Distance Project Management

Mobile technologies and handy construction software allow for management of the project to be done digitally. However, managing the construction site remotely is not an easy task. The nature of construction projects requires from managers experience on how to handle risk and high paced building site environment.

Management involves budgeting, financing, works scheduling, materials orders, making decisions, resolving conflicts and legal issues. It is very complex and requires the in-depth knowledge of the building process and the ability to solve problems. The use of technologies, excellent communication skills and trusted team are necessary to ensure the project is run according to the schedule.

Some contractors choose to manage the project on distance. The main reasons for such strategy are the higher number of projects or a project in a different region. Managing project from afar is possible and can bring same returns, but it does not mean that there will be no time on site at all. There is no substitution for on-site presence, but a well-trained team and trusted foreman can run the construction site when the management is not there.

How to plan the distance project management?

Works schedule and project plan - workers have to be aware of the works programme; their work should be plan weekly and daily. Materials have to be ordered in advance so the risk of delays will be reduced to the minimum.

Consider BIM - Building Information Modelling allows for more efficient collaboration of all parties involved in the project. Sharing documents, making any alternation to plans, taking on board decisions of structural engineers etc.

Invest in technology - Cameras link to the building site, biometric technology for workers etc., video messaging with the foreman, photos streaming of works progress. Plenty of face time or Skype conversations is vital when running remote teams. Usage of handy mobile apps also has a lot of advantages, for instance, real-time streaming from camera to create time-lapse presentations of site progress.

Define roles on site- establish who is responsible for what, what is the hierarchy in your team.

Communication with foreman - daily communication is essential to keep track of what is happening on site, with regular updates on works progress, materials delivery, health and safety records, any site visit by architect, client, engineer or local authority.

Build a relationship with the client - often phone conversations and email exchanges allow the client to stay informed.

Daily and weekly reports - such information allow to implement any changes, decide on works progress, labour transfers, materials orders and deliveries.

Works valuations - a presence during appointments for works valuations is essential. These are usually planned according to works schedule. For distance project management approach it is advised to schedule works valuation meetings more often- for instance, once a month.

📖 BOOK REVIEW

Construction Management JumpStart: The Best First Step Toward a Career in Construction Management, 2nd Edition by Barbara J.Jackson

This is our recommended book for all those wishing to start their career in construction management field. This is the second edition of a bestselling introduction to construction management. It gives insight on each stage of the construction management process.

Written from the constructor's perspective, this book will familiarize you with all the construction management fundamentals and how Building Information Modeling (BIM) is impacting the construction management profession.

- Covers interoperability of technology advances in the construction industry
- Explains how BIM is challenging the traditional approach to project delivery and how this affects the constructor's role
- Elaborates each stage of the design and construction process and the tasks associated with each of them
- Shows step-by-step how to estimate project costs, administer contracts, manage job site and construction operations, plan and schedule a project, monitor project performance, manage project quality and safety, and assess project risks
- Provides review questions at the end of each chapter to help enforce understanding