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CHOOSING PROJECT SUCCESS:

A Guide for Building Professionals

Pareto Building Improvement (361 pp.)

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Builder and first-time author McCarthy pours years of on-the-job experience and studies of architecture, engineering and business into this complete field guide for general contractors.

Choosing Project Success gives contractors detailed information about the issues they'll encounter as they work. While it was not designed to give a comprehensive examination of every technical detail, the book tackles all aspects of building, as well as project management. The first two sections concern overall planning and approaches to a project. McCarthy includes inspirational quotes as well as necessary specifications, so that contractors may plan for excellence, but prepare for every possibility. The third section includes chapters on each part of a building. This is the most technical part of the volume, with useful charts, recipes for mortar

and concepts needed to make effective choices and decisions. Issues addressed include concrete, elasticity of building materials, water transmission, fire alarms and electrical lighting. McCarthy starts each part with a brief but interesting history of the topic, which puts the work in context and adds perspective to the technical advice. The information presented is wide-ranging yet specific, explicating beginning concepts and advanced details, such as a note that "mortar is a material where the weakest mortar that is structurally adequate will be the best mortar for the job." Overall, the text is well organized, signposted with useful section headings and a complete index. Charts, tables and graphics are easy to read, given the logical layout and design. At times, the tone is a bit didactic, with writing that's stilted in an apparent effort to sound formal: "Ventilation is something we are only recently trying to achieve." Nonetheless, McCarthy composed the book with beginning project managers and experienced professionals in mind, making this a valuable reference for anyone in the construction industry.

A complete reference manual for building professionals at all experience levels.

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