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Four Effective Strategies for Efficient Lab Project Delivery

While long lead times were a significant obstacle in project delivery in the recent past, the situation has notably improved over the past year...for most items.

However, certain essential components for lab facilities, such as custom air handlers, medium voltage electrical gear, uninterruptible power supply (UPS) units, and emergency generators, still face prolonged lead times.

Fortunately, there are several project delivery strategies that project owners and teams can use to mitigate the challenges posed by extended lead times:

- 1. Pick a partner early.** One way to combat long lead items is to bring in a Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) early in the design process. This approach has proven benefits with streamlining schedule and maintaining budgets. Having the CM/GC in the room during design discussions can help the team identify which items are seeing long leads and provide another voice to offer solutions to address those issues.
- 2. Cut the red tape.** Choose CM/GCs who are already within the existing supplier network.

Clients with complicated purchasing environments may find it easier to select equipment from vendors or choose CMs/GCs who are already established in their purchasing network. This strategy helps navigate potential obstacles that can otherwise slow down project progression.

- 3. Work the network.** Another way to speed time to completion? Consider allowing the CM/GC to manage the purchasing process, with the option of equipment reimbursement. CMs/GCs may have established relationships with suppliers who can provide the necessary equipment faster and at more favorable rates. (Note, however, that this option may not be ideal in all situations but should be evaluated on a project-by-project basis.)
- 4. Fast track the schedule.** Order known long-lead items as early as possible in the design process. While fast-tracking carries the risk of components not being perfectly aligned with project requirements, the benefits may outweigh the risks. Timely project completion is paramount, particularly for laboratory environments, where delays can have significant financial implications.

Although long lead times remain a challenge for certain critical lab components, strategic planning and collaboration can effectively mitigate these issues. Bringing in a CM/GC early, working through existing relationships and fast-tracking key procurements can enable project teams to navigate these challenges efficiently, and help achieve a successful, timely project delivery.



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