



In Focus is an occasional, ongoing series that outlines a particular career via a Q&A-style interview with someone who has been in the industry for at least 10 years.

Name: Chip Reid

Title: CEO

Organization: Current Builders

Number of Years in the Industry: 36

Heather Huhman: Please describe a "day in the life" in the industry for an entry-level practitioner in building

construction.

Chip Reid: Our Assistant Project Managers (APMs) do whatever they can to assist the project team in delivering the building project on time and within budget to the client. APMs work directly at the project site and do a variety of tasks, including, but not limited to, coordinating inspections, managing change order requests from subcontractors to owners, reviewing shop drawings and updating as-builts at jobsite, updating the construction schedule and managing change order requests. The goal for the APM is to eventually control and update the complete submittal process for entire job.

HH: What skills/knowledge are expected of entry-level professionals in the building construction industry? Also, is an advanced degree recommended, or is a Bachelor's degree acceptable, and why?

CR: We expect our new hires to have computer experience, including familiarity with construction applications. We also expect them to have knowledge of building construction techniques, framing structures and an understanding of all construction trades, including plumbing and electrical.

A Bachelor's degree in building construction is fine, but a Master's is not necessary. However, we have recently found that those with Master's degree seem to be more serious about their careers and bring with them a higher level of personal responsibility. It is important to note that at Current Builders, having a master's degree does not ensure you a higher starting salary than a Bachelor's degree.

HH: What can an entry-level job candidate do, say, prove, etc. during an interview to impress you enough to move to the next stage of the hiring process?

CR: We presently build projects all over the state of Florida. The students that are chosen first are the ones who don't have any geographical limitations or preferences. The more open and flexible they are to location, the easier it is to find them work. We never know where our next project will be other than in Florida! Be in a position of portability.

We also look closely at the number of construction internships under their belt. Summer experience is very important and internships with variety of project management duties are more desirable. Any certifications that can be obtained while in school, such as LEED, are also an added bonus.

HH: What might an entry-level practitioner in building construction expect in terms of salary range?

CR: The Florida construction marketplace typically sets this. In 2008, the starting range was between \$60,000 and \$65,000.

HH: What advice do you have for students or recent graduates looking to "break into" the building construction industry?

CR: Make sure your internships have a variety of project management duties. Don't limit yourself geographically.