


*A project with a streamlined construction process is the ultimate goal for every site manager. But taking a design and turning it into reality is not always that simple. It's the boots on the ground that take a concept to completion — with dedicated site managers running a safe, well-structured scene.*

# smooth OPERA



**F**rom enduring severe weather to discovering dinosaur bones, site managers have truly seen it all. While each job differs from project to project, some of these common challenges and last-minute surprises have the potential to wreak havoc during the construction phase. The role of the site manager is to oversee on-site operations, paying special attention to safety, schedule, budget and quality. When an unexpected obstacle appears during construction, the site manager must assess how to address it while staying on schedule.

With a consistently high demand and fast turnover rate for construction projects, there isn't a lot of time for site managers to slow down. While one construction site is wrapping up, meetings to discuss details of the next project already are happening, long before it breaks ground.

"There is a lot of communication about the next job before I travel to the site," says Bill Garcia, a site manager at Burns & McDonnell. "During those meetings, we'll discuss everything — from constructability reviews and scheduling to where we can save costs for the client."

For a site manager, pre-construction planning can help prevent challenges from arising in the field. But even with all the planning in the world, some obstacles can't be anticipated. Scheduling, for instance, is one challenge that all site managers face.

"One of our biggest challenges is getting the material we need in a timely manner, in the right sequence and with the surface area needed to lay it all out," Garcia says.

For any project, the site manager checks that each task is meticulously scheduled out, down to a daily — or even hourly — basis. But if a delivery truck is stuck in bad weather and the equipment it's carrying was set to be installed that day, the site manager and field operations team must remain agile to keep the schedule moving forward.

"Anything that pops up that's not in the plan presents us with a challenge, but we don't let that stop progress," says Dewey Cook, a site manager at Burns & McDonnell.

"We continue working on other aspects of the project until that piece of the puzzle arrives." »

# ATORS



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Environmental factors also are something site managers must consider on the job site. Even if a project design is vetted through an in-house environmental specialist, not everything can be planned for.

“We are environmentally conscious about the location we are working in and the species that inhabit that area,” Cook says. “If a protected bird species is nesting on a piece of equipment we need to use that day, I will instruct my team to tackle other areas of the project to keep the schedule moving until the bird is ready to move on, even if it takes many days or even weeks.”

Then comes the issue of noise. For construction sites located near a community’s residents, the site manager must plan ahead, whether that means creating sound barriers or scheduling out specific tasks so that noises created by the equipment won’t exceed the decibel levels mandated in local permits.

In many communities, construction work noises can’t exceed a specific decibel limit before or after

certain hours of the day. For example, according to the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse, sound control codes in Kansas City, Missouri, indicate that anything exceeding 55 decibels between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. in a noise-sensitive zone is considered a disturbance. To put this in perspective, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration states that sounds from a jackhammer can reach up to 100 decibels.

By including the site manager as early as possible in the project discussions, he or she can identify potential issues or threats to the construction timeline, create a strategy based on deliverables, and determine an applicable schedule and number of days required for each particular project.

Regardless of any unforeseen issues, the role of the site manager is to forge the project ahead. A successful site manager is experienced and prepared to tackle any challenge that comes his or her way, all while keeping boots busy on-site. ●

