NADIIIAA





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The lights are too bright. The music is too loud. This space is not big enough. Can this room accommodate the needs of the rest of campus?

All of these things have been said at one time or another in planning meetings across campus, or in an email from a concerned individual. Whether it is during the early stages of a capital project or items you are learning from the community around your new facility, there is no shortage of feedback and things to consider when completing a capital project on campus. So how do we build facilities that meet the needs of constituents and alleviate the concerns of community members nearby? COMMUNICATION.

It's simple. It is the one thing that we all do each day in our positions. So how can this thing that

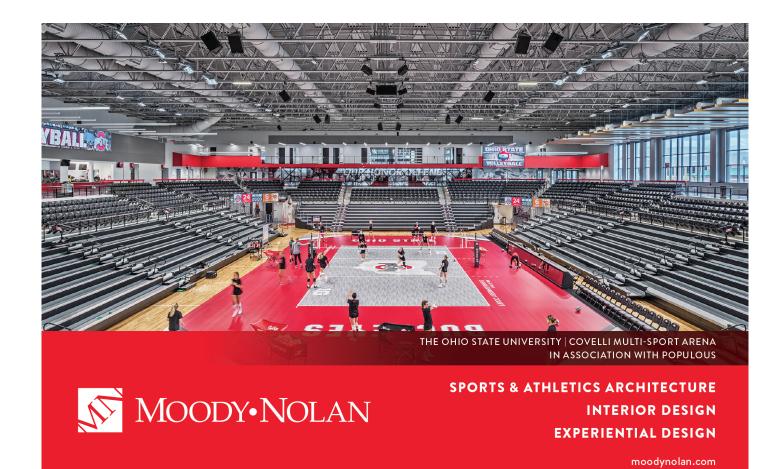
we do each day be the biggest hurdle in capital projects? The reality is that communication is the most important thing we do

in our positions, and if we do not do it effectively or thoroughly, we will end up with the comments stated at the top of the article. None of us want to look back on a project and think we could have done better. This may be the only time on your campus that this type of project will be done. So do not take any chances in your communication.

From the start, we should be asking ourselves who will be impacted by this project. Students, faculty, staff, neighbors, grounds crew, alumni, coaches and donors are just a few groups that come to mind. What better way to make sure that everyone walks away from a project happy and with the ability to spread the good news of a project, than to have them join a planning committee or join an open forum. Working in a silo only causes issues later. So, take the time at the start of a project to collect ideas and feedback on the project. It will serve you better to take the extra time on the front end rather than to go back and potentially spend more monetary resources to correct something that could have been avoided. This work is often fruitful as you will deepen your relationships with various people and collect information that will help evolve a campus project into something worth bragging about.

During this communication process be sure to listen and be strategic with your words. This is the time to learn from others and to create buy-in with the project. It is not the time to tell the groups what they need. If you listen, you may often find that the groups want what is best for the department or institution anyway. The old adage is that we have two ears and only one mouth for a reason — listen twice as much

When we all communicate in a comprehensive and thorough way, projects tend to run smoother and we have more advocates at the conclusion. If nothing else, it may keep comments from coming in that the stadium lights are too bright... Not that I would know anything about that!



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