



How to Gain Respect From Experienced Co-Workers

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YOUNG CONSTRUCTION LEADERS MUST LEARN HOW TO NAVIGATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SEASONED PROS ON THEIR TEAM.

A potential client recently asked me, “How do you handle a superintendent 30 years older than you giving you a hard time?”

On the other end of the spectrum, a 25-year-old project manager recently asked me how to run an effective jobsite meeting when everyone in it has 20 years more experience than him.

I love these questions because I have direct experience with them: In my last role, I was promoted to vice president of preconstruction and sales at 28 years old, and most of my team — estimators, superintendents, project managers — were anywhere from 20 to 50 years older than me.

One of the great things about construction is that it is an apprenticeship- and mentorship-based industry. The people with the experience take the next generation under their wing and show them the ropes.

But it's also common for someone in their 20s, 30s, or 40s to run a jobsite, department, or company, while the most experienced people are in a key support role. So, if you fall into that 20s-to-40s bucket, it's really important that you understand how to navigate relationships with your older, more experienced co-workers.



When you do that successfully, jobs will run better, people will be happier and your teams will have a beautiful diversity of thought that you really can't put a value on

I made a lot of mistakes in my journey (and still do), but I learned some good ways to gain respect from experienced co-workers. Whether you're a young PM who wants a better working relationship with your superintendent, a VP with a new bidding strategy for a senior estimator 20 years older than you, or a project executive who wants to be president of the company one day, here are some ways to navigate those relationships and gain respect from your more experienced peers.

ADMIT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

From the second you walk into that room as a young person

with a title that gives you authority, almost everyone is going to be thinking the same thing: "Agh here we go again. Another young kid who doesn't know anything about building buildings about to tell me how to do my job."

About the Author

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