

THE ACADEMY OF ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

Paper presented by

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Productivity
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PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is a many-headed monster that has been discussed by many people but we never can put a finger on what is the cause of poor productivity nor can we come up with a cure for it. Management wants to blame labor and vice versa. Labor likes to blame management and I believe that both are to blame.

These remarks are pointed toward our Electrical Industry, so do not try to make anything that I say go beyond that.

It is a known fact that an electrician cannot produce on the job if he has not been given the proper tools and material to proceed with from the very beginning of the job. This is a function of management and could well stand much thought and planning for if an Electrician or Foreman has to do this, he is half of Labor and half of Management.

There are Electricians who can pick up any job from the most intricate control systems to installing a switch or receptacle in a house, and there are others who can do these things only if they are shown, step by step, and, of course, this slows down productivity.

There is a type of man who can start jobs and make a big showing, but when he draws near the close, he is lost and cannot seem to finish the work which shows very obviously that men of this type are not leaders nor foreman material and must be sorted out and used where they are best suited. This is not peculiar to Electricians only, it can be taken right into the front office with Secretaries and Typists who might be caught short when letters are written and other material to enclose are not at hand which shows a lack of planning.

Let me submit a few non-productive items or restrictive work practices which, in my opinion, should be negotiated out of our working agreements.

1. Travel Time or Travel Expense within the jurisdiction of the Local Union.
2. Non-working Stewards or Stewards who are not qualified to perform the work available.
3. Time off to cash checks or similar provision.
4. Show up time provisions.
5. Restriction on the use of any tool considered safe by appropriate codes or safety rules.
6. Stand-by crews or inflexible manning requirements. Coverage of equipment regardless of necessity.
7. Contractual provisions allowing late starts or early quitting time for clean up, etc.
8. Lack of shift work provisions compatible with other trades on the project.
- 9A. Excessive Supervisory costs such as second man on job , a Foreman should be created.
- 9B. Crew structure restrictions such as 10 men to a Foreman. Second Foreman to be General Foreman.
10. Premium pay for non-hazardous tasks within the scope of the trade.
11. Severance pay (two hours to pick up tools, etc).
12. Personal tools to be furnished or replaced by the Contractor.
13. Excessive liability for loss of tools and clothing by employer.
14. Requirements for the on site fabrication of materials or units known as (restrictive work preservation clauses).

- 15A. Excessive numbers of classifications or rates of pay.
- 15B. Premium pay for tasks normally within the scope of the trade, such as blue print reading, making stress cones or non-lead wiped cable splicing.
16. Guaranteed work days or work weeks.
17. Undue restriction of Apprentices Ratios.

There are many other items of this kind that enter into productivity or the lack of it.

Management must take their share of the blame for such things as poor planning of deliveries and use of overtime.

According to a survey made in one of our states, the question was posed.

Rank in order of importance twelve factors that relate to the decline in productivity and the competitive posture of the unionized segment of construction.

The survey listed in order:

1. Excessive fringe benefits.
2. Inadequate labor force.
3. Poor job supervision.
4. Inadequate jobsite control.
5. Excessive travel pay.
6. Restrictive work practices.
7. Excessive wages.
8. Poor business management.
9. Labor-Management communications.
10. Poor project coordination.
11. Safety requirements and lost time.
12. Work assignments and jurisdictional disputes.

OVERTIME AND ITS MANAGEMENT

Overtime is an instrument to either make or break a job depending, of course, upon how it is used.

In many cases a few hours overtime are necessary to perform a certain task and I think that this is a plus for Management to be able to see and use this tool wisely, but the promiscuous use of overtime (generally known by the craft as time) is a tremendous monster.

When men refuse to go on a job that is not expected to have overtime on it, this becomes an item that must be construed to be a pressure movement to force the payment of overtime and will cause a slow down of work, turn over of personnel and dissension on the job, and when this overtime is started, productivity starts down and reaches a very low ebb before the job is completed.

These are a number of things that cause productivity and the lack of it.

Now, how do we cure this. Some of the greatest minds in America today are working feverishly to try to find a cure for this, and I feel more or less foolish trying to say what will cure it, but I will venture this statement even to the extent of criticism.

If we will buckle down and do what our fore-fathers did and work-work-work and above all, First, Last and Forever, be Americans for America.

W. C. Phillips