



# STEWARDSHIP MATTERS: HOW TO GET IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS FOR CHURCH RENOVATION PROJECTS  
BY PARAGON 360®





# 4 KEY STEPS TO DELIVER A SUCCESSFUL RENOVATION PROJECT

Church renovation projects are almost always more complicated than they initially appear. No matter how big or small – there are numerous decisions throughout the process. As you consider a church renovation project, here are four key steps: find the ‘why’, cast compelling vision, choose a design-build project, and choose the right partner.

When it comes to renovating any church space, there's real value in ensuring the work is done properly from the start. If you find yourself having to remodel and fix things

four or six years later—whether it's a lobby renovation or an audio, video and lighting (AVL) system upgrade in the sanctuary—it raises a critical question about the stewardship of that initial project. Ultimately, redoing or repairing work can often negate any short-term savings from the original project and cause you to lose support for future projects. This highlights the importance of getting it right the first time.

**Read on to see how you can help ensure your renovation project is a success.**





# 1. FIND THE WHY

Before you can cast the vision or even choose a partner, you need to be able to answer the single most important question: 'why'. Many people want to renovate but they don't have the 'why' figured out. Knowing the 'why' behind your renovation project will include asking yourself layers and layers of questions:

- 1 Who attends – Who is the core? And yes... lots of people attend but who is the target? Who are we trying to reach?**
- 2 Let's talk about styles – Is there a multi-generational impact to deal with?**
- 3 Does your space reflect your core values, and does it need to?**
- 4 Is it designed for the church or unchurched?**

Your renovation partner should spend hours asking questions and digging in. Many AVL integrators or architects may not be going that deep, but they should be if they are really trying to help solve the issues and not just trying to push equipment and services. The 'why' should be informing your design teams and/or integrator's decisions throughout the process. In more than 1,000 projects over 25 years – Paragon has yet to find a client that can afford all they want. So, it comes down to priorities and that comes down to being crystal clear about what we are doing and 'why'.

If you are investing a lot of money, you need to know 'why'. The people supporting and funding your project are also going to want to know why. When planning, always keep that front and center. For example, yes, the sanctuary needs renovated, but why? And not just because it's old and smells bad but what's the ministry need behind the project and what does this allow you to do? Knowing the answer will help guide the project, build support and help ensure you get it right.



SECOND BAPTIST, SPRINGFIELD, MO



## 2. CASTING VISION

Secondly, it's critical to cast a compelling vision to your congregation. This is one of the most important ways of gaining support for your project. There is a big difference between listing out the needs, how you plan to address them and what it's going to cost and casting an exciting vision for the future. It's important to remember that people don't give to *need* they give to *vision*.

Involvement creates ownership which results in giving. You should work to get your people excited to be a part of this change, get them busy, and get them engaged. A great way to do this is by developing a small "marketing team." Cast the vision in depth to that team, answer questions, and vet your plans. Once you have buy-in from that team, they become the ambassadors to help you cast the vision to the larger congregation. Casting vision is much easier when it's not just coming from staff and leadership.

Regardless of the size or the complexity of the project, you will have to find a way to break it down to simple plans for a single mission. You will find that you can't sell complicated plans to large groups of people. As you increase the number of people you need to decrease the complexity. This is never truer than in renovation projects. This will greatly simplify your vision casting efforts.

If you want to motivate or inspire people to get behind your project or new initiative, you must start by casting a compelling vision.

**The 'why' has to be at the center of that vision – which means it should lead the design process from the very beginning.**







# 3. CHOOSE A DESIGN-BUILD PROJECT

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The next key point can make or break your renovation project as far as being on-budget and on-time. It's important to know your options and which one is the best. There are two different approaches to renovation projects: design-bid and design-build.

Design-bid is a traditional project delivery method where the design and construction of a project are contracted out separately to two different contractors. For church projects there are many disadvantages to this such as project delays, cost uncertainty, lack of unified vision, increased administrative and design fees and the owner typically carries more of the risk.

Meanwhile, the design-build process is used by companies that take full accountability for the process from start to finish because they can do the design and the implementation.

Therefore, the absolute best chance of getting it right the first time will be under a design-build arrangement. It's the only process that can guarantee success. The only way a company can truly guarantee its work and take accountability for the project is to be responsible for the design and the implementation of said work. If it is easy for any party to push the blame off to other contractors, designers, installers and so on... they absolutely will.

The design-build process transfers the burdens of the project from you to your partner so that they can take full responsibility, ensuring your success. Working in a design-build process not only saves you money, but it also expedites the process, improves the coordination and results in less change orders. If you have a chance at on-time, on-budget with true accountability — it's going to be a design-build project all day long.







# 4. CHOOSING THE RIGHT PARTNERS

## REPUTATION AND DESIGN EXPERTISE MATTERS

Make sure you find the right partners. That doesn't mean hiring local, hiring the cheapest or hiring your friend's company — it means hiring the company that's going to help you get it right the first time. If the first run is a swing-and-a-miss — that's not a win, no matter what it cost.

Ensure you are working with a reputable firm that is not going to take advantage of you. In today's environment, it's easy to study a firm's reputation and track record. The good ones are going to have pages of references, testimonial videos, and a track record of long-standing relationships. If they don't, they are *not* the right company. Find a firm that you can really trust. Find a firm that's been doing church renovation projects for many years — successfully.

Secondly, you need to consider their design expertise. Not many firms are doing real design work — many of them (and even some of the larger companies) are using copy-and-paste packaged designs. This means, in the case of an AVL integration firm, that they are having their manufacturers do the design work for them or designing around the select equipment they sell. In today's systems, integrated design makes such a difference in the end-product. It's often easier to get it wrong than to get it right.

**The old saying goes,  
"If you think design work is  
expensive, you should see  
the cost of free design."**







First West Monroe in West Monroe, LA, went through the process to find the right partner that would help them plan, manage, and support their vision. They needed someone to help achieve their goals: appealing to the younger generations and having a smooth, uninterrupted service.

Paragon 360's team was honored to be selected to make their renovation dreams a reality. It started with master planning and the creation of a multi-phased plan and timeline for First West Monroe that included renovating while maintaining the historic architecture and overall feel of Feazel Chapel, a building on First West Monroe's campus.

The next phase would begin on the main sanctuary space. First West Monroe was able to present these phases in smaller pieces for their congregation to keep it simple while still building excitement for the changes.

Ultimately, First West Monroe came to our team, and they were able to clearly articulate their goals and the 'why' behind their choices and we were happy to partner and ensure their vision came to life. Paragon 360 provided services and equipment in all the following areas: audio, video, lighting, acoustics, rigging, staging, interior design, and scenic elements.





**I think the return on investment with Paragon is very, very high.** Paragon does a great job of maximizing the money, giving us a great value for what we're spending."

**TIM SPENCER**

Executive Pastor, First West Monroe, LA



## SUMMARY

Successful renovation projects are driven by finding the 'why', casting a compelling vision, choosing a design-build project, and choosing the right partner. Making well-thought-out decisions from the start is critical to avoiding mistakes and ensuring your goals are met.

If you have to redo the renovation or overall project again in five years, the money you *saved* the first time never even mattered. Save your church time, money, and remember the four key steps above to support a successful renovation project.

Paragon 360 has extensive experience partnering with over a thousand churches in 25 years, we know churches need to get it right the first time. In this day and age, when funding is getting harder and construction is more expensive. Churches cannot afford a swing-and-a-miss.

**Work with the NAME TRUSTED MORE on your next renovation or design-build project: [Paragon 360](#).**

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT PARAGON CAN DO FOR YOU?**

**Reach out to [info@paragon360.com](mailto:info@paragon360.com) to get connected with our team.**