



AMERICAN
SUBCONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION

THE SOFT SIDE OF SCHEDULING

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN GC'S AND SUBS

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INTRODUCTION

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WHAT IS THE “SOFT SIDE OF SCHEDULING?”

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FEBRUARY 6, 2018 – THE BEGINNING

ASA Metro held a discussion between 2 volunteer GC's and our members to discuss scheduling.

From that discussion TWO points stood out that most people knew but never discussed were brought to light

1. Most GC's do not consult subcontractors in formulation of original schedule
2. Most GC's do not provide an electronic copy of the schedule out of fear that it will be used against them.

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SCHEDULING COMMUNICATION

- Why the scheduling process appears to fail.
- Understanding the scheduling requirements from a general contractor's perspective.
- Management steps that subcontractors can implement to best contribute to a project's schedule.
- Building trust and integrity in the scheduling process.

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WHY THE SCHEDULING PROCESS APPEARS TO FAIL.

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“ The absence of meaningful schedules is a primary cause of project failure. Too often, the schedules produced for construction projects are deficient as instruments for planning and control. The original plan is seldom validated and it is likely that no-one knows if it was ever possible to achieve it. Schedule updates can become administrative formalities rarely reflecting, let alone dictating, short and long term planning. And if the schedule does not reflect the original scope correctly, then it can hardly be expected to be used to manage changes, even though the contract prescribes this function. ”

J. Gerard Boyle, Revay and Associates Limited

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A SCHEDULE MAY FAIL DUE TO:

- LAPSES IN REPORTING - contractors may think they can get by with a baseline, and subsequently as few updates as possible.
- REPORTING ERROR AND OMISSIONS - Many contractors don't maintain accurate records of their progress, and are forced to guess at actualized dates
- LACK OF LEADERSHIP AT THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL - Many contractors think of the schedule as an unnecessary project requirement. As such, they plan only to go through the motions, giving the minimal effort, and making you work harder.
- POLITICS - Not infrequently do GCs and CMs unduly skew progress reports to their advantage, or to obfuscate some other reality.

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UNDERSTANDING THE SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS FROM A GENERAL CONTRACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE.

Pre-Award, Post Award and Construction

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WHERE DOES THE GC SCHEDULE COME FROM? PRE AWARD

GMP/Negotiated - Satisfy owners expectation (We can do it!)

GC Preconstruction knows all and makes a schedule without subcontractor input.

Lump Sum – Meet requirements of solicitation

GC Preconstruction knows all and makes a schedule without subcontractor input.

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WHERE DOES THE GC SCHEDULE COME FROM? POST AWARD *GMP/NEGOTIATED OR LUMP SUM*

BEST PRACTICE

Provide copy of schedule in native format to subcontractors.

Get input from Subcontractors for Material Deliveries and installation logic and make adjustments.

Provide Float, Predecessor and successor information

WORST PRACTICE

Continue to use Original Precon Schedule even if outdated and make it part of the contract.

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WHERE DOES THE GC SCHEDULE COME FROM? CONSTRUCTION

BEST PRACTICE

Get monthly input from Subcontractors and make adjustments

Provide regular (monthly) updates to overall project schedule to subcontractors.

Utilize 3 week schedules that mirror the updated project schedule

WORST PRACTICE

Update project schedule but do not provide updated schedules to subcontractors

Utilize 3 week schedules that are not related to overall project schedule

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MANAGEMENT STEPS THAT SUBCONTRACTORS CAN IMPLEMENT TO BEST CONTRIBUTE TO A PROJECT'S SCHEDULE.

Preconstruction, Contract Period and Construction

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PRECONSTRUCTION

- If you see something, say something.
- With your bid provide a statement that you have reviewed the schedule and will or cannot comply and why.
- If time, offer to help develop a schedule and work with other trades.

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CONTRACT PERIOD (MOST IMPORTANT)

- Review schedule that is attached to the contract (really review)
- Point out any inconsistencies to GC such as inadequate durations (and why),
- Remember they may be a long duration between precon and contract. Schedules can get out of date very quickly if not updated.
- Ask for contract language for GC to provide monthly updates and electronic copies.
- Make modifications and send to GC in writing with reasons for modifications.

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CONTRACT PERIOD - WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE SCHEDULE

- Duration of activities (Manpower and qty of work). GC's may assume each floor is the same and just duplicate time and activities.
- Actual activities not included in schedule (insulation of ductwork, insulation of plumbing, control wiring, testing and balancing, climate control vs wood acclimation and installation, cure periods of concrete, temp heat for drywall/paint installation).

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CONTRACT PERIOD - WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE SCHEDULE

- Duration of “float” in an activity (too much float = wrong successor)
- Stacking of your activities (resource leveling)
- No time for performance review of systems
- Verify activity sequence is correct

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CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

- Attend all weekly/monthly meetings.
- Start attendance at least a month before you are to be onsite in order to understand and be prepared to discuss schedule
- Review 3 week look ahead schedule and verify it conforms with overall project schedule
- Price Changes and include schedule impacts
- Provide Schedule updates with your monthly pay application

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BUILDING TRUST AND INTEGRITY IN THE SCHEDULING PROCESS.

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WHAT IS A SUB TO DO?

- Maintain your demand every month for proper update backup, even if it may not be forthcoming.
- As a project starts to lose traction, offer solutions, and request access to higher level team members who might help streamline the process, or facilitate recovery or mitigation schedules.
- If you and/or your team do not understand CPM scheduling, it is critical to learn.
- Hire a scheduling consultant that can write reports on your behalf. Protect yourself and your company
- Provide monthly status reports with schedule activity updates.
- Provide schedule impact information with change requests.
- Do NOT continually point the finger to others

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HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

SUB: This change will delay the project.

GC: We cannot delay the end, so price it so it does not affect the end date.

Project finishes on time, great adulation for GC and, change request is denied or cut because it is not reflective of normal pricing.

SUB: But he said.... (that guy is gone)

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

To avoid failure on construction projects, it is necessary to understand that generally there is not *sufficient accountability* for poor performance.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Most projects get built in spite of the scheduling issues.
- The relationship with your client (GC) can impact the way you approach the schedule and documentation, just be careful.
- Don't ever forget, everyone works for someone else and they are measured not by their efforts but by their results. Try to understand that and help them to a successful conclusion. (this will allow you to be successful with your results. It is the ultimate Win-Win.

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BE AN ASA LEADER

- Do not follow the status quo and blame the contractor, Give ideas to improve.
- Be the leader of the subcontractors for your project by leading by example
- Follow best practices so that other subs will learn and join you in your efforts
- All you want is a schedule that reflects the future and represents the plan of the project. It will change, work to help get it right and stand up for you rights.
- The best result would be that you are recognized as a best practice subcontractor because of your association with ASA.

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