



Illinois Chapter

MERIT UPDATE

MAY 11, 2009

TODAY'S CHALLENGES REQUIRE A FOCUS ON TOMORROW

IN AN ECONOMY THAT DEMANDS CAREFUL SCRUTINY OF EVERY EXPENSE, CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES UNDERSTANDABLY MAY BE FOCUSED ON SHRINKING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES. ACROSS THE BROAD RANGE OF COMPANY PLANNING, THE BEST ADVICE IS: THINK STRATEGICALLY RATHER THAN TRANSACTIONALLY.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN AT A TIME WHEN PROJECTS ARE LIMITED AND COMPETITION IS CUTTHROAT? IT MEANS NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO PREPARE FOR A FUTURE—HOWEVER DISTANT—THAT WILL FOLLOW TODAY'S TURMOIL WITH A BUILDING FRENZY DESIGNED TO CATCH UP WITH UNADDRESSED NEEDS. HERE ARE THREE STRATEGIES CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES SHOULD CONSIDER.

MAKE WISE RESTRUCTURING DECISIONS

DO NOT SIMPLY DOWNSIZE IN A REACTIONARY WAY BECAUSE PROSPECTS FOR NEW PROJECTS HAVE EVAPORATED AND THE COMPANY NEEDS TO REDUCE STAFF AND EXPENSES. COMPANIES THAT ONLY FOCUS ON THE NEXT JOB AND THEIR COMPETING BIDDERS, AND THEN THE NEXT PROJECT AFTER THAT, ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAIL THAN ONES THAT CREATE A STRATEGIC PLAN TO GUIDE THEIR DECISIONS.

CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES CAN USE THIS TIME TO RE-EVALUATE PAST STRATEGIES, ASSESS WHAT HAS WORKED WELL AND WHAT HAS NOT, AND THEN RECAST THEIR COMPANY TO PLAY TO THE STRENGTHS THAT WILL BE MOST USEFUL WHEN OPPORTUNITIES ARISE. PREPARE NOW FOR THE FUTURE BY REVIEWING ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED MARGINAL AND ENSURE ALL EMPLOYEES ARE PERFORMING AT THEIR HIGHEST LEVELS. DEVELOP AN APPROACH THAT ALLOWS THE COMPANY TO EMERGE FROM TODAY'S ECONOMIC TURMOIL AS A STRONG CONTENDER, NOT JUST AS A STRUGGLING SURVIVOR.

BE WARY OF DEBT

MUCH OF THE HEADLINE ANGST TODAY REVOLVES AROUND THE DIFFICULTY SMALL BUSINESSES ARE HAVING OBTAINING FINANCING. BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT TAKING ON DEBT. COMPANIES THAT MANAGE THEIR BALANCE SHEETS TO OPTIMIZE LIQUIDITY ARE IN A MUCH BETTER POSITION TO RIDE OUT VOLATILE ECONOMIC TIMES. CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES SHOULD FOCUS ON CREATING AS MUCH CASH AS THEY CAN. NO COMPANY EVER GOT INTO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY BECAUSE IT HAD TOO MUCH CASH, WHILE TOO MUCH DEBT CAN SPELL A COMPANY'S DOOM. LIMIT BORROWING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND PAY DEBT DOWN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

NOW IS THE TIME FOR CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES TO TAKE THEIR INTERACTIONS FROM THE TRANSACTIONAL TO THE STRATEGIC WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS. THIS MEANS DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP THAT RELIES NOT JUST ON TODAY'S SALE (TRANSACTIONAL), BUT ALSO ON PAST HISTORY AND ONGOING PLANS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS (STRATEGIC).

IN ADDITION TO HAVING A STRATEGIC PLAN, CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES MUST SHARE IT CLEARLY AND COMPELLINGLY WITH THOSE THEY RELY ON FOR SUPPORT. A COMPANY'S SUPPLIERS, WHETHER THEY ARE SURETY BOND UNDERWRITERS, BANKERS, CEMENT PROVIDERS OR SPECIALTY SUBCONTRACTORS, ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE FLEXIBLE WHEN THEY SEE VALUE IN THE PARTNERSHIP THAT GOES BEYOND A SINGLE TRANSACTION—ESPECIALLY IF THEY BELIEVE THE COMPANY IS MAKING SMART DECISIONS GEARED TOWARD FUTURE SUCCESS.

IN THE NEAR TERM, GOVERNMENTS OF ALL SIZES ARE PREPARING TO INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY. EVENTUALLY THE PRIVATE SECTOR ECONOMY WILL PICK UP AS WELL BECAUSE THE GROWING POPULATION WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE DEMAND FOR NEW HOMES, BUILDINGS AND ROADS. TODAY'S CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE WORRIED ABOUT SURVIVAL. BUT COMPANIES THAT SIT BACK AND MAKE SHORT-TERM DECISIONS BASED ON TODAY'S MARKET CONDITIONS WILL NOT THRIVE LIKE THOSE THAT LOOK TO THE FUTURE AND POSITION THEMSELVES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL OPEN UP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN.

WRITTEN BY: TERRY LUKOW,
CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVE MAGAZINE

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ELK GROVE VILLAGE OFFICE

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ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL
60007
847-709-2960
847-709-2970 FAX

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE

526 E. ALLEN
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
217-523-4692
217-523-4752 FAX

MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU THINK

YOU PROBABLY HAVEN'T THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT SAFETY WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVING AND PULLING NAILS. PERHAPS YOU BELIEVE THERE ISN'T MUCH TO IT. BUT ALMOST EVERYONE WHO DRIVES NAILS EVENTUALLY WINDS UP WITH A BRUISED FINGER OR BANGED-UP FINGERNAIL. OTHER UNPLEASANT THINGS CAN HAPPEN TOO. A BADLY HIT NAIL CAN FLY AND STRIKE AN EYE, PERHAPS PUTTING IT OUT. LOOSE HAMMERHEADS CAN FLY OFF. YOU CAN MISS YOUR TARGET AND GIVE YOURSELF A NASTY WALLOP. A CRACKED HANDLE CAN PUSH A SLIVER INTO YOUR PALM. AND IT'S LIKELY TO BECOME INFECTED IF YOU DON'T GET FIRST AID IMMEDIATELY.

A KNACK TO DRIVING NAILS

LEARN TO DRIVE NAILS QUICKLY AND CLEANLY. THE FIRST STEP IS TO BE SURE THE HAMMER IS IN GOOD CONDITION. THE HEAD MUST BE SET AT THE PROPER ANGLE AND FIT GOOD AND TIGHT. THE HANDLE MUST BE SMOOTH, STRAIGHT GRAINED, SHAPED TO GIVE A GOOD GRIP, AND OF THE RIGHT LENGTH AND WEIGHT TO GIVE GOOD BALANCE. THE HAMMER FACE IS IMPORTANT. IT SHOULD BE IN GOOD CONDITION AND NOT CHIPPED OR WORN AWAY FROM THE SHAPE THE MANUFACTURER GAVE IT. ALWAYS USE THE RIGHT SIZE HAMMER FOR THE NAIL. THERE IS AN INCREASE IN THE USE OF STEEL AND FIBERGLASS SHANK HAMMERS. BASICALLY, THE SAME PRECAUTIONS APPLY THAT WE HAVE RECOMMENDED FOR WOODEN HANDLED HAMMERS.

HOW TO DO IT

DRIVE THE NAIL SO THAT THE CENTER OF THE HAMMER FACE ALWAYS MEETS THE NAIL HEAD. IF IT DOESN'T, THE NAIL MAY FLY AT THE FIRST BLOW OR BEND AT THE SECOND. IT REQUIRES PRACTICE TO HIT A NAIL RIGHT EVERY TIME. LEARN TO GROOVE YOUR SWING; THAT IS, MAKE THE HAMMER HEAD GO THROUGH THE SAME PATH TO HIT THE NAIL HEAD, ALWAYS DEAD CENTER AND AT RIGHT ANGLES.

PULLING NAILS

REMEMBER, NAILS LEFT IN OLD FORM LUMBER, PACKING CRATES, OR IN LUMBER FROM WRECKING OPERATIONS ARE LIKE A SNAKE'S FANGS. PULL THESE NAILS OUT IMMEDIATELY OR BEND THEM OVER. YOU MAY BE THE ONE TO STEP ON THEM OR RIP YOUR HAND OPEN. IT'S EASY TO GET HURT WHEN PULLING NAILS. ONE "DO-IT-YOURSELF" TRIED TO PULL A 40-PENNY SPIKE WITH AN ORDINARY CLAW HAMMER. WHEN IT DIDN'T COME OUT, HE THREW HIS WEIGHT INTO IT. THE HANDLE BROKE AND HIS KNUCKLES LANDED WITH A WALLOP ON THE EDGE OF THE BEAM. TWO OF THEM WERE BROKEN. HE SHOULD HAVE PULLED THE SPIKE UP UNTIL HE COULD GET A PRY BAR ON IT, THEN PLACED A BLOCK OF WOOD UNDER THE BAR AS A FULCRUM TO INCREASE THE HEIGHT AS MORE OF THE NAIL WAS REMOVED. NEVER USE A "CHEATER" PIPE ON THE HANDLE.

LEARN THE KNACK

DRIVING AND PULLING NAILS IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS IT SEEMS. BUT ONCE YOU'VE GOT THE KNACK, YOU CAN DO IT EFFICIENTLY AND REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING HURT.

SOURCE: WWW.TOOLBOXTOPICS.COM

Thriving in a Challenging Economy Workshop

Tuesday, May 19th at the ABCIL Office!

The workshop will present methods and case study that will:

- Identify leading 'profit leaks' in your company
- Show how you can empower your employees to solve these problems
- Implement methodologies to insure ongoing management of these solutions.

(Check out the upcoming events on page 3 for more details!)

DON'T MISS THESE EVENTS!

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ABCIL'S ANNUAL CHICAGOLAND GOLF OUTING



COST:

- ⇒ INDIVIDUAL GOLF & DINNER \$165
- ⇒ FOURSOME GOLF & DINNER \$600,
- ⇒ DINNER ONLY \$40

COST INCLUDES:

- ⇒ GREEN FEES
- ⇒ LUNCH
- ⇒ ALL BEVERAGES AND ITEMS FROM THE BEVERAGE CART/KEG HOLE
- ⇒ DINNER BUFFET
- ⇒ ONE HOUR OPEN BAR AT DINNER
- ⇒ DOOR PRIZES

AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIPS:

PRESENTING SPONSOR
\$3,000

GOLF THEMED DINNER
FAVOR SPONSOR: \$2,000

DINNER SPONSOR \$1,000

BEVERAGE CART
SPONSOR: \$600 EACH (2
AVAILABLE)

DOOR PRIZE SPONSOR \$500
EACH (4 AVAILABLE)

HOLE SPONSOR \$ 250
(18 AVAILABLE)

KEG HOLE SPONSOR \$200

CONTEST HOLE SPONSOR
\$100 PLUS GIFT FOR
CONTEST WINNER

GOODIE BAG
SPONSOR PRODUCT ONLY

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR
TO REGISTER/SPONSOR
PLEASE CONTACT LISA AT
LISA@ABCIL.ORG

MAY 14, 2009

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE ABCIL OFFICE, 1541 ELMHURST RD. ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL 60007 AT 10:30 AM

MAY 19, 2009

THRIVING IN A CHALLENGING ECONOMY WORKSHOP

ESPECIALLY IN TODAY'S ECONOMY – MANY IN OUR INDUSTRY ARE FACING SERIOUS CHALLENGES INCLUDING TIGHT CASH FLOW, VOLATILE MATERIAL COSTS, AND REDUCED DEMAND. NOW IS THE TIME TO TIGHTEN / INSTALL OPERATIONAL METHODOLOGY TO IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF YOUR COMPANY. THAT IS WHY WE ARE COLLABORATING WITH THE COSI INSTITUTE TO PRESENT THIS TIMELY WORKSHOP. THIS EVENT WILL BE HELD AT THE ABCIL OFFICE, 1541 ELMHURST RD. ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL 60007 FROM 6:00-8:00 PM. THE COST IS \$99.00 FOR FOUR TICKETS! ALSO, ATTENDEES WILL RECEIVE 3 POST EVENT PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION TEAM COACHING SESSIONS FROM COSI FOR FREE!!!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT GREG HUEBNER AT 312-850-4380 OR BY EMAIL AT: GREG@CYCLEOFSUCCESS.NET

MAY 20, 2009

ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR NEWLY PROMOTED AND FRONT LINE SUPERVISORS

THIS ONE DAY SEMINAR WILL PREPARE YOUR SUPERVISORS FOR A COMPLETE CHANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND OFFER A PLAN FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD. THEY WILL COME AWAY WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE BOSS, PEERS, STAFF, AND COMPANY EXPECTS OF THEM. THE INVALUABLE TOOLS IN THIS PROGRAM WILL PREPARE SUPERVISORS FOR THEIR IMPORTANT NEW ROLE PROVIDING GREATER CONFIDENCE AND SUCCESS. THE EVENT WILL BE HELD AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY O'HARE CAMPUS, 3166 S. RIVER ROAD, DES PLAINES, IL. 60018

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT DEAN CARROLL AT DCARROLL@C-KG.COM

JUNE 18, 2009

2009 GRADUATION

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING OUR 2009 GRADUATES AT BELVEDERE BANQUETS, 1170 W. DEVON . ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL 60007. THE EVENT WILL BEGIN AT 7:00PM. COST: TBD

FOR MORE INFORMATION OF TO REGISTER PLEASE CONTACT DIANA AT DIANA@ABCIL.ORG

JULY 30, 2009

ABCIL ANNUAL CHICAGOLAND GOLF OUTING

THE EVENT WILL BE HELD AT PHEASANT RUN RESORT, 4051 EAST MAIN ST. SAINT. CHARLES, IL 60174. REGISTRATION WILL BEGIN AT 11:45 AM, LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12:00 PM, FOLLOWED BY A 1:00 PM SHOTGUN START. DINNER WILL BEGIN AT 6:00 PM. (PLEASE SEE THE COST LIST IN THE LEFT MARGIN)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OF TO REGISTER PLEASE CONTACT LISA AT LISA@ABCIL.ORG