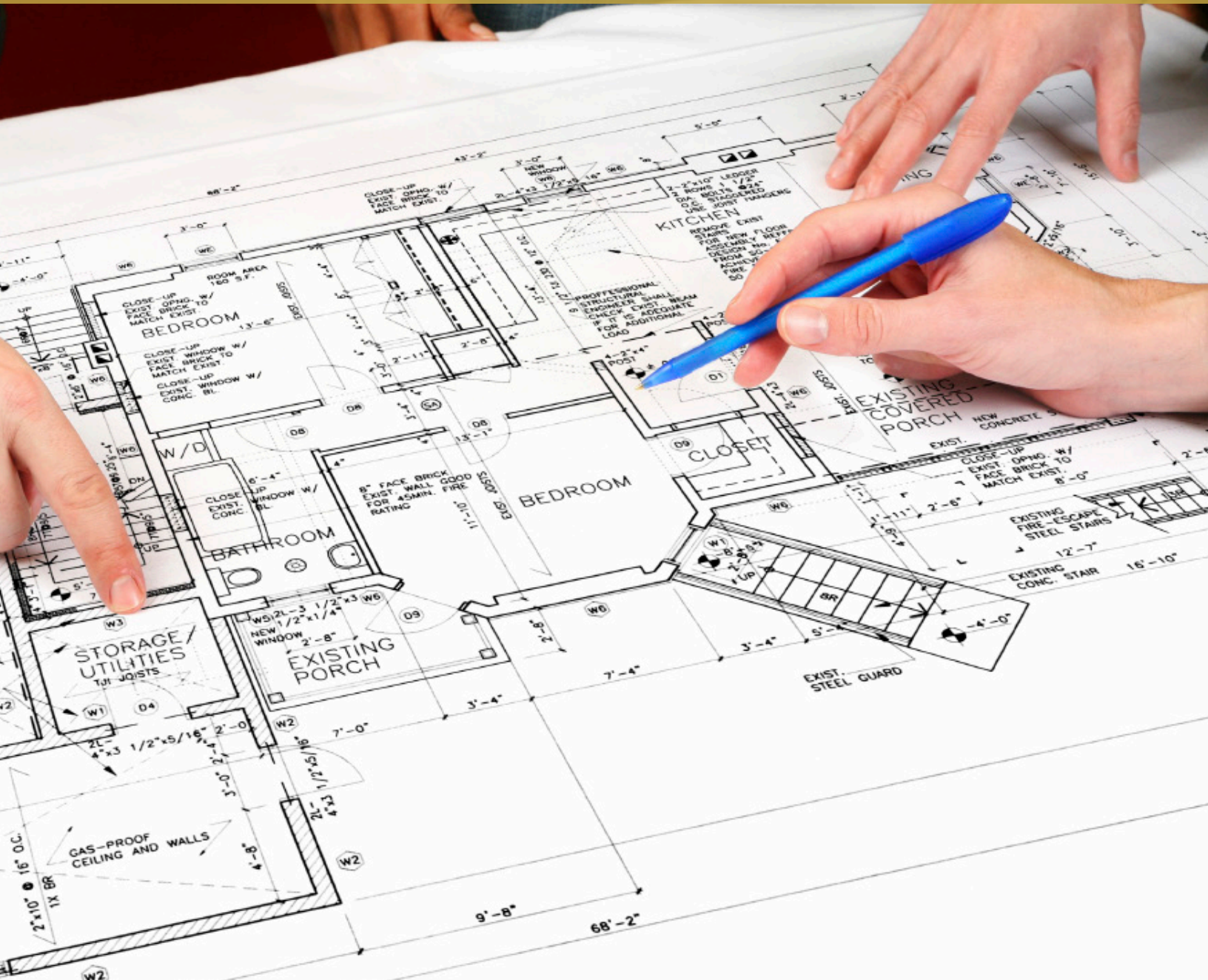


What We Have Here is a Failure to Communicate

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What We Have Here is a Failure to Communicate

Written by Julie Glassmeyer - 1-28-19

Rise and shine! It's a new day! Hop out of bed; brush your teeth; jump in the shower; get dressed; and, just before you head to the kitchen for your first cup of coffee, stop at the mirror for your daily affirmation – "I am an amazing project manager. My team respects me, because I respect them. I listen, and they have a voice in how the project is run. Together we succeed! Divided we fail!" Pretty good, huh? That sounds like a lean project manager to me – engaging the team to focus on overall project success, building consensus, and respect for everyone.

TODAY'S PLAN: Introduce the team to the principles of Lean Construction and begin implementing Last Planner® tools.

But wait... what if your team members don't want to try something new or don't "buy in" to the value of Lean and Last Planner? How do you implement a great new way of doing things if your team doesn't immediately agree with the strategy? You may think, "You know what? I bet they won't want to do it. I'd better make it as palatable as possible."

THE CONUNDRUM

In my time coaching project teams, I've realized that some of the most naturally lean thinking leaders really struggle with the initial implementation. After all, they've built their careers on collaboration with their team members; and making a unilateral decision to try a new management system that requires continuous participation by all of the last planners appears to go against that ideal. Beyond that, there is a general presumption among project leadership that the trade partner foremen and superintendents will oppose use of the Last Planner System. What is a collaborative leader to do?

THE REALITY

On each of my projects, one thing I like to do early on is meet individually with each of the last planners. This gives me an opportunity to answer questions, emphasize key things for them to keep in mind, and ask for general feedback about LPS on the site. They are usually very attentive and positive during these meetings... maybe because they feel like they have to be, but maybe because they think there is real potential in using these new tools. The truth is, when I visit jobsites, the misunderstanding between project management and trade leadership becomes very clear: ***Project management assumes they have to soften their approach to be as unobtrusive as possible, while the trade foremen are often annoyed that they have to go through hours of***

training for a system that is supposed to make the project run more smoothly, and then project managers don't aggressively push the concepts.

My life would be much easier if I didn't have to be the middle-man in these communications. Please take the note, everyone! The fact is: Almost everyone wants to provide value; Almost everyone wants to do that in the most effective and efficient way possible; Almost everyone wants to feel truly engaged in the planning and execution of their work. Project managers, heed my call. Embarking on a new initiative without the stomach to follow through damages your credibility, your team buy-in, and the ultimate results that you'll achieve. If you think Lean and Last Planner (or any other initiative) is the best way to go: Commit, train, coach, and advance. You won't be sorry.

What I need you all to understand is that everyone wants the project to run more smoothly. Everyone wants better communication, better coordination and collaboration, and less conflict. If you are holding the key to making that happen, don't let fear of objection stop you from moving forward. They are on your team, and they will help you if you trust them and give them the chance.

PS – I'm on Twitter, and I am just tickled every time I get a new follower! Please follow me @G3C_Consulting.

Julie Glassmeyer is the Owner of Glassmeyer Construction Consulting & Coaching, LLC (G3C). Julie applies her 25 years of commercial construction management and planning experience to support individuals and organizations in their efforts to reach the next level of performance excellence. G3C, LLC, specializes in Lean Construction, Construction Safety, Leadership Training & Mentoring, Owner Guidance & Mentoring, and Professional Writing. For more information, please visit www.glassmeyerconsulting.com, or contact Julie at atjulie@glassmeyerconsulting.com or 513.635.2730. Follow her on Twitter - @G3C_Consulting!

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