

Hi. Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute and the CEO Performance Roundtable Program. Today, this is going to be the first in a series of blogs that's going to be going out and we're calling it Digging Deeper.

What we want to do is dig deep into a specific construction issue or problem that our members are seeing out there, and bring that discussion back to you, the viewers. So, today we want to talk about trust and the trust I'm talking about is the trust between the general contractor and the subcontractor and how important this is to getting the job site efficiency and flow, and being able to accomplish projects on time.

So, a lot of times when we train our people, we're training them on the technical aspects of schedule and trying to put the parts and pieces of a building together. And what I see out there right now, and this is largely probably because we're operating at an industry beyond capacity and we have trades stacking, and all sorts of problems that are showing up. What I'm seeing out there is trust is broken between the job site superintendent and the key trades in many cases.

So, the trade doesn't trust that the schedule that's put forth and what the contractor wants from the trade is actually going to work and result in good economics for both sides, and an efficient job, and getting able to do the work efficiently and productively. On the other side, there are no shows galore coming from the trade side. And again, this industry being so far beyond capacity, sometimes it's not anybody's fault. There just simply aren't enough people, aren't enough crews to go around after jobs move, and stack, and rain comes, and all of that.

But the result of all of this is that trust gets lost. So now, when trust gets lost, if you're on the GC side of that and you're the superintendent, you have to sort of hedge your bets. So now, instead of having everybody come at the precise time that'll make it all go productively, you might want them there with more, or you insist that they have more people, more men.

But what happens is, that when you lose that trust, you lose the ability to plan and rely on the other people. And what this comes down to oftentimes is soft skills. You know, you may have a great job plan, but how well have you communicated that and how well have you built the trust so that the other side believes they can rely on you. And as the subcontractor, does that general contractor trust you enough? If you say, "Look, you hired me to do this trade, I got it. I know how many people I need, I know the best way to build this. This is how we're going to do it." And in many cases you may be right. But if that GC superintendent or project manager doesn't trust that you have it, then you've got an issue again, and they're asking for more or something different from what you want to provide.

So, if you really want to improve your job site performance, train your people in these soft skills; make them aware of how important trust is to getting the job done. Lean scheduling is a great thing, but it relies on trust. And then there's one other aspect to this, which, it's an old Ronald Reagan-ism is trust, but verify. That is part of trust, is, okay, you tell me you're going to do this, but make the follow-up calls, double check again to make sure everybody's on line. Don't rely on something you heard two weeks ago or three weeks ago. Trust, but verify.

Again, Dennis Engelbrecht, trying to dig a little deeper. See you next week.