

# TEN STEPS AHEAD

Renjith Thaliyadath, the Chief Managing Director of XYZ Project Planning PVT. LTD., has a one-point solution and is the architect of his own fortune.

Text: Atheena Wilson Photos: Architects XYZ



**T**en years ago, Bypass road was wide open and scantily dotted with buildings. But now you marvel at the view of all the complexes and wonder how did a deserted space now evolve into a hotspot? Apartments, malls, hotels hither and thither, a notion some time ago, but now Kerala transformed. While driving till Vytilla, I say you must watch out for the curves not on the road but the curves of the Vytilla Commercial complex. Just like Henry Ford discovered the assembly line, I came across the concept of Total Project Management when I met Mr. Renjith Thaliyadath. I noticed he was meticulous, the most valuable lesson his father ingrained in his life. Despite the heavy rains, the well illustrated

discussion commenced over a cup of green tea.

Unlike other architects, you approached the concept of being a management consultancy, how did that concept become concrete?

Many times, a site is purchased, and people start building a project. If you purchase a costly land, investing money to see what's apt for it, totally brings out the value of your project. A management consultancy is already a system that's been implemented abroad, and we applied it according to our agenda.

The management consultancy is our main highlight while architecture consultancy is one of the nine consultancies that we provide. Our theme was to include all consultancies under one roof and become a one-point solution. We offer our



Project at Bahrain



Vytilla Commercial Complex



architecture consultancy services alone to a few projects, my wife Dhanalakshmi an architect, takes care of the these. For the bigger ones, it's approached in the concept of Total Project Management. In that, we look into the architecture, plumbing, mechanical and electrical, landscape, heat and ventilation, HVAC, and other relevant requirements.

**Total Project Management certainly seems like a bigger challenge, what's the catch?**

The total responsibility to coordinate everything creates the final, most accurate and optimized drawing. We try to interlink everything. When we take a plumbing consultant's drawing, we see if it blends with the architectural drawing and then we bring in the other consultancies. Rather than getting separate drawings of different sections, the clients get a combined one. Probably, it's only here in Kerala, where we employ architecture consultants who then find their respective consultancies on the basis of familiarity. In the case of residential projects, many people do not see it as a huge problem. When it comes to bigger projects, then the gravity of the problem is understood.

**Getting an all round view, your level of scrutiny is extensive, what are some other parameters you look into?**

When a client buys a plot, we do an analysis on both site and feasibility to see what is the most fitting project for the site. According to the feasibility analysis, we look into the access to a site, adjacent properties, and distance to other buildings nearby. It's important to understand the business scope and see what's suitable: whether it's a hotel, club, commercial space or a premium apartment.

In the site analysis, we look into the initial dimension, and a study of properties with adjacent plots, the access to the site and different points, adjacent buildings and its number of floors etc. This way the client gets an indepth perspective.

**With this type of analysis, what has given you an upper hand in your projects?**

Factors such as the maximum number of floors that can be constructed, visibility from the site are provided, noise pollution levels etc. These are just the basic, it's followed by further detailed analysis, in detailed sketches and three-dimensional visuals, shots from Google earth too.

**Looking at every possible option and having calculated moves, what's the reward of having an intense eye for detail?**

(He slowly laughed) Less wastage of resources and time and accountability. For example, if a panel was a 1.2 meters panel, but the required length is 1.3 meters. Which means 1.1 meters of the material is in excess, then you would need to get another panel. During the working drawing stage, even the minute details are looked into. Once this plan is frozen, then the work begins. It will take the time to finalize all of it. When a design is hastened, there's a greater chance for things to be altered in the future.

**Now that your planning has upped the ante, how else do you reduce errors?**

There's an analysis to avoid errors. With proper authorization and supervision, the authorized person has to cross check everything. Whenever checking happens, it's usually done by overlooking and thinking it's fine just by an assumption. If there's a checklist with factors such as dimension length-wise, breath wise, reinforcement spacing, etc. the errors are minimal and there's accurate auditing for it.





**Extra time for planning but an accelerated process for execution, how much of time is taken for each project?**

That depends on the project. We handle hospitals, commercial buildings, apartments, shopping complexes, large residences etc. Usually, it takes one or one and a half months. It's totally focused and then it's frozen. (I laughed saying that's quite reasonable!) The staff strength in this office is 26, we have multiple project coordinators. For each project, there is a variation. The mechanical, electrical, structural work is all outsourced, since we work at the project management level. This way the clients and the project coordinator get an exact picture of the project and are able to ensure a smooth flowing work plan.

**So then you can quantify your resources and time your deadlines?**

Construction cases are not always about the raw materials but time management. Usually in the case of civil projects, when one task is completed only the next one begins. In terms of deadlines, plus or minus a month is something that comes in the rough calculation section. We can complete the project on time. (I joked about hartals, he smiled in return.)



We consider that too. In every step of our project, there's a time slack allotted at each stage for all possible delays. We do have the calculation and planning, and also have to look at the factors affecting the fund flow. If they are ready to pay at each stage, then there's no delay.

**The working culture is different abroad, did this well-planned theme work out that easily here in Kerala?**

Our case study for the same was done in the UAE, where we studied projects completed in this way. The success of those projects drove us to apply the same for one of our projects in Bahrain, where their requirements and its execution was analyzed in detail during the working stages of the

project. There are universal standards it's from these standards that we see how it applies to Kerala. We had to do some modifications and revisions, for example, the delegation of different divisions to reach a different context. But yes, it took time for this concept to be successful. If a new concept is introduced, it will take a time to mould into it and eventually get used to a new system.

**Setting up something new, how has it been for your clients?**

When you introduce something new, there's a little hesitancy. There are many clients who have tried this approach and have never backed out or returned to the old procedure of architecture consultancies alone.