



DR51: Lower Your Firm Risk Profile

The DesignRisk app can be used as the basis for significantly lowering your practice risk – that is, the likelihood that claims will be made against you.

By comparing the choices you make in creating a Risk Report, and looking at the corresponding assessments and mitigation strategies, you will see that you can change the circumstances of the risk issue. Some options, depending on the nature and cause of the risk, are:

- Using the inbuilt links on many of the risk choices in the Matrix – clicking these links gives you more info on managing related risk issues:

Read more about this topic here:
[Open Link](#)

- Convince the client to adopt policies that are more reasonable, for example changing onerous terms of contract
- Changing the basis on the way you quote fees. Although a very common method, basing your fees on a percentage of construction cost is HIGH risk – you have no way of knowing what the construction cost will be, and therefore you can't manage scope to hit a moving target.
- Bringing greater clarity to the way vital project information is managed. Sometimes external PMs try to act as a "screen" between you and the client – a cynic would say they are trying to justify their existence. Ensure that you can always communicate directly with the organization that pays your invoices.
- Take maximum responsibility for managing the flow of project information. The firm that writes meeting agendas controls the meeting outcome.
- Ensure that you have enough time for quality checking – even if this means less time for design. The tighter the schedule, the more important it is that work is checked before it goes out. It's critical that checkers are NOT responsible for production – they are likely to miss the errors they created.
- Always **PLAN** before you **DO**. Faithfully follow your plan. That's the simple beating heart of any good quality system. Resist the very natural impulse to get stuck into the design process straight away.
- Get the best tools you can find. If yours are not as good as they should be, explore the iProjects suite of tools. www.iProjects.net.au.
- Maintain a high level of communication with the client. Remember the old adage: "There's a reason why God gave man two ears and one mouth."
- Ensure that your Project Managers have all the skills they need. If you have any doubts about whether they do, investigate the PSMJ **Project Management Essentials** program (in the US, **Project Management Bootcamp**). www.psmj.com.au or www.psmj.com.