

Good morning everybody, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

Today, I want to talk about your meetings and a specific approach to your meetings. The approach is being intentional with your meetings. Whether it's a job site meeting, an owner architect meeting, a staff meeting, a job review meeting, whatever meeting it is, good leaders never go into a meeting without an understanding of what they want as an outcome or outcomes to that meeting, what their desired outcomes are or their strategy for achieving that outcome. If you just show up for the meeting, what are the odds that you're going to get the result or the success you want out of that meeting? And they're not nearly as good or very good at all, unless you're intentional about your meetings.

Just think about a few meetings that happen in your company. Let's think about an OAC meeting, Owner Architect meeting, maybe with your project manager and your superintendent in there. Well, what do you need from that owner? Do you need to get paid on time to make sure the subs get paid? Do you need change orders approved? Do you need answers to RFIs, or do you need quicker submittal return? What do you need from that owner? And as you go into that meeting, make sure you're clear about what you'd like to accomplish. Perhaps it's just sending him out of there with a good feeling, knowing that you've got it and that his project's on time and on pace but whatever your objectives for that meeting, you should know them in advance and there may be three or four. And if you know the objectives, you can design the paperwork you're going to present for the meeting. You can design the agenda the way you want it. You might even have some preliminary conversations to make sure you've got some background or some support for some of the things you want to get accomplished.

As an example, if you're not getting your RFIs turned around very fast, maybe you could track how quickly you are getting that turnaround and compare that to your norm, your normal project or a successful project. Maybe you can readily relate that to some critical path timelines in your schedule and relate that if we don't get certain answers, this is going to be an unfortunate result from not getting those critical answers but again, know what those elements are before you go into that meeting and then have a clear strategy to get the result out of that meeting that you want. Maybe it's putting it back in your architect's lap, asking him what his expectations are for that. And seeing if there's a way for the team to come together and get the results that they need.

Subcontractor meeting, another meeting. Let's just say we have an issue with project delays, an issue with safety, an issue with cleanliness, again, what are the things we want to make sure everybody comes out of that room doing or thinking or accomplishing? And then have that strategy going in. If you've got to make a major change in that meeting, again, maybe you've strategized this and you've talked to a couple of key subcontractors to get their support so that you know when you throw it out to the group, that you'll get some positive response because sometimes you get group think, one person raises their hands and complains and pretty soon everybody's jumping in with a complaint but on the other hand, if you have somebody teed up and ready to say, "Oh, yeah. That's exactly what we need. And I'm planning on doing this."

Well, suddenly you have everybody chipping in to do that. That's then how you lay the groundwork for a meeting, but you can't lay the groundwork unless you're intentional and you know what you want to accomplish.

Staff meetings. This is probably one of the meetings that because it's routine, we show up at 10 o'clock on a Monday and we have this meeting. Well, what do we want to accomplish? Do we need a morale boost? Do we need people to hunker down? Are we having a project problem? Have we lost a key employee and people might be concerned about that? What messages need to be sent through this meeting or taken home from this meeting, to make it sure everybody has a good week, to make sure they attend to the work that needs to be done, to make sure our culture stays strong and positive? If you just show up for the meeting with no knowledge, it's likely you won't move yourself in the right direction. Be thinking about that.

Meetings are your opportunity to assert your influence and you can assert your influence in the meeting or even before the meeting. As I mentioned earlier, getting key support. I've had several clients tell me about successful leaders they've known in their past, maybe from boards they've been on and things like that. And they tell me that these great leaders for these boards or initiatives they've been on, always engineer their meetings. They have folks lined up. They always have the votes in advance before they bring things up for a vote. They have it organized, and they've done their homework. And that's what great leaders do. You think about this, all meetings, be intentional, be prepared. There are no routine meetings. If a meeting is simply routine and there's no purpose to it, well, why are we using up everybody's time at all? Cancel the meeting or better yet, make it effective.

Again, Dennis Engelbrecht, The Family Business Institute, Digging Deeper. Thanks.