What Foremen Have to Do to Be Effective on the Job Site

By Norb Slowikowski

This is the first part of a two-part article that focuses on what foremen have to do to be effective on the job site. This month we’ll discuss the productivity requirements, and next month we’ll look at the communication requirements.

- Know the strengths of your people. Identify what they are really good at and assign them to these tasks. Utilize your crew effectively.

- Make sure the workers start work on time. They need to be at their workstation ready to work at the designated starting time.

- Set production goals with your crew. Make sure they know how much work they are supposed to get done by the end of the day. Explain to them why reaching these goals is important. Be specific. Check how they are doing. Make corrections as required (count boards).

- Keep foremen on the job until the job is finished.

- Review the weekly Production Reports. Use the data to stay on schedule.

- Express the importance of quality workmanship. If they have a problem producing quality framing, hanging, taping, fireproofing, etc.—let them know that asking for help is okay so that rework can be avoided. It is important that you emphasize working safely.

- If a member of your crew is not meeting the production goals, ask him why he is not. Say, “What do you need from me? How can I help you get to where I need you to be?” Remove excuses and obstacles. Become a coach, not a critic. If the person will not do what you expect of him after you have helped him, let him know that you can’t keep him on the job. This type of open communication may get him to start performing up to the set standards.

- Make sure your crew knows how to install the product properly—provide training as required.

- If you want a person to do a task a certain way, explain to him why you want him to do it that way.

- When asking your superintendent for people, be sure you tell him what you want the person to do (specific desired skill).

Remove excuses and obstacles. Become a coach, not a critic.

Make sure the person you get can do what he says he can do. Observe and train as required.

- On a large job, use apprentices or laborers to keep the job clean and keep the crew stocked with materials.

- Review production reports on a weekly basis—check how you are doing against the budget. Have a game plan to get back on budget.

About the Author

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