

8 Things That Affect The Cost Per Square Foot To Build A Church

1. Thinking You're Average

Have you ever shopped for a pair of pants for yourself and asked for the “average” size for a man or woman? Why not? Because you aren't average and neither is your church. Look at the other posts that popped up when you googled “**What's the average cost per square foot to build a church?**”. The average building size one listed is 17,000 square feet includes family life centers, new construction on existing church campuses, and major renovations on others and costs roughly \$100 a square foot. Does that accurately describe what you're looking for? (Not to mention the data is 5 years old)

2. What You Can Afford

This is obvious...but probably the **biggest mistake churches make with buildings**. They don't take the time to understand their affordability before they jump into designing their future space. Money is tight these days. You have to know [how to keep from over designing your project](#) and let you affordability determine what is designed.

3. Total Project Budget

The cost of the **church building per square foot** is only half the story. Actually it's more like 60% – 75% of the story. “**Soft Costs**” are items related to the project that aren't included in the construction costs. The soft costs of a church building budget usually amount to 25% to 40% of the [Total Project Budget](#) and include everything from permits to Thematic Design to Audio, Visual an Lighting. **\$3,000,000 in construction usually translates into \$4,000,000 or more in Total Project Budget cost.**

4. Design

The square footage in the design, the number of walls, and ceiling heights are just a few of the many design factors that affect the cost per square foot of your project. There can be a huge difference in the price of a building that is 22 feet tall vs one that is 24 feet tall.

5. Finishes

Flooring types, counter tops, trim and the overall look and feel of the space will play a major role in the cost per square foot of your new church building. One of my clients said “We want to create the “WOW” factor but we need you to understand the “WOW” factor is low here”.

6. Existing Conditions

The type of land you plan to build on, or the state of the building you’re planning to purchase will have an impact on the cost per square foot. With raw land, its a good idea to spend a couple bucks doing a site plan before you purchase to make sure that what you think is possible is actually possible. Find another place to save and spend some money to insure you don’t have an expensive mistake before you get started. When you’re spending millions on a project even a small misstep can cost a lot of cash. (Side Note: Please don’t purchase land if you don’t have a ministry master plan. Before you master plan the buildings mast) If you’re looking to renovate, many of the unforeseen circumstances of a building project are minimized because there is nothing buried that can pop up. You do, however, want to know exactly what you’re getting into when you **purchase a building**. Anything that isn’t up to par is a negotiating point prior to purchase. After you buy the **building**, those things will be construction costs that drive the price up. Get some professional help before you purchase.

7. Your Partners

You’ll have an army of people working with you on this project before you’re **worshipping in your new building**. The key partners on your job will play a large role in the overall cost. I spend 2.5 to 4 years with most of the churches I work with so I always tell my potential client to interview me like they would interview a children’s ministry pastor. If they wouldn’t hire me to be on staff I tell them not to hire me to lead their building project. Make sure you really know the people responsible for such a critical ministry area.

8. Collaboration

This is really a product of your partners but it isn't automatic. Collaboration on a church building project can save you between 10% and 15% but collaboration is illusive. It has to be prioritized and fought for from the very beginning of the project all the way through completion. Is it worth it? **15% of a \$4,000,000 project is \$600,000.**

What do you think? Hopefully I've convinced you of some questions to be asking in addition to the "**average cost per square foot to build a church**" question. The cost per square foot will matter, but only within the context of the entire project cost, and at a certain point in the design when it's time to determine the cost per square.

If you didn't get my Free Ebook "Church Explosion" make sure you sign up and download it before you leave.

If I can help you plan your project shoot me an email at Richard@RichardChancy.com