one most likely to provide such results.

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