

Construction Break

Laugh a little, learn a little & take a break from the daily grind

Winter 2013

When To Prepare For Project Closeout

The big question is “When do I start preparing for project closeout?” The answer is “The day you sign the contract!” The proactive approach to project closeout should include early planning, with specific milestones, closeout goals, administrative provisions, change order controls, schedule controls, punchlist controls, and maintenance/warranty work.

Administrative controls should include items such as correspondence logs, requests for clarification and additional information, submittals, punchlists, final completion schedules, pay request status, as-built drawings, any required certifications and file maintenance.

When looking at the scheduling, coordinate with the schedule of values, job cost and resource budget. Include all the other players with milestones for substantial completion, inspections and demobilization.

Change order controls should include final change order resolution. The log should be reviewed and the status of each change order can be determined. The general contractor should check the status of all subcontractor change orders and plan and schedule for final change order negotiations. Finally, estimate the time needed to complete the process.

Determine who and what controls the punchlist. Remember, as the project winds down, staff will be relocated to new jobs and you do not want to exceed the budget by not keeping a close eye on who must be there for punchlist work to be completed in a timely fashion. You must know at all times where in the closeout process you are with each phase—Substantial completion versus final completion, and preliminary versus final inspections. There must be



Are your project closeout procedures in place?

documentation for the completion of punchlist items.

What is needed to be complete and receive final payment? Final completion items are as-built drawings, equipment lists, warranties, subcontractor releases or final lien waivers, verification and request for release of retainage and final change order resolutions. Remember, this process should be started early or the final payment process will be delayed.

The result of these procedures will allow for the early identification of issues and permit quick resolutions. There

will be few, if any, execution errors, thus enhancing the general contractor's efficiency.

Employing these practices will lead to cost-effective and timely completion of the project. At the same time, because of the interaction between the contractor and owner throughout, it sets the stage for a long-term relationship, thus aiding in client retention.

Some of the processes outlined above are a part of the Marsh Construction Practice. For more information, contact your local Marsh office.



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Our New Year's Message

The new year is traditionally a time of reflection, when we look back at the past and with promise to the future. The last several years have presented enormous challenges to us—personally, as families, as businesses and as a nation.

As we look ahead, it's also a good time to appreciate our blessings. At the Walter B. Davis Co., we are thankful for our dedicated, hardworking staff, outstanding building team partners, supportive corporate friends and, of course, our loyal clients, who are the heart and soul of our company and the very reason we exist.

On behalf of the entire Walter B. Davis Co. team, we hope you had a safe and healthy holiday and wish you a new year filled with happiness, hope and great opportunity.

Safety Alert!

Major Changes To The Hazard Communication Standard

- Hazard classification: Provides specific criteria for classification of health and physical hazards, as well as classification of mixtures.
- Labels: Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes a harmonized signal word, pictogram, and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be provided.
- Safety Data Sheets: Will now have a specified 16-section format.
- Information and training: Employers are required to train workers by *December 1, 2013* on the new labels elements and safety data sheets format to facilitate recognition and understanding.

With Age Comes Wisdom

We wish the following employees a very Happy Birthday this winter...

Thomas Measimer - January 7

Chad Clark - January 16

Ronnie Ashburner - January 29

Richard Hopper - February 27





“E” is the most commonly used vowel in English. Which one is second?

Trivial Knowledge

- 1) What were the given names of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid?
 - a) Robert and Harry
 - b) Paul and Fred
 - c) Billy and Adam
 - d) Ignatius and Lee
- 2) “E” is the most commonly used vowel in English. Which one is second?
 - a) A
 - b) I
 - c) O
 - d) U
- 3) From a geological perspective, which division of time is shortest?
 - a) age
 - b) era
 - c) epoch
 - d) period
- 4) According to the traditional carol, on which day of Christmas did my true love give the recipient “maids a-milking”?
 - a) eleventh
 - b) eighth
 - c) seventh
 - d) fourth
- 5) Which European nation is currently home to the most deployed U.S. troops?
 - a) United Kingdom
 - b) Spain
 - c) Italy
 - d) Germany

—from *mental_floss*

Answers: 1) a (Robert LeRoy Parker and Harry Alonzo Longabaugh just didn't have the same ring.) 2) a 3) a (an age is part of an epoch, which is part of a period, which is part of an era.) 4) b 5) d (More than 50,000 of the 80,000 troops in Europe are stationed in Germany.)

Don't Worry, Be Happy

Want to live a good long time? Eating right and getting lots of exercise are essential, but so is the right attitude. At least that's what one study suggests. Researchers at the Institute for Aging Research at Albert Einstein College of Medicine questioned 243 people age 100 or older. They found that centenarians tend to share certain personality traits (in addition to other factors, like genetics). In general, these long-lived people are...

- Outgoing
- Positive-minded about other people
- Full of laughter
- Open with their emotions
- Conscientious and disciplined
- Unlikely to obsess about anxieties or guilt

The scientists point out that these characteristics don't necessarily represent a cause and effect relationship. They did notice, however, that in many cases the personality traits they observed weren't necessarily lifelong tendencies, but behaviors their subjects learned as they grew older.

Focusing on the good and not worrying about the negatives may have a positive impact on overall life expectancy.

Forget Shuffleboard: Many Retirees Would Keep Working

Some people dream of never working again once they reach retirement. Others—more than you might think—are happy to keep on working. A study by Prudential has found that 40% of people planning to retire this year would be happy to keep working past their 65th birthday if given the opportunity. That figure represents 48% of men and 32% of women.

Money isn't the main factor, either. The primary motivation for 68% of this year's retirees is the desire to remain physically and mentally active, although 39% just don't like the prospect of sitting at home, and 54% say they simply enjoy working.

About 10% would consider starting their own businesses once they retire, and 5% are interested in volunteering. But most don't want to put in the same hours: Only 13% would be willing to work full-time, and 49% would prefer a part-time job after age 65.



Lincoln's Unusual Strategy

As a lawyer, Abraham Lincoln had a reputation for discouraging litigation that could be avoided through other means. One day, though, a client came to his office in an impassioned state, demanding that Lincoln bring suit against a man who owed him \$2.50, despite the fact that the fellow was already impoverished.

The client wanted to sue his adversary for the \$2.50. Lincoln tried to reason with the man, but he refused to back down. So Lincoln asked for \$10 in legal fees up front to begin the lawsuit.

Lincoln then hunted down the debtor and gave him half his fee. The debtor used the money to pay off the man who brought the lawsuit against him. Lincoln kept the other half.

And so the client who brought the suit was satisfied that justice had been done, the debtor got out of trouble, and Lincoln probably had a good laugh about it all.

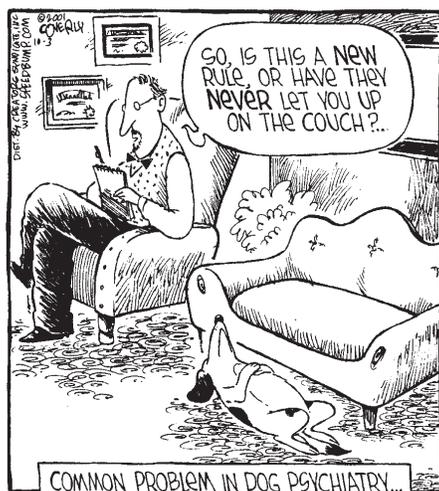
Solving Problems Creatively

Everyday problems usually respond to tried-and-true solutions. But sometimes you need to go beyond the obvious. Try these tactics when you need to take a more creative approach to problem-solving:

- **Do some extra research.** Don't assume you have all the facts you need. Before trying to solve the problem, dig deep into the background and the issues surrounding it. You may uncover something new that will lead to a fresh approach when nothing else has worked.
- **Set up the problem correctly.** In your rush to find a solution, you might treat the symptoms and not the underlying cause. Seek opinions and perspectives from other people, and keep an open mind about what's really going on.
- **Consider the impact.** Who else does the problem affect? You may gain valuable insight by including others in your analysis and solution. You'll also build support for your solution by drawing in your co-workers and other interested parties to help you implement it.
- **Try a lot of solutions.** Instead of zeroing in on one approach and hoping it works, experiment with as many different options as you can. Keep track of what you're doing so you can identify what worked or combine promising aspects of different attempts.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Caring For Your Aging Pet

A beloved pet can be like a member of the family. And just as Grandpa may need a little extra help as he ages, your pets will require more care and support as they grow older. Give your pets the love they need in their golden years by paying attention to these issues:

- **Vet visits.** When your pet hits middle age (7-10 years, depending on their size), six-month checkups are a good idea. Your veterinarian will be better able to alert you to potential health problems and give you pertinent advice.
- **Incontinence.** Older pets will need to “eliminate” more frequently. More litter boxes and “pee pads” will help—put one in every room, and keep them clean. Check with your vet to rule out medical problems.
- **Weight.** Keep pets on a healthy diet, and as their activity level declines, cut back on their calorie intake. Pay attention to any unexpected weight gain or loss, and be on the lookout for any loss of appetite.
- **Vision/hearing.** Dogs and cats may no longer be able to see or hear as well as they age, and may not respond to verbal or visual commands. Provide adequate light and adjust your cues—get their attention with a flashlight instead of a command, for instance.
- **Environment.** Make sure pets have a safe, comfortable place to sleep that they can find and get into easily. If you have small children, remind them that they need to be more gentle and quiet with older pets than they were with puppies and kittens.



Shift Your Company's Gears By Exploring These Questions

From time to time, everyone needs to jump-start his or her thinking. In business, that's even more vital. Learn to open the minds around you to all the possibilities and move your organization forward in a new direction. Start by asking these key questions:

- Are we making the right things?
- Are we making the right things in the most effective ways?
- Are we minimizing our costs?
- Are the things we make as well or better than what our best competitor makes?
- Are we serving the widest possible market?
- Do we have a unique selling proposition—a reason for someone to buy from us rather than from someone else?

How We Connect Online

Social networking brings us all together online, but whether that's a good thing or not is still up for grabs. From a survey by the social networking site *Badoo*, consider these findings about our new connected lives:

- People who socialize more online than in person: 39%
- People who prefer communicating online or via text to talking face-to-face or on the phone: 19%
- People who have shared bad news (death, divorce, etc.) through their social networks: 39%
- People who have shared good news (marriage, pregnancy, etc.): 62%
- People who accept friend requests from folks they aren't very interested in (or whom they don't especially like): 24%.