

Pardon Our Dust

CONDUCTING BUSINESS DURING AN OCCUPIED RENOVATION



by
James G.
Caliendo
President/COO
PWCampbell

The carpet, wall coverings and general decor is worn and outdated. An increase in technology usage has affected the amount of space needed. You've decided to transition from a teller line to the universal pod concept. The reasons to renovate your existing retail space can be numerous but one thing remains constant – it is imperative that you are able to service your members during the transition. As if construction isn't enough of a hardship, now you need to transform the main area where you transact business, all the while conducting business as usual. This requires well thought out architectural designs, constant communication, precise staging plans, sufficient contingency plans, comprehensive coordination of multiple vendors and a design/builder who can effectively manage and carry out the entire process.

Before the first hammer is swung, a significant amount of consideration must be given to both configuring the design of the renovation and staging how and when it will occur. Below are the top five items critical to a successful occupied renovation.

- 1. Hire Flexible Contractors.** Ensure ahead of time that contractors have experience with occupied renovations and can accommodate unconventional work schedules such as varied shifts, weekends, around the clock hours, etc. to minimize the impact of the transformation on both employees and members.
- 2. Establish contingency plans.** During most renovations, there is a limited window of time to accomplish a variety of tasks, so careful planning and consistent communication between all vendors is a must. Even with the best of planning, things can go wrong and you need to be prepared for when they do. In order to pull off a seamless transition of your retail space, you must think ahead and have back up contingency plans in the event things don't go as planned.
- 3. Ensure the safety of your employees and your members during the renovation process.** There should be a heightened sense of safety for both employees and members throughout the entire renovation process. Onsite superintendents are a good way to guarantee someone is always

making safety a priority. Whether it is posting adequate signage, ensuring all ADA requirements are met, installing temporary cameras to prevent false accident claims, or confirming that all pathways are clear of hazards, onsite superintendents should have a comprehensive checklist and ensure that all safety standards are being met.

4. Provide an acceptable work environment for your employees. During construction, a lot of disruption will complicate the workplace. To the best of your ability, you should try to minimize the hardship on your employees during this time. That means controlling things such as noise, dust and debris, air quality, etc. as much as you can. Little things such as advance communication and awareness as to what is taking place as well as offering the opportunity for your employees to dress more casually, will not only ease the burden on them but will show also you sympathize with what they must endure during the renovation process.

5. Create a thorough and detailed Phasing Plan. The goal of the phasing plan is to outline the scope of the project, detail management structure and responsibilities, identify health and safety arrangements for minimizing risk, and coordinate the onsite project team with special trades, mechanical,

transformation of your retail space while staying open for business, but will also help ensure the safety and well-being of both your employees and your members. If you feel, however, that these five elements cannot be reasonably achieved, then perhaps an occupied renovation is not the best option for you. Instead of trying to force

Before the first hammer is swung, a significant amount of consideration must be given to both configuring the design of the renovation and staging how and when it will occur.

electrical, plumbing, etc. The final document should convey exactly what is being done, when it is being done, who will be doing it and how it will be done. It should also detail any inherent risks, safety or otherwise, and how they will be addressed.

Effectively completing a renovation project during business hours can be a daunting task. Following the five elements above will not only lead to the successful

a choice that might lead to subpar service, increased safety risks and an extended timeline for construction, you should entertain the idea of a temporary facility or leasing space to service members. Not only will this option allow you to stay open for business during the renovation process, but because the space to be renovated is vacated, construction can take place at a faster pace and disruption to both employees and members can be held to a minimum.



James G. Caliendo is a former bank executive and now President and COO at the 108 year old design/build and retail services firm. In the past 18 years alone, under Jim's direction, PWCampbell has worked with over 500 financial institutions influencing millions of square feet of retail and operational space to create engaging, impactful and scalable solutions for every sized facility project.