



Customer Satisfaction The Key to Success



In today's marketplace, with the competition among quality contractors as intense as ever, excellent customer service is a key way to differentiate yourself and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. A wise company will strive to maximize customer satisfaction, which translates directly into customer retention and long term, valued partnerships.

One of American Constructors key focus areas is to keep its clients happy – and keep them coming back. This edition of *Projections* focuses on current projects in which our dedication to complete customer satisfaction has contributed significantly to their success.

Customer satisfaction and customer retention go hand-in-hand. Research shows that only four percent of customers with problems complain, but the average person will tell nine other people the problems they run into. Therefore, it is critical to seek out customer feedback before issues result in a lost customer.

At American Constructors, we realize that our clients in the healthcare, commercial,

educational and other segments have their own set of requirements, goals and expectations. Accordingly, we invest considerable resources into the research of new technical construction concepts. We train our personnel in leadership, management and communications techniques. We recruit personnel who are predisposed to this philosophy and take the time to understand each of our customers. We want our customers to see us as a

resource and asset, not just a contractor.

We've found that working with consultants and subcontractors with similar philosophies has served to strengthen our approach. We focus our pursuit on the type of work that provides the best opportunity for in-depth communication, partnering with our clients and collaboration across the board – all the things we do best. ◯➔

AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: On a Fast Track to Success

A potentially disruptive construction project for the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary was kept on track to a smooth completion thanks to American Constructors' proactive, team-oriented approach.

The Anderson House Residence Hall, completed this summer by American Constructors, is a four-story, 24-unit (single, double and triple bedrooms), 35,000 square foot building with an underground, single-level parking garage. The building's physical location was its biggest challenge. Crews worked on an active college campus for more than 12 months, closed an existing street, eliminated four duplexes and were faced with potentially losing 50 much-needed parking spaces during the construction effort.

Complex issues such as these require detailed input and decisions from a number of entities. As construction manager, American Constructors joined with the owner, architect (O'Connell Robertson),

program manager, (Project Control), consultants, city agencies and neighborhood groups to implement a pro-active, results-oriented approach that resolved the following issues in the best interest of the students, community and seminary:

- **Working on an active campus** – Detailed procedures were developed for proper notifications; temporary pedestrian and traffic routes; safety and security concerns; and construction impacts such as noise control, dust control, street cleaning and material delivery and storage.
- **Parking** – Initial plans called for 50 of the owner's parking spaces to be used for material storage and equipment laydown during construction. Instead, the construction phasing plan was revised so the garage floor was completed early. Crews used this area instead and closely monitored the delivery of construction materials and equipment. As a result, American Constructors was able to keep these important parking spaces for use by the owner during construction.
- **Taking four duplexes out of operation** – The team fast-tracked the entire design and construction phases to complete the project in the summer of 2009 as planned despite significant startup delays at the beginning of the project. This fast track made sure any lost housing was replaced as soon as possible.



Varying surface materials enhance the hall's finished appeal and help it blend with existing buildings.

- **Removing an existing street** – This included relocation of existing utility services that ran down both sides of the road. Underground infrastructure had to be installed for the relocation of these services. This required extensive coordination between American Constructors, engineers, city agencies and utility service providers. All of this was completed in time to keep the project on schedule.

The successful completion of the Anderson House Residence Hall required a team that was committed to providing the resources it took until the best solutions were reached. The project team remained open to creative and new alternatives, adjusted to the needs of the project, kept the lines of communication open and made timely decisions. The total team effort resulted in a very satisfied customer and successful project. ◯➔



Furnished units were designed to accommodate visiting professors to make their stay comfortable.

Monroe Stadium: A Collaborative Approach to a Complex Project



Few construction projects are ever cut-and-dried, but the Leander School District's Monroe Stadium was trickier than most. With an exceptionally fast-track construction schedule that required an early completion, American Constructors crews relied on its practiced collaborative approach to ensure the job was built to the owner's satisfaction and within the tight timeframe.

As part of the district's master plan for new facilities, district leaders wanted to develop one site that would include a middle school, high school and major sports complex that would serve both schools as well as other district schools. The project that was ready to start the earliest was the middle school. However, due to the rapid growth and demographics in this area, the critical need was for a new high school and associated sport complex facilities to be built first, with the middle school to follow.

After considering several strategic options, it was decided that the middle school would proceed as planned and be completed in the summer of 2009. However, this middle school would open as a high school (ninth and tenth grades) to meet the district needs. This plan became even more challenging when it was confirmed that for the middle school to open as a high school, the competition football field and associated facilities such as bleachers, concessions, pressbox, field house and parking had to be completed at the same time. At the time this opening strategy decision was made, design work on the stadium had not even started.

American Constructors, working with the owner, architect and consultants, would be busy addressing a number of issues ranging from code compliance, permitting, foundation studies and mechanical systems design to site development, parking and signage. To ensure that the stadium would be



Monroe Stadium will accommodate over 5,000 students, faculty, parents and spectators.

completed at the same time as the temporary high school – less than one year away – American Constructors relied on the cooperative Construction Manager at Risk construction delivery method to get the job done.

From day one, the entire owner, architect, consultant and construction manager team worked in a collaborative environment to identify every issue that needed to be discussed before and during design and construction. Every entity working on this project used the "Customer First" approach. This resulted in the implementation of many frequently unnoticed details, creating a more efficient and quality facility.

Even though the team worked under a tight and unrelenting schedule, time was taken to evaluate the functional and aesthetic aspects throughout the entire design and construction process (see side story, "Fast and Efficient"). The result? A top-level facility that includes many state-of-the-art design and construction components. The Monroe Stadium was completed in time for the Fall 2009 school year and football season for an appreciative and satisfied customer. ☞

Fast and Efficient: Collaboration Creates Opportunity for Design and Construction Excellence

The start of construction of the Leander School District's Monroe Stadium was delayed for three months as the result of a special excavation cut and fill variance required from the City of Austin. Even faced with this extremely tight schedule during the design and construction of the Leander School District's Monroe Stadium, they did not forget the details. The highlights below show how the designers and contractors worked together to build efficiency and functionality into the stadium.

- **Parking** – Provided at both sides of stadium to minimize walking distance and opposing team fans' interaction.
- **ADA** – All ADA routes and facilities were addressed in original plans for the best use of access and convenience.
- **Entry and exit design** – Both home and visitors have one entry and two exits. This addresses the slower traffic arriving and the mass of fans leaving.
- **Field house** – Allows home and visiting teams to be separated at all times and provides each team's own point of entry onto the field.
- **Concessions** – Carefully laid out in coordination and proximity with the grandstands and restrooms for each side.
- **Concrete paving versus asphalt** – Concrete paving was required due to an agreement between the developer and City of Austin. American Constructors was able to include this in the cost and schedule.
- **Sod versus sprigging landscape** – Due to fertilization requirements and the tight timeframe, laying sod allowed crews to meet the schedule and protect the wildlife preserve surrounding this site.
- **Women's restrooms** – The women's restrooms have two doors to assist in traffic flow in these areas.
- **Exterior veneer** – Stadium buildings are all aesthetically incorporated into the surrounding site buildings, composed of brick and Texas chopped stone.
- **Long jump and pole vault** – These activities were located outside the track to allow for a safer and less congested track and field complex.
- **Groundwater source heat pumps** – The details to make this cost efficient, environmentally friendly system were worked out by American Constructors and used to cool and heat the press box.
- **100 year life span** – Unique and innovative construction techniques using tiltwall panels for the two pressbox towers and concrete for the cross aisles in the bleacher areas increased the life of these facilities from approximately 40 years to 100 years. ☞

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