

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MARYLAND CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

NETWORKED



CONNECTED

FEBRUARY 2022

Avoid Being Dragged Down By Supply Chain Issues

Page 4

PLUS

What Construction
Contractors Need To
Know About Backlog
Page 6

The ASAP Planning
Method
Page 12

The Non-Negotiable
List: 20 **Red** Flags
For Interviews
Page 18

& More



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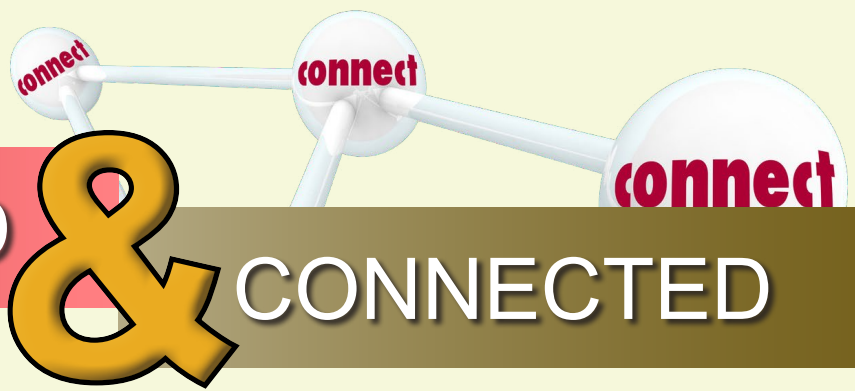
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Networked & Connected is a bi-monthly educational publication of the Maryland Construction Network® (MCN). The goal is to convey news and information relevant to the construction industry thereby improving the professionalism of the industry and providing pathways to further business development and success. The views expressed by contributors to *Networked & Connected* do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Maryland Construction Network. (MCN).

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FEATURED ARTICLES

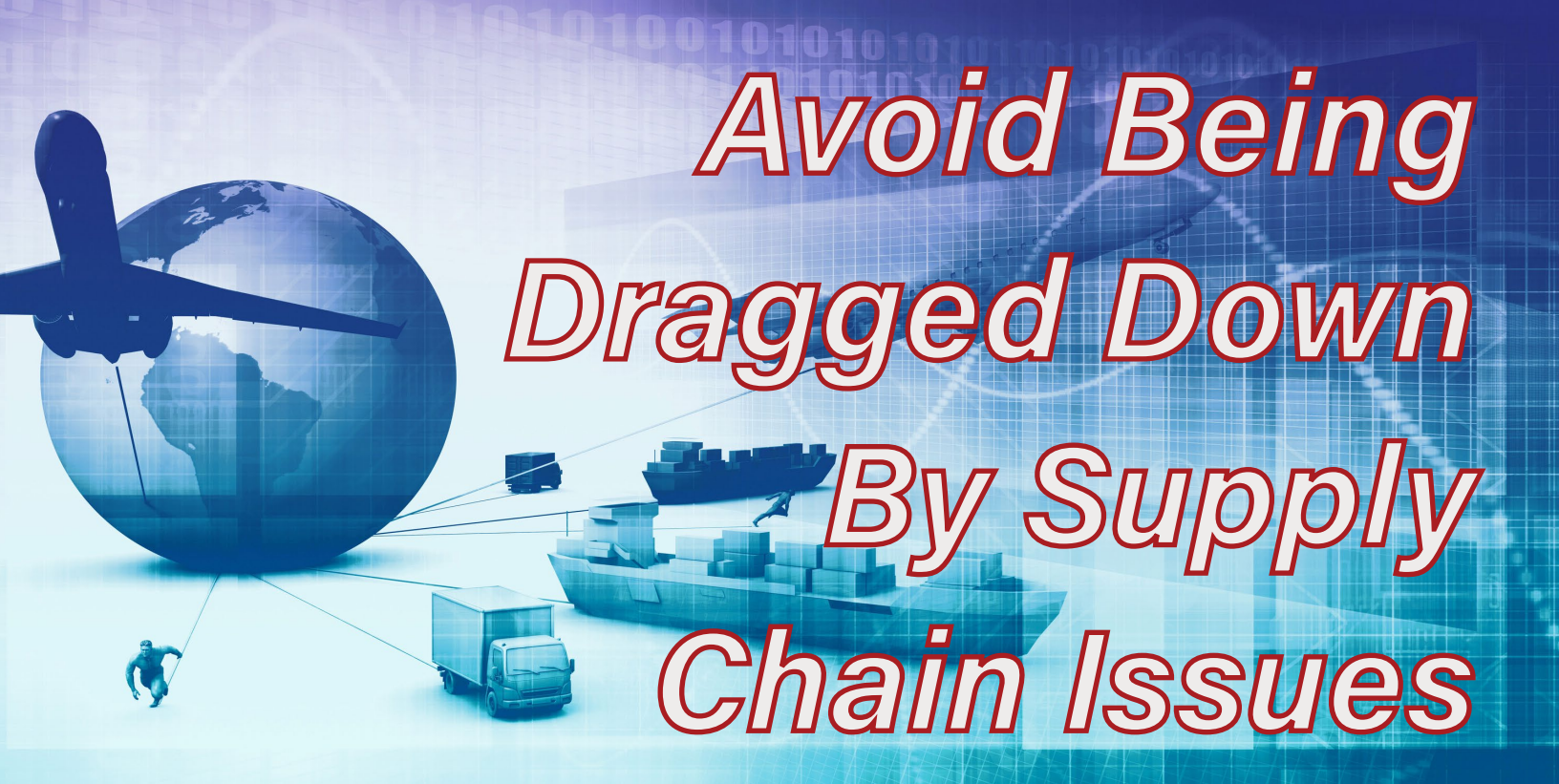
<u>Avoid Being Dragged Down By Supply Chain Issues</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>What Construction Contractors Need To Know About Backlog</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Cast-In-Place Fire Suppression Tank Design Solution Prevents 1-Year Project Delay</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>The Basics Of Prevailing Wage & The Davis Bacon Act</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>The ASAP Planning Method</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Protect Your Possession: Top 10 Benefits Of GPS To Track Your Heavy Equipment</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>The Non-Negotiable List: 20 Red Flags For Interviews</u>	<u>18</u>

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

<u>A New Program To Fuel Construction Companies For Less</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>FCCI Blueprint For Safety: Slip, Trip And Fall Protection: Housekeeping</u>	<u>11</u>

OPPORTUNITIES & MORE

<u>March 2020 Direct Connect</u>	<u>20</u>
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Avoid Being Dragged Down By Supply Chain Issues

Every day we hear about supply chain disruptions in the marketplace. Everything from computer chips to food products. Of course, the construction industry is not immune to these supply chain disruptions. In a recent article, Fitch Ratings observed that the disruptions are causing production delays, which have been exacerbated by ongoing port congestion, pressuring sales volumes and leading to higher raw materials and transportation costs. It was further noted that the supply chain disruptions in the US building products and materials sector are taking longer than expected to normalize. With the passage of the new Infrastructure bill, even more pressure will soon be asserted on the construction supply chains with anticipated increasing demand. Because of these disruptions, the cost of processed inputs for construction

firms is rising at its fastest rate in 40 years. Building products and materials companies are employing actions, including price increases, surcharges, and capacity expansion to navigate the production and inflationary pressures caused by supply chain disruption.

Given the market uncertainty and the potential for huge price swings, it is time to revisit price escalation clauses in your contracts. Traditionally, the contractor bears the risk that costs will increase during the performance of the contract in a fixed price contract. A price escalation clause is a provision in a contract that addresses whether a party will be able to recover price increases for materials that have occurred since bid submission or the time the contract was made and when the materials were ordered. For example, the ConsensusDocs Standard Agreement and General Conditions Between Owner and Constructor provides

"[t]he Contract Price . . . shall be equitably adjusted by Change Order for additional costs . . . resulting from any change in Law, including increased taxes, enacted after the date of this Agreement." ¶ 3.21.1 ConsensusDocs 200 – 2016.

In today's market, when the parties are negotiating a contract a discussion must be had regarding the risk of increasing material costs. Owners will want to eliminate the risk of increasing prices by refusing any price escalation allowances. General Contractors will want to flow that limitation down to its subcontractors and suppliers. Subcontractors and suppliers will want to shift all of the price increase upstream to the general contractor and owner. Of course, excessive risk shifting in either direction can lead to unintended consequences. For example, if an owner and general contractor bar any price increases in the bid documents or contract,

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

such risk shifting will lead to price increases in the bids overall as the subcontractors and suppliers are forced to estimate the potential impact of increasing material costs in the future. Such "estimating" can lead to unnecessarily high bids. If the estimates are bad and the material cost increases are large enough subcontractors and suppliers can fail which adds even more costs to the general contractor and/or owner. More reasonable price escalation clauses can be negotiated with material price increases being shared on a percentage basis that changes depending on the amount of the increase. Sharing the burden may prevent a larger problem. Regardless of your position in the construction tiers, everyone in the process must start considering how to address the impacts of these supply chain disruptions and what to do with the material price increase risks.

More than just price escalation is at issue. Contractors and owners need to prepare for the potential of unavailable materials at any price. Force Majeure clauses need to be drafted to specifically address supply chain disruptions. Scheduled completion dates need to be qualified or conditioned on the ready availability of supplies and materials. If you have questions about how to address uncertainty caused by supply chain disruptions, please contact me at mstover@wcslaw.com.

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What Construction Contractors Need To Know About Backlog

Backlog is an important measure of the health of a construction company. Here's what contractors need to know about backlog and how it can help (or hurt) their profitability.

What is Construction Backlog?

Construction backlog is the amount of planned work that a construction company is contracted to do but hasn't started. You can measure backlog in dollars (for profitability and financial metrics) or time (how far out work is scheduled).

What Should I Know About Backlog?

Balance is key when it comes to backlog. While having backlog is a good thing, there are a few important things to keep in mind.

Backlog and Economic Positioning

A higher amount of backlog in dollars generally means a better economic position for the company. Having a healthy backlog means that the company is winning new contract bids and there is a steady flow of work ahead.

However, there's a fine line between the organic growth

of a business and prioritizing fast growth by taking on lots of new projects in a short amount of time. Be careful not to take on too much too fast to avoid putting pressure on managing the backlog.

Make it a priority to have a solid understanding of what level of backlog is good for your company based on your market and project management style.

Size of Backlog

If your backlog is too small, it could mean that there isn't enough work coming in. That could lead to difficulty in being selective in pursuing profitable projects going forward. If your backlog is too big, your customers may question if you're able to finish in a timely manner. An oversized backlog could also mean you aren't [saying "no" to certain jobs and customers](#), which can affect profitability.

It's important that your company's financials are in good order so you can make decisions with up-to-date information.

Sureties

Sureties use backlogs as one of the factors, along with work in progress (WIP) and overall financial statements, in deciding to approve bonding on a project.

Smaller contractors will eventually need to make an investment in a construction-specific accounting and job costing software to help them better manage their workflow and meet the reporting needs of sureties.

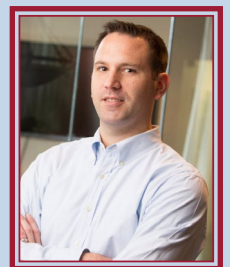
Backlog as an Economic Indicator

It's a good idea to keep an eye on the conditions in the national construction industry and your local market. One way to do that is to use the Associated Builders and Contractors' [Construction Backlog Indicator](#), an economic report developed from the results of confidential surveys sent to contractors on a monthly basis. This report uses a formula to convert the reported survey results from dollars into months of available work, and often correlates with potential booms or busts in the economy as a whole.

Need Help?

Contact us [here](#) or call 800.899.4623.

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Cast-In-Place Fire Suppression Tank Design Solution Prevents 1-Year Project Delay

Construction and building materials are in short supply since the pandemic took hold, affecting companies across the industry, including contractors and developers. The supply disruption is causing project delays, which have been exacerbated by ongoing port congestion, pressuring sales volumes and leading to higher raw materials and transportation costs. With growing supply change shortages, flexibility in design is ever increasing.

As part of site improvements at a residential development in Montgomery County, Maryland a buried fire suppression tank is planned to be installed. Fire suppression water tanks are dedicated sources of water for automatic sprinklers and fire extinguishing systems. They are meant to provide water when fire suppression is necessary, but where pressure or volume is inadequate, or in places where it is the only source of water.

These tanks are a seemingly small part of a project; however, the specified single-wall fiberglass tank, in this instance, has a lead time of about 1-year

due shortages of raw resin materials. Many contractors need viable, engineering stamped alternatives when these types of situations occur. This is where ECS' geostructural engineers can provide value to project teams' facing challenges due to supply-chain issues.

To combat delay times, a cast-in-place concrete tank was suggested as an alternate solution by a local contractor. ECS was engaged to provide structural engineering services to design the tank. Traditionally, these types of fire suppression tanks are made of steel or pre-cast concrete. ECS took on the challenge of designing a tank to suit the client needs and resist the traffic load.

Prior to design, discussion of material limitations and construction methods occurred. While not typical, there are benefits to using a cast-in-place method when designing and constructing these tanks. A cast-in-place tank can easily support the traffic load that goes over the top, while also allowing for the tank to be put at a higher elevation to eliminate extra

plumbing. Offsetting buoyancy with a steel tank can be tricky, but the weight of a cast-in-place tank is heavier, so it will hold the buoyancy of the water tank more easily than steel.

The result is a design solution that is cost-effective and will be installed and built in significantly less time than the pre-manufactured tank initially required for the project. By collaborating with the contractor and team, ECS can help provide a creative design solution that can combat supply-chain shortages and keep your project on schedule.

Alexis Herr, P.E.
Principal Engineer
[ECS Mid-Atlantic](#)



Founded in 1988, ECS is an employee-owned corporation committed to providing high quality, innovative services. The professional staff at ECS delivers value-added solutions through our core service lines: Geotechnical Engineering, Environmental Consulting, Construction Materials Testing/Inspection, and Facilities Engineering and Consulting.

a bona fide benefits plan?

Many contractors pay out the mandatory fringe benefit as wages because it's the easiest way to comply with the law. While that may be true, it's also much more costly to the contractor. And the reason is pretty simple: all wages paid to employees are subject to payroll taxes, such as social security taxes, federal and state unemployment taxes, workers' compensation insurance, and general liability insurance. The rate varies, but it is estimated that the additional cost to the contractor for these payroll taxes is roughly 25 cents for every dollar paid in wages.

On the other hand, if a contractor uses those fringe dollars to fund a "bona fide" benefits plan for their employees, that money would be exempt from all payroll taxes. Thus saving the contractor tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands, of dollars a year.

Don't believe me? Here's an example:

Let's say Contractor A has 25 employees working on a prevailing wage job that will last six months. Each employee works approximately 500 hours during this time, and the fringe amount is roughly \$10 an hour.

25 (employees) x 500 hours = 12,500 hours

12,500 (hours) x \$10 fringe benefit dollars = \$125,000

fringe benefit dollars

If Contractor A decides to pay out that \$125,000 fringe benefit as wages to their employees, they will be hit with a 25% payroll tax on every single one of those dollars.

\$125,000 x 25% in payroll taxes = \$31,250 in additional payroll taxes

If Contractor A elects to instead put those fringe benefit dollars into a "bona fide" benefits plan for her employees, such as a 401(k)-retirement account, not a single dollar would be subject to payroll taxes. That means \$31,250 in savings, which can be used later to make more competitive bids for future projects.

Using these fringe dollars properly also allows a contractor to implement or improve their existing benefit programs in a few ways:

1. For those employers who have benefits, paying the fringes as cash means funding the benefits in duplicity, as these payments are paid out of the operational account of the business. Using these fringe dollars to an employer and employee's advantage can reduce that extra expense considerably.
2. In today's tight labor market, employees look at total compensation packages, including

benefits. These fringe dollars can assist companies with bolstering their current programs by offering better benefit coverages or adding additional benefit options for their employees.

3. Fringe dollars can also be used to help owners and other key employees contribute more to their retirement while ensuring the overall company's retirement plan passes annual testing.

In the end, when utilized correctly, prevailing wage — which is comprised of a per-hour cash wage and a per-hour benefits wage — is a significant benefit to both the laborers and contractors who work on publicly-funded construction projects.

Jason Sperfslage
Director of Sales
Beneco
480-850-2556



Beneco is a company that has provided prevailing wage solutions for contractors through unique employee benefits, compliance services, and HR solutions for over 35 years. The Beneco prevailing wage plans and strategies enable clients to win more bids, attract and retain the best employees, and reduce compliance risks. Beneco has saved clients millions of dollars in labor burden savings, while supporting over 60,000 contractors and their families. Visit www.beneco.com or contact Jason to learn more.

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Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention: Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is more than an industry best practice. It helps reduce the chances of slips, trips or falls. This handout is designed to address housekeeping practices that, by themselves, may seem inconsequential, but, together, form a comprehensive slip, trip and fall risk control program.

The majority of slips result from foreign matter on flooring materials. Posting signs (e.g., “Wet – Slippery Floor”), reporting unusual conditions, and knowing what to do when there is a spill are essential housekeeping tasks for an effective risk control program. Good housekeeping reduces the chance of a slip or fall at a facility. Before allocating funds to replace flooring or purchasing materials to reduce slips, trips or falls, it is prudent to review housekeeping operations. Overlooking the details of reading labels or not having spill control kits available can increase chances of slip and fall injuries. Read on to consider housekeeping best practices designed to minimize the chances of a slip or fall.

	YES	NO	N/A
SPILL CONTROL			
1. Are spills, puddles or other debris cleaned up immediately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are signs used to notify others that the area is wet and a hazard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is the spill control cleanup kit storage area conducive to organized retrieval of cleanup materials for spills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is a wet area cordoned off until it is dry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is there a formal procedure for checking and removing the signage when the area is dry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are absorbent materials available for wiping up greasy, oily or other kinds of liquid spills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLOOR FINISHING/CLEANING PRODUCTS			
1. Is the supply of soap, disinfectant and cleaning supplies adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are cleaning products stored in accordance with manufacturer recommendations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have cleaning supply vendors been contacted to discuss flooring product offerings in light of increased awareness of preventing slips and falls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is training provided to workers when cleaning products change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are flooring manufacturer's recommended care instructions followed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are workers trained on how to apply floor finishing products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is a mopping and cleaning schedule maintained to keep floors clean and dry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the log contain details, such as the brand of cleaning products used, when the task was performed, and what procedure was followed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there a formal procedure to resolve discrepancies between logs and physical conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The



Planning Method

Recently I received an inquiry to facilitate a company's strategic planning session for 2022, but when I suggested setting up a discovery call to talk about their requirements, the response came back that the session was needed ASAP.

Oh, OK. Got it. ASAP.

I have seen the ASAP planning method before, have you too? ASAP means we are too busy to plan ahead, to lay the groundwork, to think about really what's required. We just want something, whatever it is, right now.

You are in construction world, I am sure you've had the ASAP

call, and you know how well that works out, right?

I get it, honestly, I do. I've been so busy at times in running my business that I haven't had time to stop and put a proper plan in place. On those occasions I've also experienced the result - which is the plan remains a dream and is not realized or executed.

The path that leads to not achieving the results a company writes in their ASAP plan is well trodden. When we see results not being achieved, I hear that word accountability come up a lot. As in: "We have a problem with accountability here, my team won't do the things they

say they are going to do, or that I ask them." The model for accountability in this case being perceived as top-down, and with some vague sense of punishment being entailed.

Often times, accountability is missing because there is no commitment to the decisions that are being made. When there is no buy-in to the plan that was created ASAP, then no one feels compelled to make the plan happen. The top-down version of accountability also lacks a problem-solving mindset of "How can I help you?", or a collaborative sense of teamwork and cohesion where colleagues

Continued on Page 13

are empowered to hold each other accountable.

Recently I was listening to a podcast about Pete Carroll, head coach of the Seattle Seahawks. One of the team values he has instilled is: "Be early". Note that this is not just be on time, or don't be late, but be early. When you are late to a meeting, you are holding everyone else up. When team members take ownership and accountability for getting their own stuff sorted so they can show up early, then the whole team dynamic is elevated and the team has a lean-forward posture, ready to go.

Without that commitment to where the team is going, then accountability evaporates. So where does commitment come from? It comes from doing the work, identifying the important issues to solve and creating an environment where everyone gets to give their input and be heard. This doesn't happen in the ASAP planning method, where there is no time, and a proper foundation hasn't been laid. Commitment doesn't have to mean agreement, but in the right environment, often being heard is all people are asking for before they are able to commit to the decisions getting made. Creating that environment takes time and intention.

Being heard is crucial, and the other side of that coin is speaking up and saying your piece, bringing your passion to the table. That requires leaders to step up and create an environment where people feel safe to raise their hand and call out issues as they see them,

and foster a culture of solving problems together as a team for the greater good of the business. Again, in the ASAP method, there is no time allotted to create the right environment for the team to reach its maximum potential.

And why don't people bring their passion to the table? Because of a lack of trust. Maybe it is a lack of trust of other team members, or of the decision-making process, or they don't trust that they will be listened to. How many meetings have you sat in where you have crossed your arms, leaned back in your chair, and zipped up with a steely determination to not say a single word? And why did you do this? Because of a lack of trust. Trust doesn't happen overnight, it is built on a series of actions, on a repeated, intentional, and consistent focus on getting to know each other, of working together overcoming challenges, and learning.

The US Navy SEALs have a saying about how things go when the going gets tough with a team: "You don't rise to the occasion, you sink to the level of your training. That's why we train hard." There is no training in the ASAP method, so the trust is low, healthy debate is missing, no commitment to decisions, no one is accountable, and the results remain dreams.

As an antidote to the ASAP method, I work with my clients to implement the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS). It takes months to master the tools, but along the way you build a solid foundation, feel focused, excited, happy to have a plan in place,

become more aligned, and start having more fun because you are using a proven system that works to run your business and achieve the results you are looking for.

What are you prepared to do to achieve the results you want for 2022?

EOS a complete proven system of a simple set of practical tools that has been successfully used to help over 12,000 businesses here in the US and around the world succeed.

I help you implement EOS to get your crew on the same page with your vision, become much more disciplined and accountable, and function together as a healthy cohesive team. I'm here to help!

Steve Morris

Steve Morris is a Professional EOS Implementer and helps his construction and engineering clients get unstuck, fuel growth, and build a more fun and profitable place to work with their crew. He can be contacted at: steve.morris@eosworldwide.com and 443-254-7711.



Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.

~ Paul J. Meyer

Protect Your Possessions:



Top 10 Benefits Of GPS To Track Your Heavy Equipment

One wrong turn and you are in the absolute middle of nowhere. No hope.

GPS technology has become a much loved and necessary part of our common life. Most of us can't even imagine having to use a hard copy map to get us from one place to the next. Even better, that technology is right in our hands thanks to our smartphones.

Even though we use GPS technology almost every day, there are a lot of uses for it we don't typically consider. One of the best uses for it is expensive and large equipment.

If this surprises you, don't worry. We will explain so keep reading.

Below are ten benefits of GPS for large equipment.

1. Lessen Theft

In 2016 in Texas alone, there were [over 2,000 instances](#) of equipment theft. If this is only one state, just imagine how many instances there were in the other 49.

The chances of theft are heavily dependent on several factors including how much equipment is kept in one area and how dependent the area is on agriculture or construction. It's a shame to think that while you must worry about [safety onsite](#) for the employees, you also must think about the safety of the equipment.

This is where the benefits

of GPS come into action. By placing GPS technology on your large pieces of equipment, it can make it easier for you to track down if stolen. Thieves won't make it out under your watch!

If you choose to do so, it can prevent a large number of problems. You won't have to spend the money to replace equipment, clients won't grow impatient from the wait, and your whole system of operations doesn't have to come to a stop.

2. Solutions for Client Accusations

We all know there is the unfortunate fact that you can't make everyone happy. Someone

Continued on Page 15

is bound to complain here or there. Luckily for you, one of the benefits of GPS is being able to show evidence of progress.

Some clients may claim products weren't delivered as quickly as they could have been or that your driver was lazy. While this may be so, you have the evidence to prove whether or not it was.

GPS allows you to track the route used, how long it took to complete the route, and much more. Some GPS technology will even alert the user about road closures, accidents, and detours. All of these can be taken into account.

If someone claims you didn't work hard enough, not only can you present the amount of time it takes to manufacture and package a product, you can present the time it takes to deliver it.

3. Driver Safety

Speed limit signs are important and keep people safe. However, not everyone follows those rules, especially with [the right driving playlist](#). But this can be very dangerous when driving large trucks and heavy equipment.

One of the best benefits of GPS technology for large trucks and equipment is keeping the drivers accountable for their driving habits. Were they following the correct route? Were they following the speed limit?

Unlawful driving can cause not only accidents on the road for the driver and surrounding vehicles, but it can also cause large legal issues. Neither of

these situations are situations that need to happen.

4. Unusual Circumstances

While unusual happenings and missing person cases don't happen often in the case of delivery truck or semi-truck drivers, it's still a possibility.

There have been cases of missing drivers, missing trucks, missing equipment, and whatever else possible. Whether these cases were due to the force of someone else or a driver gone rogue, GPS technology will allow you to track the equipment.

Once the equipment is tracked, this will also hopefully lead you closer to the driver.

5. Equipment Upkeep

Making sure your equipment is in great condition can be a tall order in itself, especially if you're trying to preserve [new technology](#). GPS tracking for construction equipment is useful because much of the technology can be programmed to keep up with things such as oil changes.

Writing everything down in a log or journal can become tedious, and quite honestly, you might forget sometimes. With the GPS keeping up with everything, you can take some of the weight off your shoulders.

Diving deeper into the technology, it can even report engine idling and run time. These factors are important when considering engine repair costs and fuel economy.

Watching over the mileage is key when dealing with large pieces of equipment. It's better to be prepared for repair or

upkeep than wait until it's too late.

6. Accuracy in Costs

Not only can GPS technology [prevent theft](#) and track mileage, but it can also help you create more accurate costs for your services. By knowing exactly how much fuel and how many miles your drivers must travel, you can charge customers a fair cost.

It also comes in use when paying your drivers. You can see how much time they spent working and driving on the road compared to how much time they used to stop for coffee along the way.

The best part for you is, you don't even have to get out of your chair to figure everything out. The GPS can report the numbers and you do the rest. It's much easier than leaving to individually evaluate all equipment and drivers.

7. Lower Fuel Consumption

No boss wants to believe their drivers are capable of making up imaginary numbers about time spent driving, idling, or sitting still in a parking lot to [soundly sleep](#). However, some drivers do tend to make things up.

Fortunately for you, you have all the numbers you need to know. You can track fuel usage. Just an hour of idling along can use up to a gallon of fuel, and no one has the time or money for that.

When reimbursing expenses used on the road, refer to the numbers and alerts the GPS provided. Not only will this alert you on fuel economy, but it also keeps drivers accountable.

Continued on Page 16

Advanced GPS technology, can even alert you when the driver is filling up!

Fuel isn't cheap, and most of us are doing anything we can to improve the fuel economy of our equipment and vehicles.

8. Improved Efficiency

By being able to have accurate numbers right in front of you when operating large equipment, you're able to plot out how to use the equipment more efficiently. This can include anything from fuel efficiency to efficiency in delivering products on a busy highway.

GPS technology is able to alert you of any major accidents, traffic delays, police, and detours that may take up some of your time. By being able to even look at the route before you start your journey, you'll know what areas to avoid.

Pre-planning is especially important when dealing with clients. They will want things delivered as quickly as possible. If they are not, clients could grow impatient, and you could lose business opportunities in the future with them.

Not only should you be utilizing the benefits of GPS technology, make sure to train your drivers on how to use it. This will assist them in making decisions on the road.

9. Decrease Unauthorized Use

While it seems like something you shouldn't have to worry about, workers may use the heavy equipment for their own personal projects. Whether they need to transport something or need equipment for personal home improvements, there's

always the possibility of unauthorized use.

Even if your employees have always proven themselves faithful, it's a good idea to sit and record the hours and times of equipment use. By letting them know this is part of your routine, they will be discouraged from misusing their resources.

You may even place warning labels on the pieces of large equipment letting users know about the installed GPS technology. Once they notice the warning, they will not want to inappropriately tamper with the equipment.

10. Overall Company Improvement

One of the biggest and broadest benefits of GPS technology for large equipment is overall growth for your company. Not only will you experience a greater sense of efficiency and accuracy in your company, but drivers will also be held at a higher standard.

All of this results in happier customers, a greater confidence in the workplace, and a satisfied boss. Your company will be thriving with decreased trip times and fewer incident reports.

GPS technology could be the saving factor for your business.

Many Benefits of GPS Technology

Above are ten wonderful benefits of GPS technology for the large equipment of your business. Between preventing theft, decreasing equipment misuse, and improving fuel economy, you can't go wrong with GPS!

Install it in your large equipment and train your employees on the new improvements. It's important to let them know about the new technology because if it comes as a surprise, they may become offended you've been tracking their work with no warning.

If you want to know more about anti-theft safety, security technology, or video surveillance, make sure you [check out the rest of our site](#). It's better to be safe than sorry!

Shawn Scarlata
CEO, [SMART Security Pros](#)



SMART's founder, Shawn Scarlata, was an active duty law enforcement officer for 22 years in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. SMART Security Pros specializes in utilizing our [Mobile Video Guard](#) to protect construction sites and other outdoor venues at over 65% less than hiring traditional security guards. Call 301-719-2819 or [submit a detailed quote online](#) to get the right security solution.

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The Non-Negotiable List

20 *Red* Flags For Interviews

If you ever interview job candidates, you need a Non-Negotiable List. This list is used during the interview process to help identify “warning signs” that candidates aren’t a good fit for the organization or position. When a candidate shows one of these warning signs, he or she is no longer considered as a potential hire.

We used a Non-Negotiable List quite effectively at my old company, curbing our turnover by over 90% in one year. The genesis of the list were the many occasions where on the heels of a new employee not working out (fired or resigned), one of the interviewers would say something like “You know, when I interviewed him/her I noticed he/she. . . (Fill in the blank with any of the items on the list below.) When it comes to interviewing, trust your gut.

Here is a list of 20 sample non-negotiable traits and

behaviors that should be red flags for most jobs. This list will help you start creating a list of your own, using warning signs for behaviors that clash with your company culture.

1. Could not look me in the eye.
2. Could not answer the most rudimentary questions succinctly and directly, but instead provided a wandering and vague “answer.”
3. Did not show up to the interview on time and appeared not to have a legitimate excuse.
4. During the first conversation/interview, asked about how many vacation days or work breaks were allowed.
5. Did not know what the organization does and/or what my job function was.
6. Bad-mouthed their current or last boss/ employer.

7. Exhibited a high degree of drama when discussing their current or past employment experiences.
8. Moved very slowly and showed very little energy.
9. Could not share an honest and candid response to the great interview question, “Please share the single greatest mistake you have made in your job in the last three years.” (According to a national SHRM poll, 43% of Chief HR Officers believe that the number one reason new employees do not work out is that they cannot take feedback. [e.g., they are perfect people and do not make any mistakes.] Fielding answers to this interview question is quite entertaining, as nine out of 10 people will either:

Continued on Page 19

- share a mistake and promptly blame others for it; sit silently for minutes on end, not being able to think of anything they have done wrong—in three years!)
10. Had inappropriate language or dress.
 11. Chewed gum during the interview.
 12. Displayed behavior that showed a lack of politeness, disrespect, or messiness. For example, when accepting a glass or bottle of water at the beginning of the interview, they left the used cup or bottle on the table, instead of offering to throw it out or bring it to the break room. One recruiter told me one of her candidates had the audacity to come into the interview with a “Big Gulp” from 7/11, only to leave it on her desk, condensation and all.
 13. Provided inconsistent and/or conflicting information or answers.
 14. Looked at their cell phone, fielded a phone call or responded to a text during the interview.
 15. Did not ask probing questions about the job or organization when afforded the opportunity and/or exhibited a general lack of curiosity about both.
 16. Expressed weaknesses that clearly did not bode well for the job position (e.g., an introvert who prefers to work alone interviewing for a customer service position).
 17. Clearly interviewed for

- a job, as opposed to showing passion for wanting to do THIS job.
18. Did not send a post-interview thank you letter or follow-up in a timely manner. (If you don’t receive an email right away, wait for a card to come in the mail.)
 19. Sent a post-interview message to follow up, but: it was generic and likely used for all job interviews; names were misspelled; grammar and writing skills showed cause for concern.
 20. Was invited for a second interview or asked to provide follow up information but did not respond in a timely manner.

Create your own Non-Negotiable List to benchmark candidates against during the interview process. Use your list and make no exceptions, since the behaviors and actions are non-negotiable. Trust me, it works.

Kevin Sheridan

Kevin Sheridan is an internationally recognized Keynote Speaker, a New York Times Best Selling Author, and one of the most sought-after voices in the world on the topic of Employee Engagement. For six years running, he has been honored on Inc. Magazine’s top 100 Leadership Speakers in the world, as well as Inc.’s top 100 experts on Employee Engagement. He was also honored to be named to The Employee Engagement Award’s Top 101 Global Influencers on Employee Engagement of 2017.

Having spent thirty years as a high-level Human Capital Management consultant, Kevin has helped some of the world’s



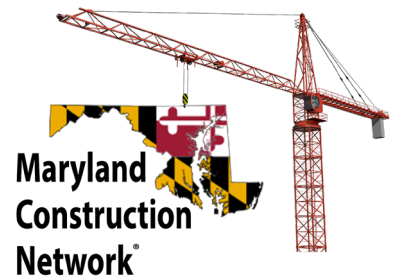
largest corporations rebuild a culture that fosters productive engagement, earning him several distinctive awards and honors. Kevin’s premier creation, PEER®, has been consistently recognized as a long-overdue, industry-changing innovation in the field of Employee Engagement. His first book, building a Magnetic Culture, made six of the best seller lists including The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today. He is also the author of The Virtual Manager, which explores how to most effectively manage remote workers.

Kevin received a Master of Business Administration from the Harvard Business School in 1988, concentrating his degree in Strategy, Human Resources Management, and Organizational Behavior. He is also a serial entrepreneur, having founded and sold three different companies.

Connect with Kevin on social and learn more about him by visiting the [website](#) or reaching out through email: kevin@kevinsheridanllc.com

Being an entrepreneur is a mindset. You have to see things as opportunities all the time. I like to do interviews. I like to push people on certain topics. I like to dig into the stories where there’s not necessarily a right or wrong answer.

~ Soledad O’Brien



March 24th | Dutch's Daughter
581 Himes Avenue | Frederick, MD 21703
3:45 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

MCN Member Early Registration \$70 ~ Late Registration - \$85
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Frederick County is Maryland's largest county in size at 664 square miles. The City of Frederick, the county seat, is the second largest city in Maryland and a thriving hub of activity. Frederick is the northern anchor of the I-270 Technology Corridor, a key economic engine for the state of Maryland, making the area an ideal location for businesses.

Accordingly, Frederick County has a robust construction industry. MCN is pleased to enjoy the beauty and hospitality of Frederick County as we welcome the return of Direct Connect Networking. Join in on industry leading networking at the conclusion of a diverse program featuring short presentations from businesses representing various segments of the industry.

We also have scheduled a special visit from Maryland Gubernatorial candidate and former Secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce, Kelly Schulz. Ms. Schulz will be greeting guests to the event and briefly sharing her vision for Maryland's future.

Don't miss this chance to enjoy one of MCN's favorite stops and to meet new people and make connections designed to help you and your business thrive.

Event Host:



Event Sponsors:



Schedule of Events

Registration: 3:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Presentations: 3:45 - 5:00

Direct Connect Networking: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

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