Making Job Review Meetings More Effective

Communication practices for ensuring your job-site project stays on track

By Sydney Parvin and Phil Nimmo, MCA, Inc.

You've handed over the job from estimating to the field, so the field is off and running. But how do you know that you're on the right track and the job is proceeding as intended? Most contractors have realized the importance of maintaining regular communication between the field and office, and this goes beyond the foreman/project manager walking a job and checking if they're okay. We all want technology to replace personal interaction, but the most effective job review meetings still include data driven discussions with information collected and categorized over time.

Job review meetings are set up to ensure "the office" knows where the job stands and that the field has timely access to the resources/support that they need. A standing weekly job review meeting between a project manager and foreman is a great start — however, that alone doesn't ensure that the needed support is going to be available. For problem resolution and project success, the review must include all the stakeholders that have access to resources and solutions.

A job review meeting is like any other meeting; you get out of it what you plan and prepare for. Following the steps below will help ensure your team has effective communication during the job. Getting what you need in every step and engaging different people as necessary is called Channels to Action™

PLAN THE MEETING, CONTROL THE JOB

Know your objective for the meeting, and have an agenda in place to meet that objective. Job review meetings are about establishing and maintaining project control. To do this, you need to:

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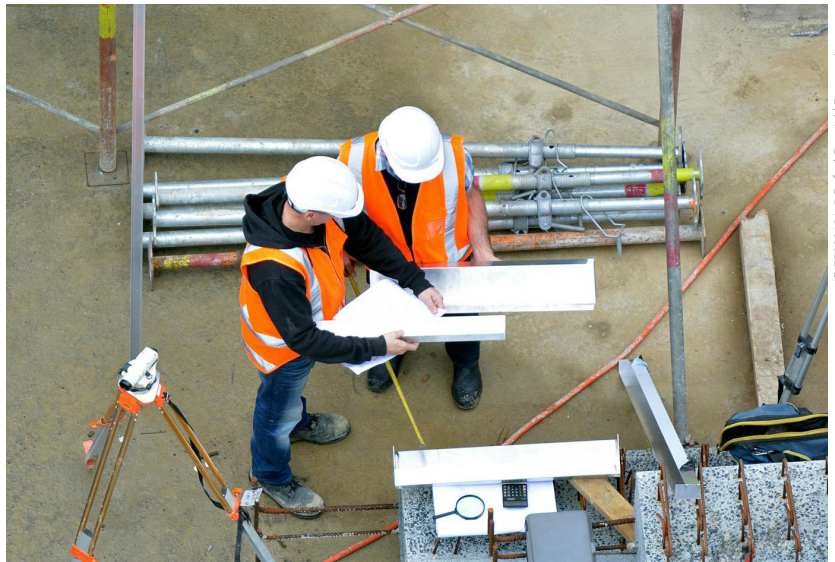
• Know where the job stands today.
• Know where the job should be.
• Establish a plan to cover any gaps between the two.

The agenda presented in **Fig. 1** on page 12 is a tested and proven agenda for facilitating data-driven, outcome-focused discussions.

ENSURE PARTICIPATION FROM BOTH THE FIELD AND OFFICE

Make sure the right people attend the meeting. This should consist of (at the very least) the project team representatives and the functional leaders needed to ensure labor, money, material, and tools are available. The regular participants should include the project manager, foreman, and project coordinator. Depending on the relevant issues pertaining to the job, other participants can include executive management, senior project managers, superintendents, vendors, prefab coordinators, or

safety directors as needed, depending on the issues and if the smaller team has been unable to resolve the situations

USE RELIABLE DATA TO DRIVE THE DISCUSSION

Using quality data ensures the time during the meeting is spent on the issues that matter most. Data is right when opinions fail. Data can resolve all the arguments and disagreements that opinions introduce. Experience plays a significant role in planning and execution — but analysis is where data excels.

Before the meeting, make sure the data lines up with the reality of the job, as bad data coming into the meeting is not useful. To do this, review the data for any outliers or misnomers. Check for potential errors that can occur in the four stages of data quality, shown in **Fig. 2**. According to Dr. Perry Danesh-gari and Dr. Heather Moore's report, "Agile Construction for the Electrical

Contractor Second Edition," four stages of data quality are collection, reporting, recording, and output.

Prior to the meeting, note any potential data quality issues, and, if possible, address them prior to the call with the person who knows the reality of the job best — the foreman.

JOB OBSTACLES AND PRODUCTIVITY

Going back to our meeting objectives and the agenda shown in **Fig. 1**, knowing where we are and where we should be — and having a plan to close the gap between the two — is our goal for the job review meeting. To achieve this objective, we need to have a reference point for the overall job and a reference point for the day-to-day work.

Reviewing the common obstacles that occur day to day on the job is critical because these silently eat away at the available hours to complete the work for the job. Even though scheduled work is impacted nearly daily across most construction jobs, the issues encountered by the field are more often than not left unspoken, according to Dr. Heather Moore's PhD dissertation on "Exploring Information Generation and Propagation from the Point of Installation on Construction Jobsites: An SNA/ABM Hybrid Approach."

ASTM Standard E2691 suggested tools, like Short Interval Scheduling (SIS®) allow the field to establish a reference point for what they need to accomplish and report the daily obstacles that get in the way of doing that, as required by the *2022 Annual Book of ASTM Standards.* Categorizing data is key, so you can refer to it and work on what's impacting you the most. The example in **Fig. 3** on page 14 shows the obstacles reported on the electrical work for a remodel of a multi-story office building.

Knowing where you are for the overall job is just as important and should also be a topic in the job review meeting. Tools like JPAC®, which not only measure productivity, but also forecast job outcomes are the most useful. Productivity variance and job-site obstacles are what cause schedule issues, missed deadlines, poor coordination, and, in some cases, even missing design information/lost opportunities for prefabrication.

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Having the right information available for discussion can be a challenge, but even more critical is interpreting the data and knowing which issues to act on and which issues to simply monitor. A good rule of thumb for this is to react to trends, not single data points. Take note and respond to patterns rather than discrete events. Also, document information that needs to be monitored and the items that require immediate action.

Like all effective meetings, there need to be action items. A great place to do that is with project notes in the tool that you're using. Another consideration to support your Channels to Action™ process is through using AI to support pattern recognition for your data. At MCA, we're incorporating AI technology into pattern recognition and response processes to support contractors in identifying trends, summarizing insights, and generating project notes more efficiently.

A great example of not only using a data driven approach for job review meetings, but also using the data to make

Weekly Job Review Meeting at Consistent Time and Day of Week

✔ Review weekly obstacles
✔ Review productivity trends
✔ Review safety
✔ Review material, procurement, and prefab plan
✔ Follow up on action items from previous meetings
✔ Review next three weeks (three-week lookahead from schedule, if applicable)

Fig 1. This is an example of what a typical job review meeting agenda would look like.

Four Areas of Data Quality

Collection | Reporting | Output | Recording

Fig 2. Collection, reporting, output, and recording are the four main components of ensuring data quality.

decisions, document them, and follow up on them is illustrated in the example shown in **Fig. 4** on page 14. It displays the productivity trend and project notes for a transmission line rebuild project being tracked in JPAC® by a contractor who has been practicing Agile Construction® principles for over a decade. In the chart, you can see productivity trended weekly between February 2025 and June 2025.

Also shown are the notes entered by the project team. In preparation for job review meetings, this team notes the project status and any flags in data quality. The number of hours impacted allows us to compare it with the update date for that week to see if there were impacts to productivity that align with the obstacles reported in SIS® (impacting 6 hours). Also noted in **Fig. 4** is a new pending change order submission for outage delays. The 'x' represents the date the change order was added. The use of the status "requires follow up" and acts as a reminder for the team to revisit that action item.

This project is a great example of the project manager, coordinator, and foreman acting to respond to signals on the job; however, there are situations that can arise when senior
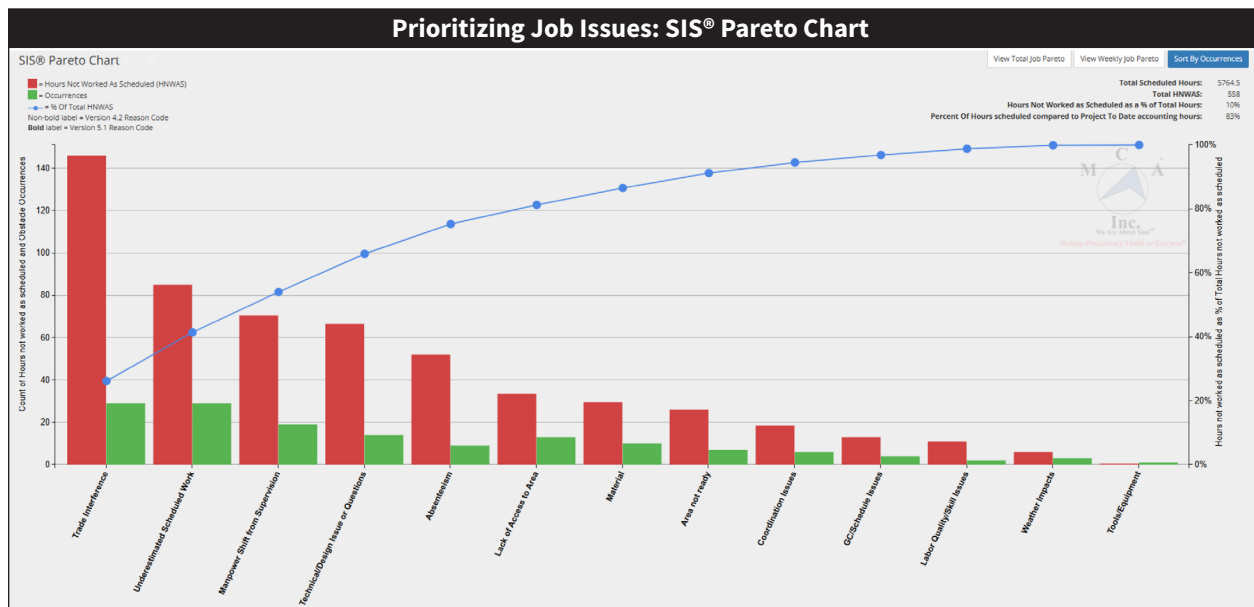
Fig 3. Prioritize issues for discussion based on frequency and impact.

management or company executives need to be involved. On job review meetings, if any issues cannot be handled by the project team, they can easily escalate to senior leadership. Know what to do and who to go to when things are getting off track. Most project teams wait too long to engage their leadership in finding solutions. Safety, work stoppage and recurring systemic issues are common examples. Others include; Risks that could impact the financial outcome, schedule compression, unapproved change orders, or damages to materials or equipment. Additionally, many subcontractors wait too long to engage the GC and the customer in problem and issue resolutions, engaging senior leaders with the GC or customer at the appropriate level,is often the only practical way to get resolution.

Fig 4. Make sure to act based on the signals received from the job.

CONCLUSION

In the current construction environment, collaboration between the office and field during the job is no longer optional, it is a requirement for success of the project. This collaboration needs to be more involved than an ad hoc phone call between the foreman and project manager to "see how things are going." The project review meeting is the tool of the professional manager.

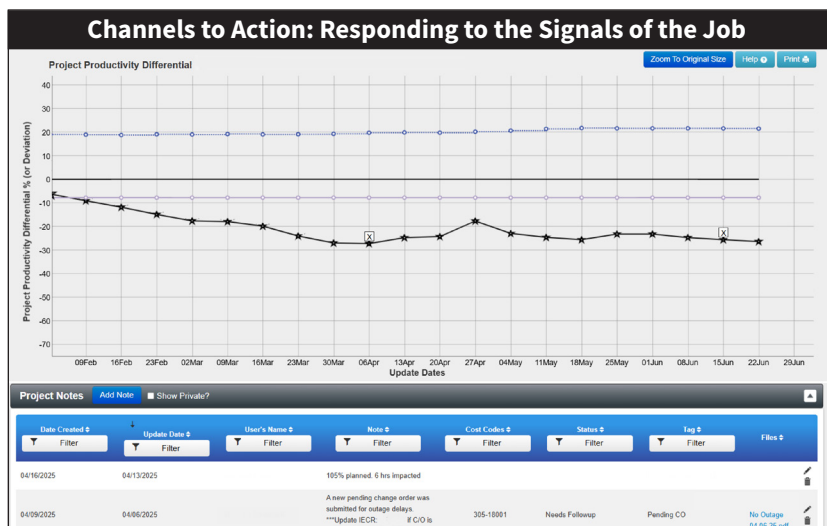• Professionals communicate good news and bad news, but always timely and accurately.

• Professionals collaborate on solutions and accept help from others when it benefits the whole.

• Professionals base their project review on data.

Using the right tools, you don't need to be the analytical wizard; you just need to know what the data is telling you. Properly presented data from tools that provide properly built charts and graphs can communicate a meaningful message to the proper audience at the review meeting with little input and no mathematical

manipulation by the presenter. Keeping communication open between the office and field to achieve these objectives is critical for satisfying both the end customer and the future success of the business. **EC&M**

Sydney Parvin is associate data analyst at MCA, Inc., Grand Blanc, Mich. She can be reached at sparvin@mca.net.

Phil Nimmo is vice president of business development at MCA, Inc. He can be reached at pnimmo@mca.net.