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Project Performance Conference Best Solutions Luncheon Identifies Possible Solutions to Common Challenges

Participants at the Project Performance Conference enjoyed active discussions of three common challenges during a Best Solutions Luncheon. The topics and solutions that were discussed were later presented for the whole group so that teams could learn from one another.

Which pre-planning tasks should a mechanical contractor implement first to produce the most positive impact on a project?

- Pre-plan before estimates are made
- Packages on equipment
- Jobsite info.
- Info. on different subs/vendors
- Turnovers from management to field are critical
- Project management and superintendent need to know the contract
- 3-week look-ahead schedule
- Weekly coordination meetings/scope reviews
- Material ordering/delivery
- Identify pre-fab opportunities
- Equipment coordination with other trades
- Set up logistics ASAP, i.e., laydown areas
- Delivery procedures
- Safety procedures
- Jobsite plan
- Workflow
- Give the PM and foreman a week to review all the documents and come up with questions to discuss as a team internally before discussions with the GC
- Manpower loaded schedule based upon bid estimate and project turnover review
- Equipment matrix schedule; 3-week look-ahead
- Jobsite utilization plan
- Establish buy-in from PM and field
- Create a schedule and submit to the GC; organized and effective purchasing
- Pre-fab
- BIM
- Identify value engineering opportunities and offer to the customer
- Design review

Strong relationships are the foundation of any successful contractor. What initiatives could a mechanical contractor implement to best improve their relationships both internal and external?

- Constant communication with the GC
- Develop the relationship so there are no "nickel and dime" negotiations occurring
- Make certain employees feel appreciated



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- Train employees consistently between employees
- Give the field goals
- Maintain relationships with the customer especially when there is no impending work
- Make it seamless for the customer
- Make certain field and office personnel understand the value of the relationship you have built or are building
- Have consistency on the project with the PM and foreman
- Have weekly team meetings in house
- Rank customers—platinum, gold, silver, lead
- Job performance reviews
- Keep your word
- Proactive relationship development
- Maintain timely communication with all parties
- Coordinate with the GC not just other MEP contractors
- Have employer/customer gatherings and outings
- Monthly raffles for prizes
- Build trust with GC on other jobs
- Physical presence on the job
- Have a good kick-off meeting
- Keep the same PM/foreman/superintendent on a team

Communication often suffers on challenging projects for a variety of reasons. What are the top three initiatives a mechanical contractor can implement to produce the most improvement in communication?

- Weekly internal meetings of the foreman and project team
- Open flow of communication, open table discussions
- Job turnover meetings
- Electronic communication with foremen (phones, Internet)
- Geographical location of personnel
- P-10 weekly meetings
- On-site foreman meetings with subs
- Timely responses
- Regular meeting with all subs
- Develop a face-to-face relationship—don't hide behind e-mail
- Maintain minutes of meetings
- Insist that all decision makers attend key meetings
- Be proactive rather than reactive—address job issues before they grow

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