

Case study

Hi-Rise Group, Inc.

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada



Construction company builds business through integration, facility management

Residential construction, including town homes and high-rise condominiums, had been the primary focus of The Hi-Rise Group of Toronto, Canada for years. Broadening its horizons to commercial buildings in recent years, the company was contracted to build a federal government facility in the City of Hamilton. With the help of Johnson Controls, Hi-Rise successfully saved its client time and money by integrating the base building and tenant fit-up. Johnson Controls was also contracted to manage the new facility, ensuring compliance with strict governmental operating standards.

From its humble beginnings in 1979, The Hi-Rise Group has become a significant player in the greater Toronto area's high-rise residential, commercial and institutional sectors. The company's steady growth is attributed to adapting to shifting trends in the Ontario construction industry and to maintaining a watchful eye on development opportunities.

According to Warren Green, president of The Hi-Rise Group, construction of the federal building is the company's flagship commercial project. The project comprises more than 330,000 square feet, consolidates eight government departments and has a value of more than \$85 million. "To date, it is the largest project we've undertaken," says Green.

The project differed from Hi-Rise's usual residential construction process, according to Shawn Marr, a principal of the Hi-Rise Group. "Our greatest challenge was achieving an integrated product that included the base building and the tenant fit-up," he says. With the federal government as the primary tenant, there were also high expectations and exacting standards to adhere to. These standards applied to both the space itself and



another aspect that was new to Hi-Rise, the ongoing management of the facility. "After meeting with a number of preeminent companies, we selected Johnson Controls as the best choice to assist us in meeting these challenges," states Marr.

Maintaining a winning formula

Through its vast experience with residential projects, Hi-Rise has developed a winning formula for completing projects on time, within budget and to exact specifications. "We're a pure development company with the expertise to develop projects from inception to completion," says Marr. For Hi-Rise, conducting the tenant fit up at the new building and meeting the nationwide standards for federal government facilities added a new level of complexity in maintaining that winning formula.

To maintain its schedule and budget, Hi-Rise wanted to avoid installing systems in the base building that would only need to be torn out to install systems that would meet tenant requirements. Johnson Controls worked with the construction team to select the appropriate electrical, mechanical and controls systems, and develop one set of drawings wherever possible. Using its Metasys building management system, Johnson Controls was able to integrate all base building and tenant systems including HVAC, security, lighting, CCTV, life/safety and card access systems. The Metasys system controls all aspects of building operations for more than 15,000 points throughout the facility.

"Johnson Controls ability to integrate systems and their familiarity with federal government standards played a key role here. They were able to identify potential challenges before they became problems and helped us accommodate rolling changes from the tenant, yet stay on schedule and on budget," says Marr. "This knowledge made the construction process flow smoothly. In fact we received a letter from the government commending us on the project."

Maintaining standards

For Hi-Rise, meeting the standards of its federal government tenant did not stop when construction was completed. The company was also responsible for coordinating the ongoing operations and management of the facility in a manner that met governmental expectations and regulations. "Building operations and management of this type of buildings was a new challenge for us," says Green. "The level of mechanical, electrical, and controls is more complex than in residential facilities." Taking a turnkey approach, Johnson Controls entered a comprehensive operations and maintenance contract with Hi-Rise, which includes operational cost and energy performance guarantees.

Under the contract, Johnson Controls oversees building operations, health & safety, security services, pest control, landscaping, environmental services, recycling programs, waste management, tenant services and code compliance. The building's HVAC equipment, chillers, boilers and controls are maintained through a planned service agreement

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HI-RISE GROUP, INC.

with Johnson Controls. "Johnson Controls brought a very good overall track record in facility management to the table and more specifically, experience with the Canadian Federal Government," states Green.

An onsite Johnson Controls team meets with Hi-Rise management on a regular basis to review operations and develop measures for improving operational efficiency and tenant satisfaction. An active approach is taken to stay abreast of the latest governmental legislation in areas such as health and safety, to implement industry best practices, and to leverage available savings opportunities. Johnson Controls is also responsible for providing information used in value reports required by the federal government.

Special attention is given to environmental services where Johnson Controls has complied with the government's request to use fully certified green cleaning products. Efforts are also being made to utilize information technology in everyday operations by transferring hard copy documents to electronic files, cataloging information in databases and using PDAs for data collection.

To better serve Hi-Rise, Johnson Controls is actively involved in BOMA, IFMA and other related organizations. And, BOMA training is stipulated in the job descriptions of key personnel.

According to Domenic Molinaro, a principal of The Hi-Rise Group, "the transition from construction to ongoing building management with Johnson Controls was very smooth because they were here from the beginning. They know the building and its systems, our tenant's requirements, and take a proactive approach to managing our needs. Along with reducing our risk, this results in sense of comfort for Hi-Rise management as well as our primary tenant."



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PRESIDENT & CEO
HI-RISE GROUP, INC.

