

Job Site Scheduling: Time Really is Money!

People often say that “time is money,” and this is especially true during construction projects of all types and sizes.

For example, a regional organization was in the process of expanding their headquarters by adding a new wing. The initial decision-making and approval process took a little longer than expected, and consequently the project began six weeks late. This delay brought-about a time-challenge for the company, as winter was quickly approaching.

In addition, the communication between site management personnel, suppliers and sub-contractors was not the best. In certain instances the main crew was unable to work productively because materials were late in arriving. In other cases sub-contractors didn't arrive on site because they were confused about the schedule. As the frequency of these types of *misunderstandings* increased, the “ripple effect” became significant and it soon became apparent that the facility would not be weather-tight prior to winter's arrival, thus bringing about a need to import additional workers and to authorize overtime work – expensive solutions to say the least!

Managing a schedule is not always easy, but the upshots associated with failure to do so can be costly in multiple ways. In addition to delay-related costs, some contracts include punitive fines if certain deadlines are missed. In other cases the negative impact on worker morale can result in safety or quality lapses, as the overall job-site culture becomes one of mediocrity. Finally, a contractor's brand-value can be damaged once they get a reputation for missing timelines.

Best Practices Punch-List

Some of the best practices that can help avoid schedule-related disasters and costs are:

- Effective use of automation tools such as “Microsoft Project”
- Clear definition of roles and communication protocols, including the use of prudent meeting management practices
- Consistent and timely coordination with all trades, and the adoption of a “contract time table” to ensure compliance and to avoid punitive fines
- Use of ordering schedules to ensure materials arrive on site on time
- Teamwork – Project Managers and Superintendents must create a good working relationship with all parties; a spirit of teamwork must be created and maintained

