

CASE STUDY: LEONARDO ARMS BUILDING II – PAINTING PROJECT

For many associations, the board members believe that re-painting is the easiest project they will undertake on a routine basis. And on the surface, it appears they are correct. But painting can be either the primary defense against water intrusion and the most important aspect of building maintenance, or it can be a lost opportunity. Why is painting such a great opportunity? Because it is one of the only times the building is staged, or a lift is on site, allowing proper inspection of the building envelope by a professional. If an association is putting their painting project out to bid without the assistance of an experienced consulting firm, it is more than likely a lost opportunity.



When the property manager for Leonardo Arms Building II was working with the board to have their building painted, he decided that they were not going to lose the opportunity to obtain the best paint job they could get. The first step, and often the most overlooked, was to obtain a professionally prepared Project Manual. Many property managers and associations believe painting is such a simple process that there is no need for this. Or, perhaps they are just unaware that painting projects can benefit from having a professionally prepared Project Manual.

A well prepared Painting Manual will be divided into two main components. The first component is the scope of work. At first, you may think, "isn't the scope of work to paint the building?" But, it is actually a lot more complicated than that. First you have to evaluate the current condition of the paint. If it's in poor condition the building may need a chalk sealer prior to painting. Or, if the paint is peeling it may need mechanical removal prior to painting. Second, the condition of the substrate should be assessed. In Florida, the substrate is typically stucco. An assessment of the stucco will help determine if portions need replaced, how many and what type of cracks are present, and any additional areas of concern. The caulk around the windows, doors, and

other penetrations needs to be evaluated in order to determine whether it is to remain, be re-caulked, or be cut out and replaced. The scope of work should be custom tailored to your building for your specific needs during this project. Failure to prepare a scope of work prior to bidding means that most painters will bid the absolute minimum scope in order to be competitive. This just involves painting and no caulking, crack repair, or stucco repair.

The second component of a well prepared Painting Manual involves the technical specifications. Technical specifications are detailed instructions on how the scope of work should be executed. It covers things like paint thickness, temperature of application, materials and products to use, guidelines for worksite management, and the standards and codes that govern each aspect of the project. Do not expect a painting contractor to provide any of this. The only way a good set of technical specifications will be used on a painting project is if a consultant is obtained to prepare them.

Leonardo Arms Building II chose to have us prepare a Painting Manual for their building and used that manual to put the project out to bid. The property manager was already familiar with our manual from previous projects and decided to handle the bidding phase himself. When he reviewed the bids, he compared them to the Painting Manual. Once the association chose a contractor, they made sure the contract (usually prepared by the painting contractor) referenced the Painting Manual by name and date, and included it in whole as part of the agreement. When the contract is prepared in this manner, the painting contractor is agreeing to use the materials specified in the manual and perform the work per the standards set by the consultant.



The association knew that the only way to enforce the specifications in the Painting Manual was to have us perform key inspections during the project. During the first inspection, we identified improper materials, inadequate primer preparation, no caulking, improper paint application and a host of other problems. We met with the painting contractor to correct the problems and review the guidelines they should have been following. We also contacted the painting manufacturer and met with them on-site to ensure that the products used were appropriate for the application. The project was off to a rough start. Had the association

been handling the project by themselves, it is unlikely any of these deficiencies would have been identified.

During our second inspection, we observed that some of the problems from the first had been corrected but other problems had persisted. We called in the vice president of operations for the painting contractor and met with him on-site along with the property manager. As is sometimes the case, the V.P. was unaware of the status of the project due to a lack of communication between his foreman and his office. The result of the meeting was that the painting contractor cycled off that crew from the project and brought in their veteran crew to finish.

During our third inspection we were pleased to discover that all of the systemic problems that had been present previously were now corrected. The level of quality had improved significantly. There were still some corrections to be made, so we developed a "punch list" and made sure the contractor followed through with it. In the end, the members of Leonardo Arms Building II were very pleased with the result of the painting project, and the property manager could confidently report to the board that the job was done right. During the entire project the property manager was informed of every inspection we performed, received written reports throughout the project, and was involved in many on-site meetings. Communication is key to developing strong relationships with your consultant, and Consult prides itself on having exceptional communication skills.

The cost to perform all of the services we rendered during this project was about 10% of the painting budget. A small price to pay to not only raise the expectations of the painting contractor, but to also make sure those expectations are met.