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Scheduling in Crisis Mode



Every contractor will hit bumps in the road where they get into a scheduling crisis. **Everything that could go wrong has gone wrong.** One job, do to no fault of your own, delayed when you were in the middle of the project and now it is starting back up again.... It's been raining for three weeks and now the sun is shining and all your jobs are ready to go.... One of your best foremen has a personal issue and can't make it to work right now..... The trade ahead of you on a project went much faster than expected and the customer wants to move your work up in the schedule....we've all been there.

What you do now is crucial: Continue >



First, go where you can finish a job.

Let's say you're busy with work and it may be a situation where it rains and all of your jobs are now starting to stack up. A lot of times people will spread out their men and send diluted crews to every job to make an appearance and keep the jobs running.

What you should do is go out and pound on the jobs that can be finished in a matter of a day or two. Maybe the final 100 yards of concrete need to be poured or the final slabs need to be poured and then that job is done. Go finish the jobs that can be finished! Then you'll have less on your plate and can proceed to finish the other projects (plus you can turn in invoices so you don't get into a cash flow crunch too).

Doing this means you may have to make a couple of phone calls to folks to say: "It was raining and I'm going to be back to your job on Thursday". They may ask you why you won't be out on their job tomorrow. You may have to do a bit of a tap dance as to why you won't be on their job, but you need to get it across to them when you will be there. Little do they know that you are going to pound out the other job and then come and pound out their job (instead of making a lame showing on all the backed up projects). So, be tough, but then be real good and everything will turn out fine.

Customers may snarl at you a little bit, but most will understand if you level with them and say that due to the rain you are all backed up and need to go get two projects finished then move on to their job when you can properly staff it.

To learn more about cash flow issues from the Sherpa click here:

Cash Flow is the Life Blood of Growth (Keep it Coming)





Second, go where the job is ready to be worked on

This sounds too logical. Why would anyone be working on jobs that are not ready? It happens all the time.

Some customers offer up a myriad of reasons about why the job isn't ready, they know it, but they need you to get started. They don't have permits yet but they will shortly, but they need you to get started. They don't have the plumbing awarded yet, but they need you to get started. The driveway isn't rough graded yet, but they want you to start in the backyard- even though you figured to do the entire job at one time. The customer needs to make an impression with the lender...you've probably heard them all!

Pound on the jobs that can be finished in a matter of a day or two.

There are a hundred variations of jobs not being ready but customers want you to be there. You want to be working on the jobs that are ready to be built, can get inspection, can get poured, and then get out of there and turn in your invoice.

Particularly when you are in a scheduling crisis, you have no business working on projects that are not ready for you to do your work. By working where the job is ready you're going to be a stronger company and the kind of company that people want.





Third, Break the Bad News Early

Let's face it, there are going to be situations that come up where you can't do what you planned on doing. Hopefully you're running your business in a manner where there are fewer and fewer of these "situations", but things do happen once in awhile.

Some contractors are afraid and procrastinate about breaking the bad news to customers. This does nothing but make it worse.

As soon as you know the bad news and have decided that no amount of shuffling can change the facts, let the customer know. Yes, in many cases they're going to ride you like crazy. But at least you let them know, and the sooner the better.

An example is, let's say you found out that you're so backed up on projects. No matter how great the plan was, something happened and you can't start that job next Monday as planned. Call the customer on that previous Tuesday and give them your sad story on why you can't do it. You can't get out there until Wednesday.

Now, it wouldn't be unusual for you to get a couple of phone calls from the client or the client's representative reading you the riot act, but bow up and take it because in the end you're going to have told them what you can do and have given them ample notice to reschedule the other trades (whereas if you wait and let them know on Friday that you can't come on Monday they're going to have a hard time rescheduling other trades).

When you are in a scheduling crisis, you have no business working on projects that are not ready for you to do your work. By working where the job is ready you're going to be a stronger company and the kind of company that people want.





Over time your reputation is going to grow (since you do make your schedules the vast majority of time) and your customers are going to respect you very much for the fact that on the rare occasion there is a problem they know you will call them.

A big part of scheduling is knowing when there is going to be something that you can't do, which will occur, and getting the bad news out there so the customer can deal with it. Don't hide from your problems or wait until the last minute to expose them.

As soon as you know the bad news and have decided that no amount of shuffling can change the facts, let the customer know.

Who knows they may *thank you...* if not...

swallow hard and keep on keeping on!





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SUMMIT DATE

This document reached the summit (was created) on January 13, 2005 and is based on the best information available to the Sherpa at that time. To check for updates please click here <http://www.ConcreteSherpa.com/crisis>.

NAVIGATION & USER TIPS

You can move around this guide by using your mouse or keyboard arrows. Left mouse button goes to the next page, right mouse button goes to previous page. Click on the right arrow (→) for the next page and the left arrow (←) to go the previous page.

KEYBOARD SHORT CUTS

	PC	MAC
Zoom in (Larger)	[Ctrl] [+]	[⌘] [+]
Zoom out	[Ctrl] [-]	[⌘] [-]
Full screen/normal screen view	[Ctrl] [L]	[⌘] [L]

ABOUT THE CONCRETE SHERPA

The Concrete Sherpa is a team of people that represent the experience, teaching and learning of our team members and other industry leaders *on a mission to make life better for the concrete contractor*. We are an idea center striving to deliver thought provoking ideas based on “Concrete Advice for Business and Life” to stimulate you to reach new heights. As a user, you should remember to consider all information you receive, here at the Concrete Sherpa or elsewhere, not as a *cast in concrete* recommendation, but rather as an idea for you to consider and ponder.



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THE JOURNEY LEADING TO THE CONCRETE SHERPA PROJECT

The Concrete Sherpa Project (A [Sherpa](#) is a “guide”) was born at The Concrete Network in mid 2004. Here is how it happened:

The biggest surprise, or gift, since starting The Concrete Network in 1999 has been the concrete contractor friends from around the country we’ve made and witnessing the passion they have for what they do. These people include Dave Pettigrew, up in the San Francisco Bay Area, or the Verlennich brothers in Minnesota, or Bob Harris in Georgia, the list goes on and on. It’s quite inspiring.

We were once asked, “How are you so excited every day about concrete?” Well the answer is simple, it is impossible to not be excited about concrete when you have the job we do—interacting with hundreds of concrete contractors from every state in the country.

The thing we’ve learned about concrete contractors is that most are passionate *craftsmen*—they are often less passionate and experienced in the “office stuff”. Human nature channels us to do what we are most comfortable with; learning how to use a new saw-cutting tool is comfortable; learning and implementing a new estimating strategy, or job management tool, is not so comfortable.





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THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

So Sherpa was born to provide FREE and easy to use information on topics many contractors are not too comfortable with.

- Concrete Sherpa is here to provide help to contractors who are often 'Lone Rangers' and don't have anyone to get solid business advice from.
- Concrete Sherpa is here to provide help for contractors who have to work too hard and too many hours in their business, and one day realize they need to work *on their business, not in their business*.
- Have fun with Concrete Sherpa and go faster towards reaching success than you might have on your own.
- To skeptics who think something free can't be valuable, or there must be a trick- visit Concrete Sherpa and decide for yourself.

We hope you make great use of the Concrete Sherpa and it helps you to become an awesome success for yourself, your family, your church, and your community.

VISIT THE CONCRETE SHERPA

To visit the Concrete Sherpa click here <http://www.ConcreteSherpa.com>.

