



Collaborative partnerships in construction: deep dive with Project One

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At Knight Frank, within our Project Management and Building Consultancy department (PMBC), we are constantly striving to provide our clients with the best project outcomes. We act as pure project managers, which means we have no affiliation with any contractors, consultants or suppliers as this enables us to always act in the best interests of our clients. That said, our project management philosophy is that successful projects stem from successful relationships and by building an excellent project team.

We pride ourselves on the strong relationships we develop with the skilled consultants and contractors that we procure for our clients. Gone are the days of establishing an 'us' and 'them' culture between the client team and the contractor; our approach is team orientated. Instead we often recommend the construction works are procured with Early Contractor Involvement ('ECI'), to reap the benefits a collaborative approach of combined expertise offers.

In this article, we asked Project One's Pip de Rohan to offer his take on the benefits of ECI from the contractor's perspective.

Project One is an established Construction Management Firm specialising

in the delivery of commercial interior fitout and refurbishment projects across Australia (\$30m turnover).

In a property world that is becoming more dynamic and more sophisticated by the week, the opportunity to maximise returns through re-brand, design, fit out and refurbishment initiatives by engaging in collaborative partnerships has never been more accessible.

The selection of highly-skilled teams, together with careful consideration for the best construction delivery model, now represents one of the greatest opportunities to realise the real potential invested in commercial property upgrades.

There is a distinct move towards more hybrid project procurement models, that utilise Early Contractor Involvement ('ECI'), made evident as the competition for co-working, flexible workspace solutions, flexible leases, activation of common property and increased occupancy rates continues.

Although the industry standard procurement models, such as traditional lump sum, or Design and Construct (D&C), continue to be used there is certainly more strategic, rewarding and meaningful collaboration between project managers and construction managers taking place. The Early Contractor Engagement of a qualified building contractor, formal or otherwise, can add significant value to the outcomes of the project as the team innovates together to bring their back-end expertise to the front end of the project.

The coming together of landlords, project managers, designers, clients, contractors and even innovators with the same mindset provides a unique pool of expertise and a unique opportunity to ensure that the commercial return for investors exceeds expectations.

The value of ECI can be measured through accelerated timelines, early design resolution, value-engineered solutions maintaining the design intent and efficient delivery methods. In this instance, the whole is most certainly greater than the sum of all its parts and can be measured in both tangible (commercial) and intangible terms (experiential).

The more progressive clients managing capital expenditure across multiple projects are streamlining their procurement process. They are inviting contractors and consultants the opportunity to sit on a preferred panel of service providers following a rigorous review process of their respective capabilities. This progressive model ensures retention of the intellectual property, and retention of value-add initiatives and key learnings, through dedicated teams delivering to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and even financial incentives out-performing those KPIs.

We can also see examples of hybrid business models, with construction firms offering multi-disciplinary services in response to the ever-changing market. They might include interior design, services design (mechanical, electrical, fire and hydraulics), design management, furniture procurement management or graphic design. As a result, such contractors are being engaged on a more consultative basis by project managers based on their unique set of skills and holistic delivery experience.

The term 'fast-track' has never been more relevant as landlords look to accelerate programs by integrating make-goods, building upgrades and spec fit outs all at once – saving on professional fees and contractors' preliminary costs. For the smaller Design & Construct projects (circa 200 sqm > 1000 sqm) there are now very competitive lead times for the availability of fit-out products to a high level of design specification – often available in stock or within a matter of days. As such, more projects are being designed by price with designs

that will certainly outlast the term of the lease.

For seven years Project One has delivered commercial office/industrial construction projects under traditional delivery models (Lump Sum, Construction Management and D&C) but in the last two we have engineered our capabilities to meet the requirements of the changing market. As a result, we now also have expertise to deliver major fire upgrades and to professionally manage D&C for mechanical, electrical and hydraulics, in addition to our core skill of construction management.

Project One has a wealth of experience working with landlords, project managers, architects, designers and tenants alike, inviting early to push the envelope of what is possible to achieve the very best outcomes for the project. Such clients include Dexus, Grimshaw, April Group, Fortius, Mirvac, Combes Property Group, UBER, Trip A Deal, and of course Knight Frank to name a few.

Below are some examples of projects delivered by Project One on this basis.

Brambles	
Project Manager	Knight Frank
Project Type	Office Fitout
Area	800 sqm
Time	6 weeks
Design Intent	Graypuksand
Design Management	Project One
Construction Management	Project One
Services D&C Management	Project One

Tenable	
Project Manager	Knight Frank
Project Type	Office Fitout
Area	600 sqm
Time	8 weeks
Design Intent	Project One
Design Management	Project One
Construction Management	Project One
Services D&C Management	Project One

Uber (multiple)	
Project Type	Warehouse refurbishment & fitout
Area	2,000 sqm
Time	10 weeks
Architectural Design	Hot Black
Design Management	Project One
Construction Management	Project One
Services D&C Management	Project One

Fortius	
Project Type	Spec-Office Fitout
Area	1,100 sqm
Time	8 weeks
Design	Hot Black

Fortius	
Design Management	Project One
Construction Management	Project One
Services D&C Management	Project One

Holt & Hart	
Project Type	Integrated office refurbishment & fitout
Area	1,200 sqm
Time	10 weeks
Architectural Design	SIB
Construction Management	Project One
Services D&C Management	Project One

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