

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

When we started this series a couple of years ago now, really had a focus on project managers and superintendents, how they could do their job better. So going back to the past a little bit, I wanted to sort of think about and refresh on the top habits of successful project managers. And I've had the opportunity now in 20 years of being outside and inside the construction industry to see a lot of folks and hear a lot about how they achieve their success. So, I'm going to today focus on just five top habits of some of the best project managers that I've had the opportunity to witness.

So, first habit of top project managers is they know their job. All right? They know their job inside and out. And what I've always heard from the top folks, they say the first thing they do when they get a job is they take it off again. All right? Oh. So, the estimating department or the pre-con department did their takeoffs and all of that. What the top project managers almost all did to a person is they took that set of plans and they approached it by scratch. I've also noticed that those top folks use a lot of colored highlighters and they'd be highlighting a lot in the plans and in the specs and all of that and in the contract. They would be highlighting all of these things as they took it off again and learned the job really from the basics, as opposed to just hearing from it from the estimating team and then trying to take it from there. So, first habit of the top EMs, know their job, and most of them do that by taking it off again and going through all of that detail.

The second thing I've noticed about great project managers is they're organized. And not only are they organized, they're organized in order to prioritize. All right? I've had a lot of folks complain to me lately, a lot of top leaders, that many of their project managers don't know what a priority is or don't know how to prioritize. So, they end up doing the wrong things, doing the wrong things first. Well, top project managers are organized to prioritize. They keep lists. They prioritize those lists. They check off the most important things first and then get to the things that are less important. One of the great quotes I remember from the past was, "Never let the most important be at the mercy of the least important." So top project managers are organized. They get organized in order to prioritize.

Number three, top project managers don't assume. Assuming gets you into trouble. Many of you probably know the saying around assuming. We won't go there. But if you don't assume, what does that mean? That means you ask. You ask the questions. You investigate. All right? Top project managers ask, investigate. They document. They inform. Sometimes the information that they have to inform folks with might not be pleasant. It might even be a little bit of conflict involved there. So, you have to make sure you inform in a nice manner so that folks aren't taken aback, and you create other problems. They also don't assume in the sense that they cover their tracks. They document what's going on. So, there's not a problem later. We don't assume that the owner's going to be okay with these delays just because they didn't make a big deal out of them. We make sure the reason for those delays is documented and that folks are informed, so that in the end, if it comes down to what's in the contract, we have the ammunition to take care of what's in the contract. So good project managers don't assume. All right?

Great project managers are not the lone wolf. All right? What do I mean by that? The lone wolf, maybe the person that thinks they know it all. They don't want to ask other people for advice and questions. They don't necessarily want to collaborate. They want to be the smartest person in the room. Well, trying to be the smartest person in the room is probably the quickest way to be the next unemployed person in the room. All right? That is not the way to get the best results in today's world. So don't be the lone wolf. Learn how to ask questions, collaborate, get the best information from the folks who have it, bring people together as a team, and you'll have a lot more success.

The next thing and the final one about the top habits of project managers is they get personal. All right. What do I mean about getting personal? Well, the opposite of the top project managers, some of them hide behind their computers and their phones and they manage solely by text and email. Well, unfortunately, while that may be important, we talked about documenting, informed and all of those things, that's important, but they don't neglect the personal side. They get on the

phone. They talk to folks. They recognize where there's potential conflict and they work through it on a personal basis. Again, we talked about collaboration. They establish trust. They establish friends, so that when they need advice or they need collaboration or they need cooperation, they can get that. So, the top project managers definitely are personal. They use relationships to their advantage. They know how to communicate with people. And while they do document and do all of that stuff, the personal really matters much more.

So, five top habits, quick reminder. Know the job. Be organized to prioritize. Don't assume. Document. Don't be a lone wolf. It's a team game out there. And number five and most importantly, remember the personal side. It takes relationships and people to get things accomplished.

Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.