A Guide for Subcontractors:

Embrace the Right Tools for Improved Communication

E B O O K

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Introduction

Effective and transparent communication techniques are ideal for efficient construction processes.

Miscommunication of crucial project elements, such as materials, change orders, and schedule changes, often leads to disputes. Projects run more smoothly when everyone is on the same page, reducing unnecessary conflict.

We believe you're a subcontractor facing communication challenges, as a survey by the National Subcontractors Alliance in 2020 found that around 18% of all disputes in the construction industry involved subcontractors.

Working with contractors using the latest technology can be challenging for subcontractors. The right tools are needed for efficient, prompt, documented communication that eliminates the guesswork.

As a subcontractor, you're likely juggling multiple construction projects simultaneously, with ongoing changes and schedule updates.

Using robust construction project management software that offers subcontractor support, you can leverage real-time communication to stay connected with your contractor.

With the right tools, subcontractors can easily access and send messages, view and track comments, and check the status of jobs.

Your efforts won't be hindered, as the platform will always inform you of changes through automatic notifications.

When you have an integrated system to handle communication chaos, subcontractors will be focused on delivering quality results.

Using robust technology, establishing connections with main contractors strengthens employees and workers through proper and efficient communication.

Effective communication between team members helps individuals take ownership of their tasks, improving performance.

Good communication on the construction site enhances the performance of activities in the project schedule and improves working relationships between contractors and subcontractors.

Why Does Communication Fail at Construction Sites?

The most common red flags of communication breakdowns on construction sites are interpersonal matters and miscommunication. No matter how minor the problem is, it can negatively impact the project's profitability. Some of the specific issues driving poor communication include:

● Assumptions
● Inability to listen and react
● Lack of integrity and respect

The following are the main effects of the communication problems mentioned above:
● A tense work atmosphere
● Employees not understanding the whereabouts of information showing the completion of work
● Considering leaving the organization due to their unhappiness with how they are treated.

Miscommunication in a construction project causes substantial losses in addition to being inconvenient. This results in project delays due to the unnecessary time wasted looking up project details and resolving disputes.

03 Reason for Conflict between Main Contractors and Subcontractors

The main reason for conflicts between main contractors and subcontractors is often related to contractual and financial issues. Here are some common causes:

1. **Payment disputes:** One of the most common reasons for conflict between main contractors and subcontractors is payment disputes. Subcontractors may feel that they need to be paid fairly or on time, while main contractors may feel that the subcontractors need to meet their contractual obligations.

2. **Scope of work disagreements:** Conflicts can arise when the subcontractors have different expectations about their responsibilities and scope of work than what was outlined in the contract. Main contractors may also change the scope of work without notifying or consulting the subcontractors, leading to disagreements.

3. **Delays:** Delays can cause a ripple effect on the entire project, and it's common for subcontractors to be held responsible for delays even when the main contractor is liable. This can lead to disputes over the allocation of costs and time.

4. **Quality issues:** Quality issues can arise when subcontractors fail to meet the quality standards specified in the contract. This can lead to delays and rework, increasing costs and potential disputes.

5. **Communication breakdowns:** Miscommunication between main contractors and subcontractors can lead to misunderstandings, mistakes, and delays, which can ultimately cause conflict.

Overall, conflicts between main contractors and subcontractors can be avoided or minimized through clear communication, realistic expectations, and fair contracts. Both parties should also proactively resolve issues and address disputes before they escalate.

According to Tim Hogan's podcast, he said that," Subcontractors need to follow three basic rules to avoid conflicts:

1. Return phone calls and emails the same day
2. Don't complain about problems; come up with solutions
3. Know your niche. Be the guy GCs call in the preconstruction phase for advice and insight."

Top 10 Benefits of Using the Right Tool for your Subcontracting Business

1. Elevate your workflow

Effective use of business software solutions can significantly improve organizational efficiency and productivity, leading to better customer service and increased customer satisfaction.

Businesses can streamline their processes by assigning tasks, setting goals, monitoring progress, generating reports, and improving overall performance.

Additionally, when team members are committed to the process, the software can facilitate communication and information sharing, enabling better evaluation of everyone's efforts.

Ultimately, using business software solutions can simplify tasks, enhance procedures, and improve outcomes.

2. Seamless collaboration

Managing multiple projects and responsibilities within a company can be challenging, but personal accountability tools can help individuals stay organized and focused on their most important tasks.

Business software tools can create a productive work environment that facilitates collaboration, which is crucial for increasing output.

By utilizing productivity tools, businesses can simplify assigning assignments and projects and effectively monitor progress.

3. Simplifies document management

The construction industry generates and manages extensive paperwork, all of which must be securely preserved. In the past, this was done using paper documents stored in filing cabinets.

However, those days are long gone, particularly for companies seeking a competitive advantage. With integrated construction management software, all project-related paperwork can be securely stored.

Project managers can easily track progress and communicate with clients and contractors using construction software, as all relevant data is stored in a document management system.

Integrated accounting software for construction projects also makes monitoring spending easy for all parties.

4. Eases information accessibility

An integrated construction software management system provides an organized way to manage critical issues and track paperwork, allowing for quick retrieval of vital information.

All project records are stored in a centralized location, ensuring that important documents are not lost. Audit log records also provide evidence of document creation and modification.

With everyone involved in the project having access to the system, the project's status can be verified at any time. For example, project managers can quickly check the software system to determine the amount spent on construction materials or how much was paid to contractors.

5. Evaluates risk

Disorganized project paperwork can make it more challenging to assess potential risks. To ensure that all construction projects include proper risk assessments, an integrated construction software system can help to identify and manage risks.

6. Controls project costs

To make money, controlling project costs is crucial. Using construction accounting software, you can relieve your staff from sifting through mountains of paperwork to find documents.

Accessing the construction software system will allow them to view contracts, change orders, and track the budget's progress.

Therefore, the most up-to-date project management software ensures the success of every project. You can handle significant difficulties if all relevant information is readily available.

For example, you can manage expensive project problems as they appear and reduce the possibility of a project cost overrun.

Construction organizations benefit from integrated accounting software with better project tracking, lower operational expenses, and access to real-time financial data.

7. Deliver projects on-time

Many project managers consider construction management software the ultimate guide to achieving corporate success.

By utilizing the most effective construction software, complete with fully integrated construction accounting software, projects can be finished on time and within budget.

The latest software developed for the building and construction industry simplifies all tasks. All project team members, including architects, designers, project managers, builders, subcontractors, and tradespeople, can follow the same plan until the project is completed.

Construction software brings workers together, boosts productivity, streamlines operations, and increases profitability.

8. Enhances your business growth

A team of qualified tradespeople usually takes on construction projects. These highly skilled individuals work together efficiently to complete the project.

By creating a project team and implementing integrated construction software, you can instantly have a group of people who use technology to expand their business and increase profitability.

9. Expand your business efficiently

Construction jobs are typically undertaken by a crew of certified tradespeople, a skilled group who work efficiently to finish the project.

By assembling a project team and implementing integrated construction software, you can immediately establish a team of individuals who will utilize construction software to expand their business and enhance their profitability.

10. Improves safety

When constructing a building, project managers must prioritize safety. Using construction software enhances the project by aiding in its comprehensive planning, management, and coordination. Integrating construction software minimizes costly delays and facilitates efficient communication, empowering the field team to work to their maximum potential and avoid costly or hazardous errors.

What Does a Collaborative Construction Business Look Like?

Efficient workflows are a sign of successful collaboration, where all team members are aware of their duties, comprehend how to access the necessary information (i.e., communicate effectively). Moreover, they are confident in completing their tasks while allowing others to do the same.

The following are specific actions undertaken by collaborative construction:

1. It increases trust

Trust is the core of productive collaboration. Without it, individuals and organizations may prioritize their own duties and goals, often at the expense of others. As mentioned above, this lack of trust is a common cause of cost overruns.

2. It keeps everything simple

Collaboration should be simple and connected to routine job duties; otherwise, it is unlikely to occur. Successful collaboration, on the contrary, is uncomplicated. It allows for effortless, organic team collaboration. A seamless collaborative process typically stems from the smart application of tools and techniques.

3. It is comprehensive

A true partnership should be built on inclusivity. Nowadays, a plethora of research and thought leadership shows that inclusivity is a much better growth approach than exclusivity, leading towards growth.

Usually, when people use this phrase, they refer to a variety in terms of race, age, background, and experience. However, diversity also plays a crucial role in ensuring accessibility to information. When information is deliberately withheld, nobody benefits.

4. It maintains transparency in roles and responsibilities

For collaboration to thrive, it is essential to establish explicit roles and responsibilities and bring all stakeholders together. Each team member should be aware of their specific duties, and workflows should be structured to ensure everyone knows the chain of command that follows them.

5. It prioritizes communication

It's important to understand that effective communication is essential for teamwork.

A report from FMI states that "almost half of all rework is due to inadequate communication among project stakeholders and insufficient project information."

Intelligent and successful construction companies address this issue by implementing cloud-based, easily accessible systems that allow for simple uploading and downloading of documents, real-time viewing, markup, Q&A, information requests, offline access, remote location interaction, and more.

Communication should be a top priority at every stage.

Conclusion

Sharing information with stakeholders, suppliers, contractors, and designers can be risky business and may result in knowledge gaps and data loss.

To address these issues and foster collaboration in your construction subcontracting business, taking intentional steps toward that goal and using appropriate tools is essential.

While it can be challenging at times to achieve successful teamwork in a construction project, the rewards are well worth the effort.

Clear and concise communication, starting from project management and extending to frontline workers on the job site, is the cornerstone of collaborative construction.

Although implementing a collaborative building policy may sometimes be frustrating, it is evident that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

If you are looking for reliable construction management software, ProjectPro is all you need.

A robust platform powered by Microsoft Dynamics Business Central, streamlines accounting processes and strengthens control of your project like a pro. It works as a single source of truth for subcontractors and main contractors. To see the product in action, book a demo.
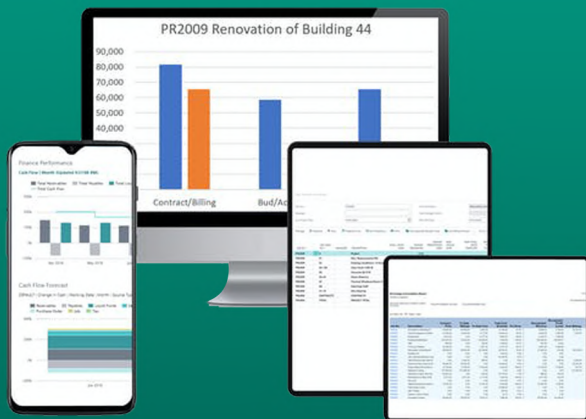
About ProjectPro

ProjectPro is a division of Netsmartz LLC global group of companies. ProjectPro is specifically designed for construction firms and powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central to make sure you get the most out of your business software.

Stand out of the league by streamlining your business processes, controlling costs, and offering timely and accurate information. ProjectPro holds the potential to integrate your crucial job quoting, project accounting, resource management for labor and equipment, and much more all in a single database.

With integrated data, intelligent transaction processing, and robust analytical and reporting capabilities, you can reduce the time and effort it takes to access meaningful information necessary to make good business decisions.

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