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INTRODUCTION TO FIELD LABOR MANAGEMENT
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Bob Caputo, President of the American Fire Sprinkler Association , is chair of the NFPA 24 and NFPA 291 Technical Committees and a member of multiple NFPA technical committees, including NFPA 13 and NFPA 25.
Caputo is a member of the Industry Advisory Board at Oklahoma State University, School of Fire Protection Engineering. A contributor of the NFPA Fire Protection Handbook, and the NFPA Inspection Manual. A member of NFPA and AFSA faculties, Caputo has written and presented seminars throughout the world on fire protection and life safety systems for over 30 years and is a regular speaker at AFSA and NFPA conventions. He is a contract instructor for the U.S. National Fire Academy for Fire Inspection Principals and Plans Review programs.
Caputo's industry distinctions include San Diego County "Fire Prevention Officer of the Year" in 1994; Fire Protection Contractor magazine "Man of the Year" in 1997; and the Henry S. Parmelee award from AFSA in 2017. Caputo is a U.S. Navy veteran and former volunteer firefighter.
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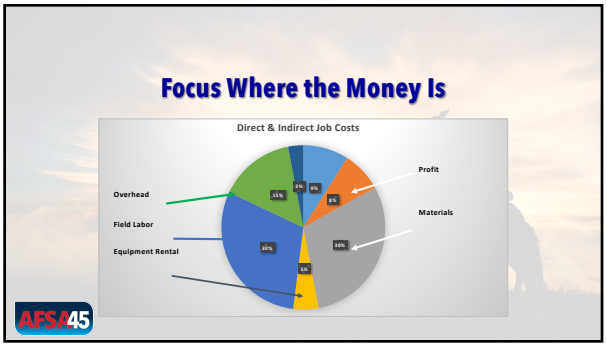
Focus Where the Money Is
Direct & Indirect Job Costs
Overhead
Field Labor
Equipment Rental
Profit
Materials
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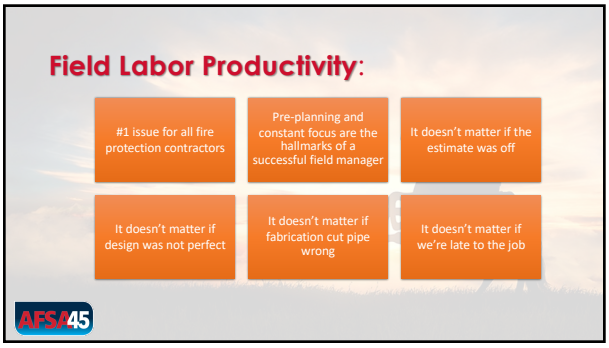
Field Labor Productivity:
#1 issue for all fire protection contractors
Pre-planning and constant focus are the hallmarks of a successful field manager
It doesn't matter if the estimate was off
It doesn't matter if design was not perfect
It doesn't matter if fabrication cut pipe wrong
It doesn't matter if we're late to the job
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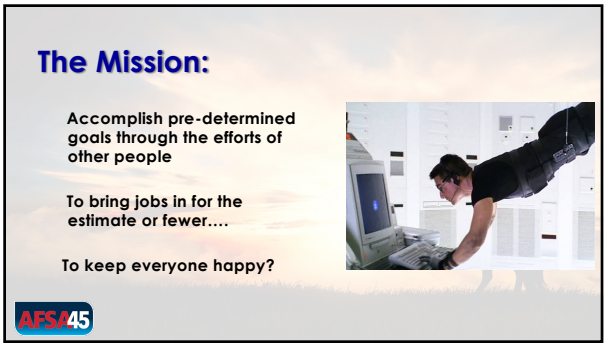
The Mission:
Accomplish pre-determined goals through the efforts of other people
To bring jobs in for the estimate or fewer....
To keep everyone happy?
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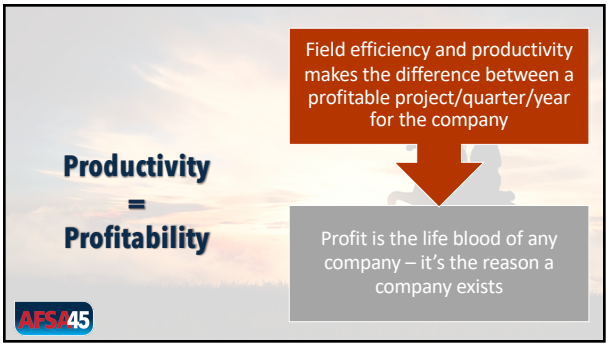
Productivity
=
Profitability
Field efficiency and productivity makes the difference between a profitable project/quarter/year for the company
Profit is the life blood of any company – it's the reason a company exists
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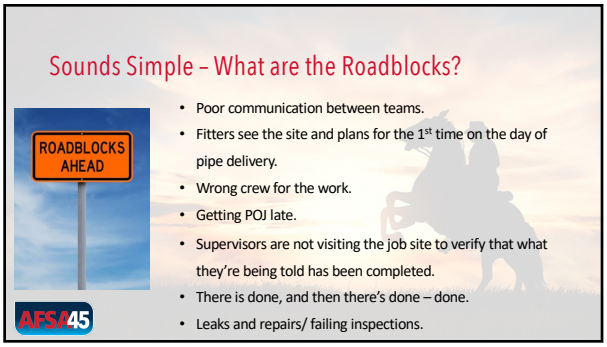
Sounds Simple – What are the Roadblocks?
ROADBLOCKS AHEAD
Poor communication between teams.
Fitters see the site and plans for the 1st time on the day of pipe delivery.
Wrong crew for the work.
Getting POJ late.
Supervisors are not visiting the job site to verify that what they're being told has been completed.
There is done, and then there's done – done.
Leaks and repairs/ failing inspections.
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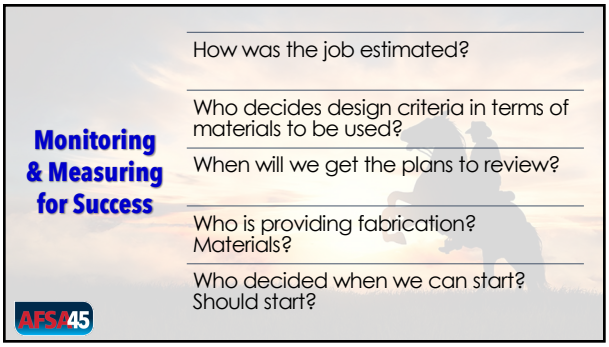
Monitoring & Measuring for Success
How was the job estimated?
Who decides design criteria in terms of materials to be used?
When will we get the plans to review?
Who is providing fabrication? Materials?
Who decided when we can start? Should start?
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Hours
=
Dollars
Hours/Dollars reports are your ledger
What do I know/not know?
How do I measure?
What 5 things do I need to know everyday?
Whose help do I need for success?
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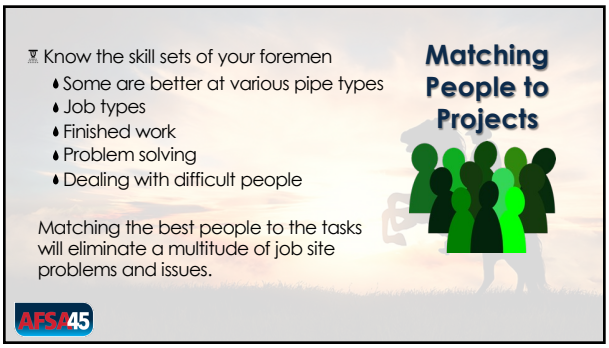
Know the skill sets of your foremen
Some are better at various pipe types
Job types
Finished work
Problem solving
Dealing with difficult people
Matching the best people to the tasks will eliminate a multitude of job site problems and issues.
Matching People to Projects
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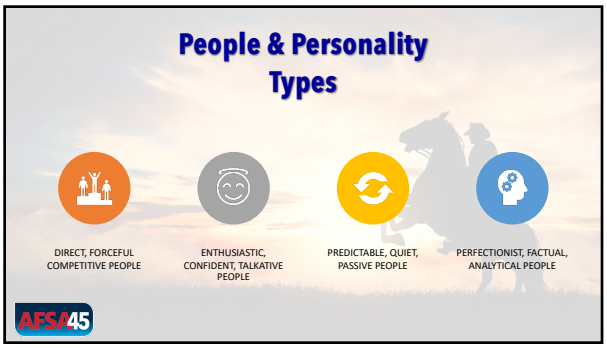
People & Personality Types
DIRECT, FORCEFUL COMPETITIVE PEOPLE
ENTHUSIASTIC, CONFIDENT, TALKATIVE PEOPLE
PREDICTABLE, QUIET, PASSIVE PEOPLE
PERFECTIONIST, FACTUAL, ANALYTICAL PEOPLE
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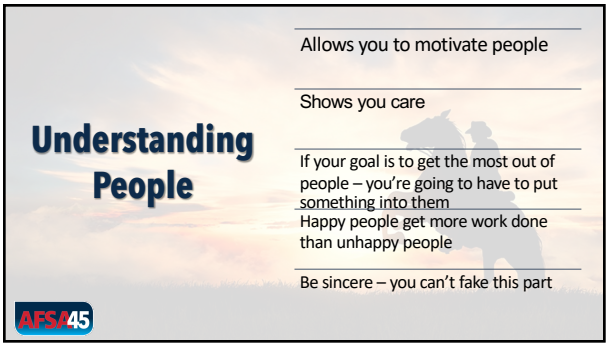

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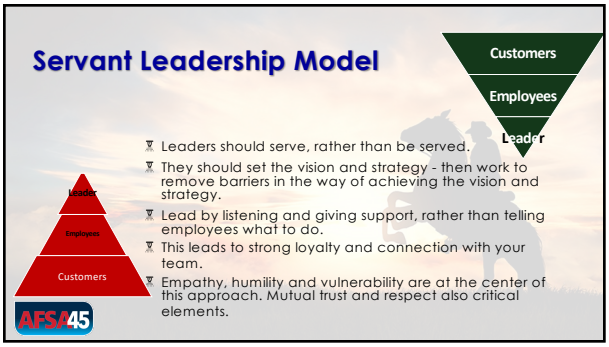

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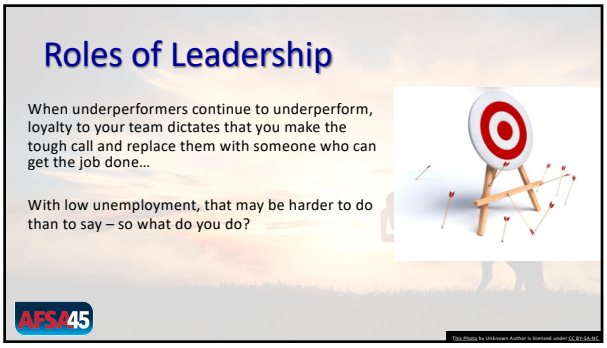

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Increasing Productivity

- Planning – Planning – Planning
- Material & equipment management and coordination
- Setting and monitoring daily goals with your crews
- Incentives for success

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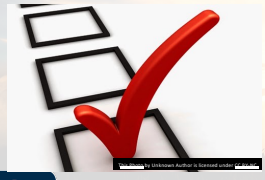
Measuring Results & Progress



- Tracking sheets & record set of plans
- Estimated costs vs actual costs (hours/dollars)
- Don't trade quality for quantity… short term gains never pay dividends

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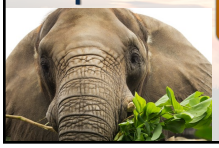
How to Eat an Elephant



- One bite at a time
- Breaking the job down into small, manageable bites is the key to successful scheduling & tracking
- Do not be overwhelmed by the bid numbers and big pictures
  - Manage in quarters or less

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The Three C's

- Communication
- Cooperation
- Coordination

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Let's Talk Communications

What you know… what you've done… who you know – all irrelevant and useless unless you can work with and communicate to your people.

ALL of your people.

Good communication is the job. It doesn't matter what you say – it matters what they hear!

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How We Communicate

- ***Verbal & Non-verbal***
  - Body language
  - Tone
  - Word selection
- ***Written***
  - Email
  - Text
  - Notices
- ***Drums in the jungle…***
  - Hearsay & rumors

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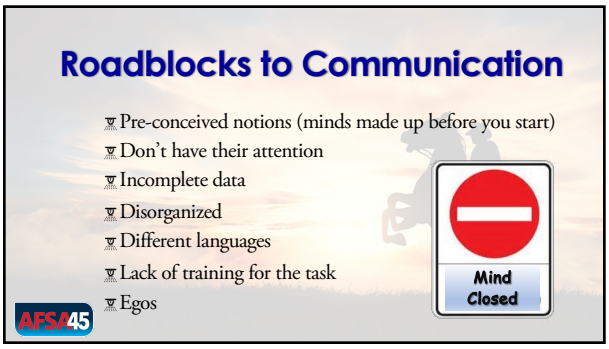

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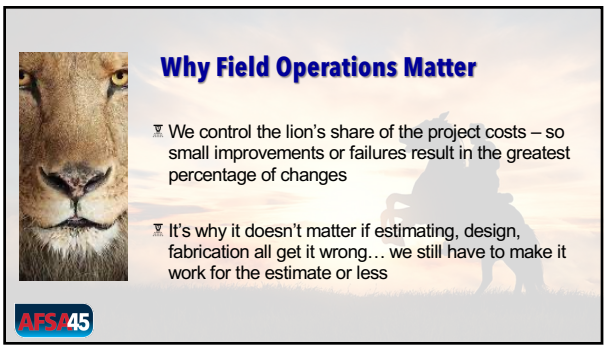

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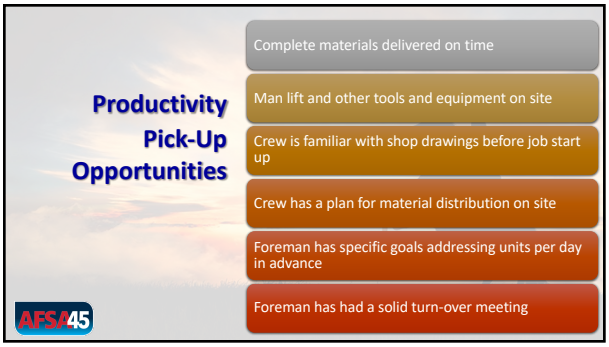

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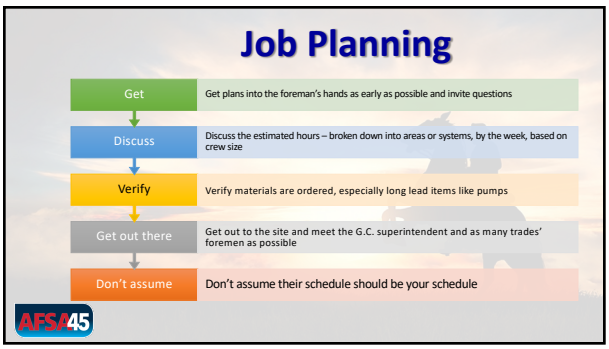

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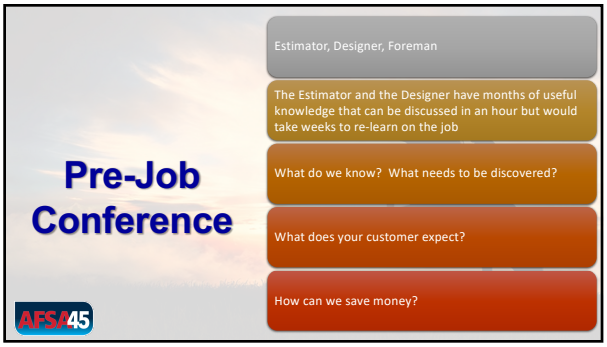

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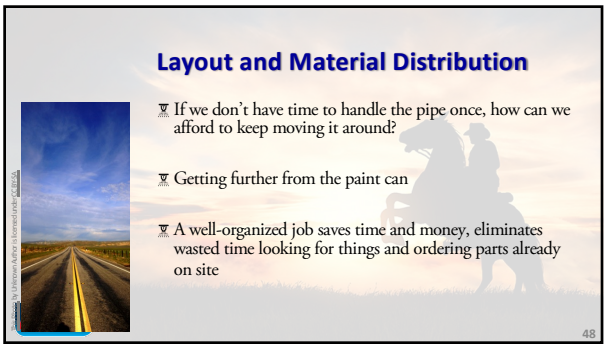

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Planning The Day/Week

- Make your To-Do List late in the day and review it in the morning as a routine way to get a good night's sleep
- Keep a note pad by the bed
- Leave work at work but leave the phone on 24/7

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Know Yourself & Your Schedule

- What's the best time of the day to be in the field or office – create a routine
- Keep up with your paperwork – don't allow things to pile up and get older than a day
- Let others know how you operate and discourage "crisis management" mentality

When everything is an emergency, nothing is an emergency

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Keep it Simple

Short & Sweet

- One man, one day = 8 hours
- 8 hours x 5 days = 40 man hours per week
- How many guys are on the job?
- If you have 1200 man hours estimated, you'll need at least 20% for testing and finish work which leaves 960 for rough-in
- With three men, that's 8 weeks, so let's make a schedule that completes the job in 4 quarters of two weeks each…

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After Action Critical Analysis

- Nothing ever goes exactly as planned
- When the job is over, review what we learned
  - *What went well?*
  - *What went badly?*
  - *What would we do different if we could do it over?*
- Not a lecture
- Not a discussion of minor events
- Not a complaint session
- Not to fix blame or embarrassment

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Key Points in the Timeline to Avoid Problems

Upon completion of the design:

- Check shop drawings for compliance with plans and specs, contract documents

After plans are received from the reviewing agency:

- Review any comments and make sure that any changes required are, in fact, within your contractual scope of work and made prior to fab when possible

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- **After materials are delivered:**
  - Check job cost posting to ensure materials are charged to the right job or area.

  It's much easier and less costly to find and correct problems at this point than to reestablish data to find errors later in the project.
- **Turn-over Meetings:**
  - From estimating & design with your foreman

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Pre-Planning Revisited

- **Don't allow pipe delivery day to be the first time your foreman sees the prints.**
  - You'll waste at least half a day.
- **Avoid changing foremen mid-job**
  - It will cost you 40 hours minimum to get re-oriented.
  - Where possible, start with the guy you want, even if you have a foreman running multiple jobs for a few weeks

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Key Points in Every Project *(Cont)*

- When 20-25% of the labor dollars are spent:
  - ***(End of 1st Quarter)***
  - Review the job cost and the overall direction of the job in terms of being ahead or behind the estimated hours and overall budget.
  - Is the plan working?
  - What adjustments should be made?
  - Do we have everything we need at this point?

Also need to repeat at 50% - Halftime Report

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Finally…

- When labor is 75-100% develop a plan for completion de-mobilization
  - Many times, job labor looks good right up until the last 10%, then we lose it because there is no vision of how to finish.
  - Guys wonder where they go next week.
  - Running out of space creates confusion.
- Rough-in crews may not be good at finish work.
- Service work guys are great at finish work!
- Match talent to work types for really good results.

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Leadership

Leaders own everything in their world. There is no one else to blame.

Acknowledge mistakes

Admit failures

Develop a Plan to Win

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The Big Secret

- Job profits are a lot smaller than people think…
- Every $100 bill counts
- If we could save $100 on every key decision every day, we could add $100,000 to the bottom line each year… and that's just 5 days per week and a few key decisions per day
- Field Supervisors make a huge difference every day

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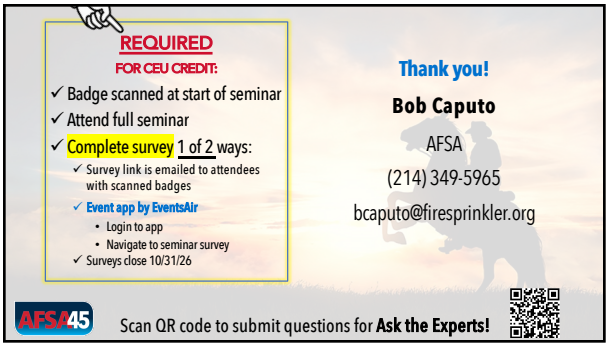
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