



Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

September 2004 Volume 4, Issue 3

Current/Recent Project List

- Interpretive Sign Design, Potato Creek State Park, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Interpretive Sign Plan and Design, North Hydro Park, Charter Township of Ypsilanti (MI) with *Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc.*
- Interpretive Sign Design, River Bluff Trail, Logansport (IN) Memorial Hospital
- Interpretive Sign Design, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Chapter
- Interpretive Sign and Brochure Design, Stormwater Management Demonstration Project, Porter County (IN) with *J.F. New & Associates*
- Interpretive Sign Design, Latimer Woods, Bloomington Parks and Recreation (IN)
- Interpretive Sign Design, Chilo Lock and Dam, Clermont County Park District (OH)
- Exhibit Planner, Mansfield Mill, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, with *Lifespace Design*
- Exhibit Planner, McCormick's Creek State Park, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, with *Lifespace Design*
- Interpretive Planner, Lincoln State Park, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, with *Lifespace Design*
- Interpretive Plan, Prophetstown State Park, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, with *Lifespace Design*

Speaking of Specifications

Finally, after months of working with a contractor, the finished product has arrived. You look it over. It's not quite what you expected. What happened?

In most cases, the contractor *has* provided what you asked for – at least their interpretation of what you asked for. This difference of interpretation can be prevented by clear communication of what you want. The means of communicating this is in the specifications.

What are specifications?

Specifications are a written document that specify exactly what the finished product will look like. They also help the contractor give you an accurate quotation.

What is included in specifications?

Specifications will vary depending whether the product is a plan or a sign, but the following are some items to consider when you envision your final product.

1. Product Description:

Sign: what material, how many, what size, what print quality, inks, finishes, frames?

Plan: general contents, do you want conceptual drawings, ready to build drawings, cost breakdown for implementation, interpretive theme, hard copies or electronic designs?

2. Warranty:

longevity, maintenance, vandal and weather resistance

3. Delivery: shipping, installation, time line for completion, procedure for unacceptable work, type of binding, number of copies.

4. What you will provide to the contractor: files, photos, logos, artwork

What goes into a specification package?

The spec package goes to all contractors you wish to receive a bid from. Again, its contents will vary depending on the project, but all should include:

- the specifications,
- a cover letter with deadline for quotation,
- contact information (for questions as well as for submitting the quote—can it be faxed, sent electronically?)

Other things that could go in a specification package:

- description of the site,
- resource information,
- an example of a comparable project.

All of these help the contractor get an idea of the scope and scale of the project, thereby giving you an accurate quotation.

Changing specifications after the package goes out.

Occasionally, a contractor will review your specifications and have a question. If you provide new information to one contractor, you must provide it to

all contractors. This will keep all the bids accurate. This new information is submitted as an addendum. Depending

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on the change, it may require an extension of the deadline for quotations.

Checking the final product against your specifications

Clear, accurate specifications provide a fall-back position should the end product not meet your expectations. When there is a problem, compare the product with your specifications. Make sure that it is not a misinterpretation of the specs, but a failure of the contractor to meet them. If your specifications are clearly stated, you will have a recourse and an opportunity to get the product you want.

Specifications help both the client and the contractor. They help the client get the product they desire. They help the contractor create the product for the price they quoted.

Feature Project



Miller-Showers Park, Bloomington Parks and Recreation, Bloomington, Indiana

Sign Design: Interpretive Ideas, Okemos, Michigan

Sign Fabrication: High-pressure laminate, Folia Industries, Huntingdon, Quebec