



Field Training Services Newsletter

"Improving the bottom line through production training."

Tip of the Month

Let's look at #4 of my 12 things that I think will make a remodeling company successful in production. The fourth key is pre-job planning by the person that will manage the job. So, depending on your structure, this would be a lead carpenter or project manager. Basic definition? A time set aside for the manager to look at all the documentation and carefully debug and plan the job.

What gets in the way. Most everyone agrees that this is a great idea but in 95% of the companies in the US it does not happen. The reasons are many and seem to be legitimate. We promised the client a start date and we must keep that. The client took too much time to do selection but we had to start anyway. The job manager was tied up and just could not fit it into their schedule. It is the same type of job as we have done many times before so there is no need. All of these are simply excuses, not reasons, for setting aside what I think is the most important step in a successful job.

History. One of the reasons this is the case is that business owners often have been in the field themselves and they never had to do this type of thing. They sold the job, estimated it, debugged it, and planned while the client was making decisions. Having done all this they simply started the job and bang it worked! But now a new person has stepped into the equation and they do not have the intrinsic knowledge of the job and must be brought up to speed in two weeks instead of 3 months.

What to do. A job manager must plan a time during the end of one job to plan the next one. This means setting aside a specific block of time. It cannot be "when I have time" or "over the weekend". In these cases the work will be set aside for other things that are either more pressing emotionally or more fun. The plans and documentation must be done a few weeks before start so the manager can create the time in a hectic schedule. Business owners or production managers must be pushing to see that this is done as an aid to the job managers

The list of tasks to be accomplished is simple. Read all contracts, carefully debug plans and scope, read all trade contracts, create a schedule, make a materials list, etc. and make a list of questions for the sales person so they can be answered before the job starts. By doing this the job manager will find a large number of the items that otherwise will pop up on the site and time will be wasted waiting for the answers.

What about the rush job? I will concede that there are times when a job really does need to get started for many different reasons. Simple solution - day one is all planning then you start the actual construction.



Next Month: Pre-Construction Conference

Personal News

Welcome to February, and what a good one it is! In the Northeast we have been having a very temperate winter. Westerly, RI received about 10 inches of snow during the storm that hit the east coast a week or so ago. The next day up to 40 degrees and as I look out back no snow to be seen. It reminds me of our first winter here in 01-02 when we had very little snow fall and I came away feeling like we had made a great move. Having heard all the news about how New England gets "a lot of snow" I thought perhaps we had moved to place where it is more moderate. Well the next winter it snowed and snowed! So I am enjoying the weather and even washed the cars last Sat.!

No fishing to report except that after the snow storm, I rushed out to clean off the boat! Can't let that fill up with snow!

I did spend 3 very nice days at the International Builders Show in Las Vegas in Jan. I went there to speak and had fun meanderings around the very large show floor. Many of the exhibits were items that I was not interested in but I did find a few things that caught my eye.

In my work with Yellow Dog Builders, design and sales, we are starting to do more additions than decks. So one of the things that caught my eye was digital drafting software. I have seen it and known about it for years but the expense was not worth it. Now it seems that has changed and perhaps I will enter the 21st century and start to do my designs on my computer.

My sun room green house is flourishing. I have started hanging more plants and I have a growing aloe vera forest. They keep multiplying and I can't seem to simply throw them out. My orchids are starting to blossom again. They were in a drought it seems but I moved them around and they are shooting out blossom shoots. I should have them blooming for most of February. I really enjoy a few flowers in the middle of winter.

NOTE: I could not change the information in the next block and save it due to a glitch in my system. Sorry.

Product Information

New Production Managers Roundtable Forming! I am facilitating Roundtable meetings for Remodelers Advantage focused for production managers. These meetings are designed to bring non competing companies together and allow the exchange of ideas as well as challenge each PM to be better people managers. If you are interested in something like this feel free to call me (401-348-9698) or Remodelers Advantage (301-490-5620) for details.

On Site Consulting Opportunities.

For those who do not know I offer consulting at your office on production systems and helping the company be more efficient. This involves a two day visit. On the first day I do interviews of employees and the owners to see where the problems are. The afternoon of the first day is spent with the decision makers to discuss what I found and what can be done to correct any issues. The second day is spent doing training for everyone based on the findings of the first day.

Upcoming Speaking Events

International Builders Show

Las Vegas, NV

Jan 19-21, 2016

Mastering Your Remodeling Business

Remodelers Advantage

Baltimore, MD

January 26-27, 2016

JLCLive NorthEast

Providence RI

March 17-19, 2016

Remember, investing in the people that spend the money, may be the best investment you ever make!

Sincerely,

Timothy Faller

Field Training Services

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www.leadcarpenter.com