

Hi. Dennis Engelbrecht here with The Family Business Institute and the CEO Performance Roundtable for Contractors. Each week, we're trying to share a little information from our members and this session of Digging Deeper is going to be about meeting schedule and really focusing in and diving deeper on trying to track days gained and days lost as a process in your company.

So, let's think about this. The construction atmosphere is getting just harder and harder. We're really an industry operating beyond capacity and it's hard to coordinate everybody and get everybody at the job site doing what we need them to do and even with limited skills and all of that. So how do we finish our jobs on time? How are we going to accomplish that? Well first of all, we're seeing more and more schedule creep. So, we're seeing jobs not finishing on time, not finishing early as often as they could because of all the dynamics going on in the industry overall.

So, my point about tracking days gained and lost has several parts to it. First of all, by tracking anything, it brings awareness. My recommendation is - take the biggest whiteboard you have in your office, list your jobs and track where each job is, in a visual manner for all of your people. Are we three days ahead? Are we two weeks ahead? Are we four days behind? And this first of all, will bring problems to light and then hopefully solutions. It opens your office up and maybe adds a little competitiveness to it. I know if I was the project manager and I had some minuses up there, that I'm four days behind on this job and two days behind on that job, I just might want to make sure that my jobs have the pluses instead of the minuses. I get a little over-competitive. It's a fault of mine.

The other thing that happens, we find, most of my members report that urgency is not there in the first third of the job. So, they find that they actually lose more time in the first third, before there are 17 out of 20 trades working on the job and they're scrambling to finish and everybody's going crazy. But in that first third, where it's just a couple of trades maybe, that's where they maybe just don't have the urgency that they need to keep things moving along. So again, by tracking days gained and lost, that helps bring urgency to the first part of that job and in a sense, maybe even creates some false urgency so that your people are paying attention to it.

And then, the other part of schedule, of course, is a lot of this problem, particularly at the first third of the job, is caused by submittals and things like that that don't get turned around quick enough. Decisions don't get made on finishes or whatever else you have to do to get the windows ordered, or the doors ordered, or something else that might be in the critical path going. So, bringing urgency to that is very important.

And then the final thing about tracking days gained and lost, is to make sure that those days that you might lose due to rain, decision making, let's just say long turnaround times, maybe on the front end from the architects and engineers, it gives you an opportunity to cover yourself, cover your butt, because at the end of the job nobody's going to remember that they didn't turn this submittal around in six days like they could've or should've. Nobody's going to remember that it rained four days in a row back in May and that set us back. Right? So, when it comes down and the job is late and there are costs to be divvied up, make sure that you showed the urgency at the start, whether it's no cost change orders, or making sure you make up that time immediately so that you don't end up holding the bag at the end.

Again, track your days gained and lost. This is Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper. Thank you.