

Welcome back to Digging Deeper. I'm Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute and the CEO Performance Roundtable for Contractors. Each week, we're going to try to dig a little deeper into an issue in construction and hopefully give you some tips that you can use that we've learned from our members. I do want to tell everybody we invite your comments and these videos of course are available to get a copy of and get a transcript of later.

Today I want to talk to the military approach to job planning. What I see happening out there in the construction world today is too much chaos. And the chaos is caused largely by the fact that we're really an industry operating beyond our capacity. So, it's common for trades to get stacked up and have the inability to properly man job sites or get their crew there on time, very difficult on the scheduling side because many jobs are moving and then the people that were originally committed to those jobs are now committed elsewhere. They end up with more work in a particular time phase and it's hard to get everywhere.

So, with all this chaos going on, what we find is that every day on the job site seems to have its new set of challenges. So maybe that takes a different approach on the part of the job leaders and the job planners. Think about what the military has to encounter when they go in to, say, Fallujah in Iraq and they have to clear the city of terrorists and they don't know where they are and they're embedded in all these houses. So, you know, you're trying to clear house to house, area to area, next thing you know you've got reinforcements or you've got some rockets coming in from somewhere. So, the point of all this is that every day in the military your situation changes. So how do they approach that? How does the military end up having success operating in that kind of chaos? And the answer is, every day they have to reassess. What's occurred yesterday? What progress did we make? Who showed up? Who didn't show up? What new environmental encounters did we have? Did it rain again? All of these things that are going on.

But we've got to reassess and that used to be a weekly or even monthly basis. You'd have a six week look ahead. Today, the six week look ahead sometimes needs to be a three day look ahead, again, because of the chaos that's actually out there. So, on a daily basis, reassess. Then you have to re-plan, all right? What does this reassessment call for in terms of parts and pieces? And then with those parts and pieces moving, you have to communicate. In fact, you have to over-communicate. All those parts and pieces need to know what the new plan is and then you have to go out there and redeploy and get it done. I think it used to be a lot simpler, but what we find in today's world with everybody over capacity, is there just too many failures in the system? And many times, it's even a supplier failure that hits us today.

So, my suggestion is get with your people, get them training, thinking about the military approach. Reassess, re-plan, re-communicate, re-deploy. Again, Dennis Engelbrecht, trying to dig a little deeper. Thanks.