



Estimator and Field Superintendent Must Be Joined at the Hip



It is quite common in concrete construction for there to be continuous conflict between the estimator (the office man) and the field superintendent (the field guy). In these cases everything that goes wrong on the job site is blamed on the estimator: Not enough labor in the budget, the concrete was not calculated properly, not enough base was figured.... [*Continue >*](#)





There can also be a built-in bias from the field toward the estimator such as, “That estimator has never been in the field a day in his life, what does he know, he’s working in a controlled environment, where there’s no special circumstances except adjusting the air conditioning vents.”

Also in these cases, everything that goes wrong on the job is blamed on the field supervisor: poor management of labor caused the labor budget to be busted; unwieldy trenching caused the concrete to go over budget.... From the estimator’s perspective: maybe they have a college degree and think they’re superior to the men in the field. Sound familiar?

It’s *vital* that your *field personnel* and your *estimating personnel* have a good relationship with strong *communication* and are very tied together in making sure the company reaches its goals.

In the winning concrete construction companies- the estimator and the field superintendent operate as a team. It is imperative that there is not animosity between estimating and field personnel. And usually much of the animosity will emanate from the fact that company owners always have to have someone to blame- so the estimator and field superintendent try to protect themselves by blaming others. The owner of the concrete construction company is really going to set the pace for the relationship between the field and the estimating. If the owner wants collaboration and teamwork- that is what he will get.





Don't allow or create an environment of blame in your company. You want to create an environment that rewards collaboration and doing well as a team. Do this well and you will be rewarded handsomely.

The owner, as the team builder, must work at creating a continuous loop regarding what's going on in the field compared to the estimates. Only then can improvement in the estimates and the field production be expected. If as the owner you set a tone of: "look, we're working together as a team and yeah maybe we went over budget on concrete on this job, but I'm not worried about this job, I want to figure out what the circumstances are so that the next job's don't go over. " If you have a constant feedback loop like that that, it will benefit all of the parties involved and everyone will feel like they are working in more of a team environment.

This collaboration is vital since new requirements are always coming up on the jobsite (this city now requires this..... this customer likes it this way...this always happens...) The field should be willingly and freely telling the estimator about these items so the proposals can be properly prepared in the future— versus the field wanting to burn the estimator.

The estimator should respect the field, learn from the people in the field, and not be too quick to criticize what happens in the field. Being in the office is one thing, but knowing what goes on in the field with the wind, weather, working with various crews, interfacing with other subcontractors, working with scheduling conflicts— it's not always a perfect science out there. Instead of micromanaging the field, look at how the field is performing overall.

It's vital that your field personnel and your estimating personnel have a good relationship with strong communication and are very tied together in making sure the company reaches its goals.





High Grade Form, Inc. has a tripod management group outside of the owners. One person is responsible for running all of the labor out in the field. The estimator runs the entire estimating department and is responsible for the job costing and the estimating, etc. Then there is the office manager who does the books, handles the banking, and oversees accounts payable, payroll and accounts receivable.

Collaboration is vital since new requirements are always coming up on the jobsite

This management group is being groomed to possibly take over the business several years down the line. They are given a lot of attention and training and are on the exact same profit sharing plan. They are integrally linked and it would be silly for them to be battling each other. Instead they want to work together to grow the company because they want their company to be successful.

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SUMMIT DATE

This document reached the summit (was created) on January 3, 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/joined>.

NAVIGATION & USER TIPS

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	PC	MAC
Zoom in (Larger)	[Ctrl] [+]	[⌘] [+]
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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>.

