



“...since effective change always starts at the top, the role of leaders, among other things, is to be agents of change.”

NO. 6: MINIMIZE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

ROCK THE BOAT, CAPTAIN!

Editor's Note: *Following is part six of our eight part series called “Better Next Year,” by Fred Ode, CEO, chairman and founder of Foundation Software.*

Construction business owners, like a ship's captain, must be prepared to steer their companies through the stormy waters and uncharted territory called change. To sit still amid changes happening within your market, your industry and your competition is to risk sinking.

Take it from the hundreds—or perhaps thousands—of books on the subject: Change in business is a given. Hard as it may be to accept and implement, the fact is that change happens. And since effective change always starts at the top, the role of leaders, among other things, is to be agents of change.

Contractors operating within a rapidly-changing construction

environment, therefore, have no choice but to implement change. Not only do they need to research and pursue the changes that will best help their company grow and prosper, but they need to manage and model those changes as well.

Change Starts at the Helm

Having worked with hundreds of construction business owners over the last twenty-seven years, I can safely say that significant organizational change does not happen within a contracting business unless the owner is willing and able to make it happen. Leaders who can effectively step outside their own comfort level and focus on the larger issues facing their company are more likely to follow through on change initiatives. What's

Better Next Year— An Eight Part Series

1. Avoid Spreadsheet Dependency
2. Hire Expert Construction Advisers
3. Understand and Use Management-Level Reports
4. Fine-Tune Project Management Reports
5. Improve Communication between Office and Field
- 6. Minimize Resistance to Change**
7. Owner, Open Your Eyes
8. Commit to Ongoing Education

more, those change initiatives are more likely to succeed and help the company grow when owners commit to change.

Unfortunately, many business owners struggle with change. They avoid it not because they are lazy or uninvolved, but because they are too busy or too fearful to move from “the way we’ve always done it” to a new program or process with unknown results. Meanwhile, as they stay at status quo, afraid of the changes that might hurt their business, their business lags behind because of inefficiency and missed opportunities.

In order to produce effective changes, contractors often must learn to change themselves. They can’t be afraid to make change decisions, they can’t be afraid to evaluate change and, if need be, they can’t be afraid to alter those decisions. In order to guarantee that change is working, company owners need to constantly and obsessively evaluate their initiatives.

Leading Change by Example

Once a decision has been made to implement change, employees are the most important aspect of its success and the greatest obstacle.

Depending on age, skill levels and even upbringing, employees’ response to change can range from outright fear and panic to enthusiastic support. But the truth is, most people resist change to some extent.

Research shows that involving employees in the decision-making process and communicating the reasons for the change will help staff members adapt more easily. In addition, when people understand what’s expected of them and feel that they have management’s full support throughout the change process, they are less likely to dig their heels in and refuse to budge. Finally, recognizing employees for their effort and cooperation is another way to help staff

members transition smoothly.

So what happens when, despite all the best efforts of management to initiate change, employees refuse to accept new processes or procedures? Sometimes, contractors have no choice but to let go of the “dead wood” that is dragging the company down. Unpleasant as it may be, contractors need to recognize that employees who are incapable or unwilling to change could have a huge negative impact on the company’s health and prosperity.

Although we all generally accept the reality that “change happens,” the idea of pursuing and implementing change remains an ominous challenge. But for construction business owners who wish to be “better next year,” change must be high on their list of personal and management-level priorities. When it comes to change,

rocking the boat can lead to smoother sailing. ■



Fred Ode is the CEO/Chairman of Foundation Software, developer of construction job cost accounting software called FOUNDATION for Windows. For further information on FOUNDATION for Windows, visit www.foundationsoft.com. Fred Ode can be reached directly by phone at 800.246.0800 or e-mail fred@foundationsoft.com.

Never Buy Plywood Again.

Mobile Matt™

*Cleat design on the underside helps reduce walkout

Unique "M" tread pattern provides maximum traction

Visit us at www.mobilematt.com

PERMA-PAD™ HD

Manufactured Ultra Molecular Weight Polyethelene (UHMW) plastic for years of service.

Custom sizes available.

Visit us at www.permapad.com

Mobile Matt™

MOBILE MATT INC.
1051 Ashwaubenon Street
Green Bay, WI 54304
920.983.1005
1.800.592.5270

circle 138 on card or go to cbofreeinfo.com