COORDINATING TENANT FIT-OUT REQUIREMENTS WITHIN NEW OR EXISTING BUILDINGS

When completing a tenant fit-out, the selection of the building is a critical factor in achieving the required result. Whether moving to an existing building or one under construction, it is important to focus on coordinating requirements with the base building to ensure the tenant space meets the project-specific fit-out needs. Although relocating to a building that is under construction provides greater flexibility for customized build-out requirements, early planning and engagement are vital to success, regardless of the selected space. The below guide supports a seamless transition for tenants in the planning process, from building selection through to fit-out completion.

ENGAGE EARLY
Tenant-specific changes to the core and shell of a building are smoother and more cost effective if they are finalized as early as possible relative to the core and shell program. Early notification is critical to the contractor’s ability to successfully manage the design team, update the drawings and coordinate with the Department of Buildings to ultimately avoid impacting the final project schedule. Creating an open dialogue with the landlord and the core and shell contractor allows all parties to react quickly to the needs of the prospective tenant, without impacting the overall cost and schedule of the building.

POWER REQUIREMENTS
Does the business have additional power requirements above what is being offered by the landlord? A generator or an emergency power requirement is additional to the usual tenant offering. The landlord should be engaged to confirm that the watts per square foot match a tenant’s business requirements. Unique telecommunications or data needs should also be discussed early to ensure the business has appropriate connectivity.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION
Further requirements for security should be assessed to achieve a secure facility that reflects a business’ unique access control needs. A technology analysis should also include the coordination of industry-specific, technology-related hardware and software to ensure 24/7 operational continuity.

LIVE LOAD CAPACITY
Is additional capacity for live load required? Extra equipment, such as servers, may increase the required capacity for live load. This can also have an impact on power requirements.
COOLING NEEDS
Depending on the nature of a business, increased cooling capacity may be necessary. Additional conference centers or food services in the office can increase the required cooling capacity, which should be discussed and negotiated prior to signing a lease. This added cooling capacity can also impact power and live load requirements.

CONNECTIVITY
Multi-level fit-outs require tenants to consider the physical office environment’s impact on culture, as well as daily operational requirements for adjacencies and dependencies. Connecting floors with internal staircases, escalators or dedicated visual openings can provide a vertical flow, address a lack of connectivity and contribute positively to the culture and integration of an organization. Alternatively, personal elevators can also assist to bring a team together when they are spread across many floors.

Often, the decision is influenced by the structural allowance of the building. Engaging with the landlord and base building contractor will provide a clear understanding of the options for increased inter-level connectivity, ensuring the end result meets the cultural requirement.

CUSTOMIZATION
Each tenant usually has at least one additional request outside of the standard building offering. This personalized requirement is often influenced by industry type, specific business need or company culture. Selecting a new building that is under construction increases the chances of being able to personalize a tenant space. Unique requests should be made as early as possible to minimize the impact to core and shell construction and maximize the ability to achieve fit-out objectives.

Below are some examples of potential customization.

» **Terraces**: these can be added during base building construction to create outdoor spaces that provide additional employee benefits or event spaces. Engaging with the landlord and base building contractor early in the construction program minimizes changes to the engineering of the original building plan.

» **Raised floors for a data center or trading floor**: these modifications can be achieved through early coordination with the core and shell contractor to avoid a dangerous drop off in floor height in the bathrooms and communal spaces.

» **Amenities**: kitchenettes with gas services, routing for kitchen exhaust ductwork, additional sanitary and waste plumbing, or even simple bathroom design changes, are all possible add-ons or amendments that can be achieved during early coordination with the landlord and core and shell contractor.
INTEGRATING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

After a tenant has negotiated the build-out requirements for the core and shell in order to finalize the design, there are multiple questions that need to be addressed. When a building is still under construction, it’s important to understand the potential impacts this can have on the fit-out contractor. Ideally, a tenant wants to begin their fit-out the day after the core and shell contractor achieves the Certificate of Occupancy, but it is important to understand if this is a viable timeline. Landlord guarantees for the date of accessing the tenant floor, elevator availability, the amount of power provided to the tenant during the fit-out, impacts of potential service interruptions during business hours, and access to temporary restrooms are all important factors to confirm upfront in order to understand the program for the tenant fit-out.

The movement of labor and material is one of the most important elements to consider. Tenants should ask about their access to and the scheduling of the hoist. This determines if the fit-out contractor will need to share the core and shell contractor’s hoist, or if they will be allocated an additional hoist. If hoist access is limited to after-hours and weekend work only, it will significantly increase the cost of construction. Tenants should also question when they will be able to transition from the external hoist to the permanent building elevator, as well as when the external facade will be completed, to allow interior finishes. Additionally, deliveries are vital to meeting a fit-out’s schedule. Tenants should confirm the timing and frequency of their loading dock access to understand the full delivery cost and time implications to their fit-out.

END RESULT

There are numerous components to question and confirm during the building selection step of a tenant fit-out. It’s critical to undertake careful planning and engage the landlord, as well as the core and shell contractor for new buildings, early in the process to make the right decision for a company’s unique needs. A carefully integrated design and coordination process with the relevant stakeholders will provide a safe, cost-effective and timely project that will provide tenants with a lasting, customized and high-quality result.

Are you relocating your office? Click here to contact Gilbane’s interiors expert, Jay Prybylski, to discuss your unique needs and the best strategy to maximize your new space.