

Commissioning as a Risk Management Strategy

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Synopsis

There are a lot of different ways that commissioning of new or existing buildings can be portrayed: a new way of doing business, an increased attention to detail, an improvement in the communication processes during design and construction, or a way of avoiding building flaws. However, when marketed to customers or included in public programs, it is most often portrayed more as one of an array of possible energy conservation measures. This portrayal leads to difficulties in describing or quantifying the expected or realized value of commissioning.

Some of the fundamental differences between commissioning and other conservation measures are important to understand, which may lead to different ways of marketing commissioning, requiring new kinds of market research. This roundtable discussion will explore marketing commissioning as a risk management strategy. To do this requires the ability to clearly communicate the risks that a decision maker will face if the building is NOT commissioned, and the effect that commissioning will have on reducing those risks.

The discussion will focus on the following set of questions, helping to inform a multi-phase research program that is currently being developed to support the marketing of commissioning:

1. What are the odds that any given customer will be given a flawed building?
2. What are the likely impacts that those flaws will have for the building owner and occupants?
3. What is the value that reducing the probability of flaws will have for an owner, and the price point that commissioning will have to meet?
4. What are the commissioning processes that can meet these price points?
5. What is the probability that these commissioning processes will avoid building flaws and deliver this value to the owner?