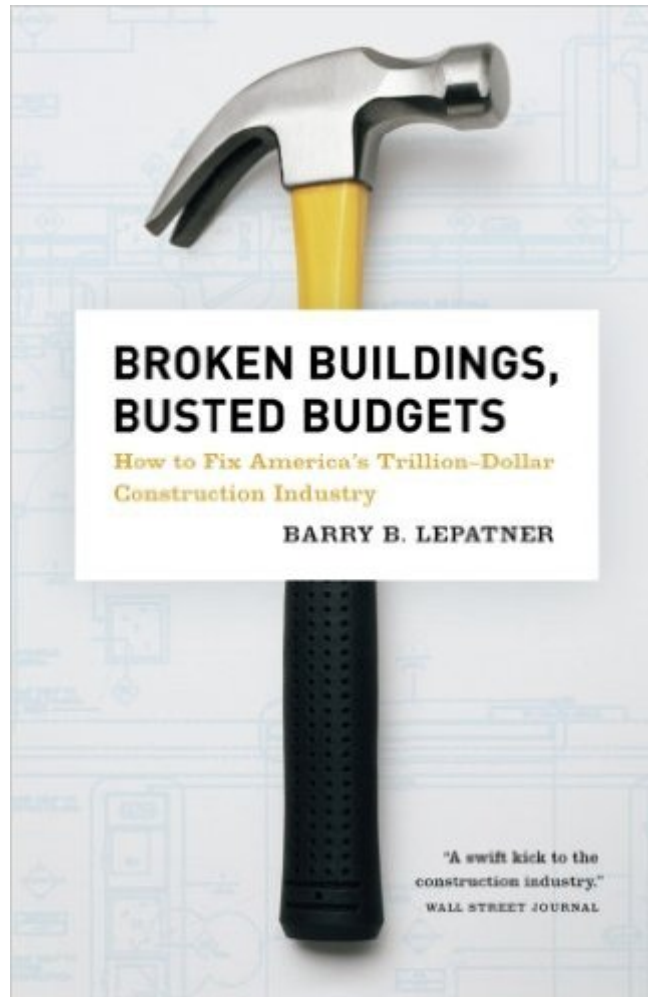


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# Broken Buildings, Busted Budgets: How To Fix America's Trillion-Dollar Construction Industry



## Synopsis

Across the nation, construction projects large and small—from hospitals to schools to simple home improvements—are spiraling out of control. Delays and cost overruns have come to seem normal, even as they drain our wallets and send our blood pressure skyrocketing. In *Broken Buildings, Busted Budgets*, prominent construction attorney Barry B. LePatner builds a powerful case for change in America's sole remaining mom and pop industry—an industry that consumes \$1.23 trillion and wastes at least \$120 billion each year. With three decades of experience representing clients that include eminent architects and engineers, as well as corporations, institutions, and developers, LePatner has firsthand knowledge of the bad management, ineffective supervision, and insufficient investment in technology that plagues the risk-averse construction industry. In an engaging and direct style, he here pinpoints the issues that underlie the industry's woes while providing practical tips for anyone in the business of building, including advice on the precise language owners should use during contract negotiations. Armed with *Broken Buildings, Busted Budgets*, everyone involved in the purchase or renovation of a building or any structure—from homeowners seeking to remodel to civic developers embarking on large-scale projects—has the information they need to change this antiquated industry, one project at a time. LePatner describes what is wrong with the current system and suggests ways that architects can help by retaking their rightful place as master builders. "Fred A. Bernstein, *Architect Magazine* "Every now and then, a major construction project is completed on time and on budget. Everyone is amazed. . . . Barry LePatner thinks this exception should become the rule. . . . A swift kick to the construction industry." James R. Hagerty, *Wall Street Journal*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maybe I can not be objective about this book. LePatner cites my book on running construction companies about fifty times. That's flattering, though I was a bit irked to find that he cites me more readily when drawing on my writings to support his criticisms of the construction industry, and less so when invoking my solutions for our problems. Even so, I give LePatner's book 5 stars. Here's what I wrote about it in the Resources section of my new book, CRAFTING THE CONSIDERATE HOUSE: "Rightly criticized for being overly redundant and for a lawyer's bias toward his clients (owners as opposed to builders and designers), LePatner's book is, nevertheless, an exceptionally vigorous exposition of the ailments of and possible cures for the construction industry." In fact, the book is so energetic and provocative it's downright fun to read. LePatner explores the ailments of and possible cures for the construction industry more deeply than any one else I have ever read. I am sure that when I write my next book I will find myself borrowing back some of my ideas, but in the improved form suggested by Lepatner's insight. Meanwhile, I am recommending the book to every thoughtful builder and architect I know. Below I have copied in my Comment on what I consider a valid yet woefully inadequate review -- titled "Deficient" and written by a person who calls himself "Consultant" -- of Lepatner's book. You can also see the Comment at "Consultant's" one star review. "Consultant" makes a number of good points. It is true that Gehry's MIT building landed in litigation after LePatner cited it as an exemplar of advanced construction information management.

Like others here have said - the book offers a promise but doesn't deliver. Ironically - much like the sub-standard contractors the author faults for all of the industry's problems. The book has serious deficiencies - it is questionable how much the authors really know about certain industry practices such as cost estimating, building information modeling (BIM) or Job Order Contracting (which is never mentioned). Some of their observations are simply anecdotal (despite an over-abundance of footnotes, like some academic text). They seem not to realize some of the circumstances that lead to the current configuration of the industry - such as specialized crafts and training required by contractors in order for owners to get manufacturer's warranties on certain products such as roofing. A general contractor can't keep people like that on the payroll all the time - it's just-in-time work, and a good deal of it is refurbishment, not new construction. Also, much of what the author faults the entire industry for are simply examples of bad management - on the part of architects, contractors

and owners. Nothing new there. Then again - that's how the author makes his living - as an attorney in contract disputes. As another reviewer opined - he never sees the good projects. For example - the author lauds architect Frank Gehry and specifically the Strata Center at MIT. Apparently the book was written before MIT sued Gehry for the many flaws in the design of the \$300 million Strata center (search the Boston Globe of November 6, 2007 for the full article.) Just because MIT paid Gehry \$15 million - MIT expects a building that doesn't leak, have poor drainage and a host of other problems. The nerve!

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