Cooperation: The Essential Ingredient

Gaining Cooperation From Fellow Contractors Is the Result Of Planning, Too.

by Thelma L. Fair
Construction Writer

Cooperation is essential to a continued healthy construction business and no one knows it better than the contractor who finds it difficult to obtain.

Inevitably, there is a reason why that has been happening. It is often in the failure of an individual to institute proper steps toward assuring its presence. Here are things which can be done beforehand to make that easier:

Give as well as take. It definitely pays to look upon requests for assistance or cooperation as worth following through for each, for each is an investment toward cooperation in the future.

Experience reveals that a major request by you is seldom denied after even only small ones have been given by you in the past. No request for cooperation from a fellow contractor is ever unimportant enough to be neglected.

Increase personal activity within all contractor groups. The men therein know the value of cooperation better than those outside.

Such activity establishes a pattern that usually does not go unnoticed.

It is particularly recognized by the ones whose cooperation will be needed most (and be of greatest value) in the future.

Learn more about the interests and specialties of other contractors with whom you come in contact. Those are the areas wherein they have top knowledge and enthusiasm. And almost without exception they are the ones these people are usually eager to share with others when mutual interest has been demonstrated in the past.

Be the individual to whom business integrity is of maximum importance and practiced constantly. That breeds respect and this in turn develops a desire to cooperate and be of assistance whenever an occasion arises to do so.

Respect for an individual invariably builds up the desire to cooperate to the maximum extent on each occasion.

Shun even the minutest bit of gossip about fellow contractors. Others are suspicious of the person who indulges therein even when it is of a harmless nature.

Gossip does not have to be vicious; it covers even the small and unimportant things involved with humorous occurrences about which all of us tend to pass along such things that we have observed.

When a fellow contractor is in a spot, by all means help him without delay or questions, as long as his problem does not touch upon business ethics or illegality. Those are the occasions when gratitude builds a desire to repay what one has done, at the first opportunity presenting itself in the future.

Be accessible. The contractor who is difficult to reach or talk to insofar as his colleagues are concerned, automatically discourages any kind of cooperation from them in the future.

With just a little practice it is easy to protect yourself from the people who will abuse that accessibility. The cooperation of even this group may, some time in the future, be needed.

Avoid downgrading the individual who comes to you for advice, help, or assistance, even when you extend such cooperation. It is mighty easy to do without thinking so well guarded on each such occasion. Keep in mind that it is easy to look down upon that colleague at such a time. Make sure this never happens even if there be cause for that attitude.

Develop maximum patience with the men in your professions on all occasions where contacts of any

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kind are made. That is often hard to do under trying or difficult conditions, but it is worthwhile.

Patience develops understanding that could be missing where it is absent. When one exercises it, one assures oneself that the cooperation being extended is definitely of value and will be remembered in the future.

Broaden personal acquaintance among fellow contractors. With how many in the area where business is being done have you built a personal relationship beyond just using first names? The more individuals one can place on this list the greater number will be available when the need for their cooperation does arise.

Resist the temptation to criticize what another contractor is doing until all of the facts are available and are then carefully weighed. Snap judgments seldom contribute anything toward building future cooperation from such an individual and one can never know which individual will have to be called upon at some time in the future.

Keep broadening personal business and non-business interests. Each such step helps build a closer bond between individuals in the field. The people who share common interests are more eager to work with one another at any time than those who do not.

Avoid putting a dollar-and-cents tag on each such request for cooperation received. Values have to be weighed, of course, but where each is assessed upon that basis, the results are seldom productive.

Be sure that you really need assistance and cooperation before it is requested. When need is minimal, and that fact is obvious, there is little to encourage the other individual to make an extra effort toward being of assistance.

Give the other person all of the information needed to understand and to fully justify, in his own mind, full cooperation with what you are requesting. The lack of such data may be the stumbling block on the way of wholehearted cooperation.

Where one individual’s assistance is all that is needed, avoid asking half a dozen others at the same time. Cooperative spirit diminishes when such things happen again and again.

Show genuine appreciation each time such cooperation is given by any individual. Just taking it for granted discourages any second help as well as receiving it from others who hear about what happened.

Finally, pick the time and place for making such requests carefully. Cooperation often depends upon a specific individual’s ability to respond. If he or she is approached where that is not possible, full cooperation is impossible to return to oneself in even the smallest degree.