

Why Hire a Roof Consultant?

By Brandon Hexham, BA, RRO

Discover the benefits of hiring a roofing consultant for your "top job."

WHY HIRE a roof consultant? I'm sure that's a question that several of our clients ask themselves after learning about our profession. In the past, it has been a regular occurrence for owners to either gather referrals from a business colleague/friend, or to open up the Yellow Pages and pick a roofer for their project. This can be a good start, but a roofing consultant can help with several aspects of the roofing project that may never even come to mind. Things like writing a proper specification, ensuring that the roofer is abiding by the proper safety standards, using the right materials and installing them according to the manufacturer's written instructions.

Consultants can also inspect the roofing work in progress on a daily basis to make sure the owner is getting what they're paying for. Roofing consultants help the owner get competitive bidding so that all roofers are bidding on installing the same roofing system. There have been numerous occasions where we have been asked to review quotations from roofers and all of the quotes were different - from the type of materials being used, to the installation methods, to the total price (which is the aspect that most building owners seem to focus on the most). That's understandable, as roofing expenditures account for some of the most expensive construction projects in the construction industry.

Now that we've decided to hire a roof consultant, how do we go about choosing the right one? Well, you should certainly start off by choosing a consultant involved in RCI (Roof Consultants Institute - the Institute of Roofing, Waterproofing and Building Envelope Professionals). This is an organization of over 2000 members across North America that specializes in roofing and the building envelope. Choosing a consultant involved in RCI will help to ensure that you are getting a professional unbiased opinion about your technical roofing/building needs. RCI, Inc. has several educational programs to be taken and certification levels to be achieved, that separate those involved with the organization from the rest of the industry. Designations such as RRO (Registered Roof Observer), RRC (Registered Roof Consultant) and RWC (Registered Waterproofing Consultant) are obtained by passing an 8-hour exam that covers all aspects of roofing and/or waterproofing.

We've chosen our roof consultant, what's next? Now that you've chosen a roof consultant, the next step is to meet with them to figure out how best they can be of assistance. Is it a case of being proactive, where they need to look at your building portfolio and assess the needs of each building and roof level? These building investigations are usually billed on a per building basis, and the amount will depend on size, location and number of roof levels on the building.

OR

Is it a situation where you know that repairs and/or re-roofing needs to take place, and a specification needs to be written and put out to tender to roofers, so that you are getting competitive pricing? Generally, roof consultants charge for this work based on a percentage of the lowest tender price. This percentage is usually broken up into two parts. The first part usually covers the written specification, details, tender analysis and prestart meeting. The second part usually covers the inspection while the roofing work is being carried out. With either of these scenarios, a sit-down meeting should be arranged to make sure that both parties are on the same page.

What goes on during the roofing project? Once the roofing project starts, the consultant will likely take care of all aspects of the job. They will make sure that they are in contact with the roofer each day to confirm that the roofer is onsite in order to conduct inspections of the work in progress. The consultant will keep the owner up to date with the job progress by emailing daily site reports should this be required. The consultant will also approve all invoices for the owner when applicable. It is the consultant's job to ensure that the roofing work carries on smoothly, with as little interruption to the building tenants as possible. A prestart meeting is usually held with the roofer and building owner/property manager to go over the work to take place. There is also a final meeting once the work is completed to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the roofing work.

Ensure your roofing project will go smoother. Don't wait to call a roofing consultant until after a project has gone bad. Building owners and managers should not be expected to be roofing experts, just as roofing experts may not know how to manage buildings. Roof consultants are working hard at educating the roofing industry and our clients, so that we can achieve better building practices and encounter fewer problems on job sites. The cost of retaining a roof consultant will easily be covered by fewer roofing issues and longer lasting roofs.■

Brandon M. Hexham, BA, RRO, has worked with Pinnacle Roofing Consultants Inc. for the past 9 years and is currently the vice president. He graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Arts and is a certified RRO. Brandon has recently completed his term as president of Roof Consultants Institute, Ontario Chapter. He can be reached at info@pinnacle1st.com.