M ost of us are familiar with huge construction projects such as the Millenium Dome in London’s Greenwich, which was estimated to cost around £400 million, and ended up costing at least £200 million more—and that’s allowing for ticket sales. Then there is the new Wembley Stadium, ‘notori-}

ous for being £400 million over budget and a year late’. Then there’s the Scottish Parliament, estimated at first to cost just £40 million, modest by to-day’s standards, finally running over budget by £155 million. But that’s nothing; the Channel Tunnel was finally completed at a cost of £10 billion... £5.2 billion over budget.\(^1\)

**What to expect**

With so many dentists enlisting contractors to refurbish, renovate or construct premises from scratch, now seems like a good time to say a few words about budget, and what those dentists should expect from their contractor. Of course, the figures involved are famously hard to compare to those frittered away in the above examples, but the practice is essentially the dentist’s livelihood. What will the dentist do, for example, if the project exceeds budget?

If it is a small excess, then the dentist may grin and bear it, though he or she will certainly vow never to use, or recommend, the contractors they enlisted again. However, if it is a huge amount, this can cause a great deal of trouble. If the project is delayed, or halted altogether, you could very well lose those pa-tients whose loyalty was hardest to earn. In order to avoid the po-tential problems caused by spi-ralling costs, enlist a contractor with a track record of sticking to the limits imposed by clients.

**A team effort**

The leading contractors working in the dental industry will man-age the entire project on your behalf, keeping you informed along the way. However, you should ask your contractor if they employ a partnering approach. This means that everyone on the project works together, as a well-oiled machine, with optimum communication. The best contractor even offers workshops at the start of every project to ensure that everyone is reading from the same page.

Partnering during the project also ensures cost-effectiveness, as everyone can share their expertise and work together to overcome obstacles. With a contractor who employs this strategy, your refurbishment or new build project will run much more smoothly, and there is a greater chance of it meeting the estimated cost.\(^1\)

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