

The Painter's RAG

Inspiration

Support

Education



PDCARESIDENTIALFORUM.ORG

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From THE PRESIDENT



I've never been a big fan of New Year's resolutions. Usually, they're

a bit vague, too lofty, and often a repeat of an unsuccessful resolution from the year before. Most

resolutions are also generally things we shouldn't be doing, which carries a negative connotation. Nothing quite like starting off the year by beating yourself up about something.

After some reflection on this, a few years ago I decided that instead of making a resolution, I would set one goal at the start of each year instead. Goals carry a much more positive vibe, making them that much more attractive to begin with. And once your overall goal is established, it's fairly easy to identify concrete steps that need to be taken in order to reach the goal, thus increasing your chances of success from the start.

In 2010 my goal was to establish more balance in my life. To make it "real" I decided to conquer it 15 minutes at a time. I went to bed 15 minutes earlier than usual, got up 15 minutes earlier than usual, set aside 15 minutes to read or reflect each day, and another 15 minutes for some type of physical activity (usually a brisk walk with the dogs). I was amazed at how such a small shift made such a big difference, and have done my best to maintain this motto since then.

In 2011 my goal was to become more assertive. As I venture deeper and deeper into the world of "professional business woman", I realized that my quiet nature and need to be polite was keeping me from

January 2012

voicing some thoughts and ideas that were worth sharing. I am currently the president of the Residential Forum because a dear colleague saw in me (two years ago) a potential that I am just coming to believe in and trust myself. My Southern roots run deep so I still mind my manners, but when it's clear that something is in my best interest, or that of the business, etc., I'm no longer afraid to voice my opinion and stand my ground (if necessary).

My goal for the coming year is to be more resourceful. I can't tell you how many times I've needed something and thought, "I wish I knew someone who did this", only to later remember that I did. Whether we realize it or not, we have a multitude of untapped connections at our fingertips just waiting to be called upon. Between the National PDCA network, the Residential Forum network, and our own personal networks, there is a sea of knowledge waiting to be shared.

As your president for the coming year, I also want everyone to be aware that I too am here to help in any way that I can. Please bear in mind that I keep "bankers hours" (10 am – 6 pm Eastern), but feel free to call or send me an email with any thoughts, ideas, suggestions, or questions. As you can see by our new logo, the new look of the Painter's Rag, and the newly re-designed website, we are actively working on providing you with the best value for your forum membership. The best way to insure we are successful is with your direct feedback. I can't wait to get to know everyone better in the year ahead, and here's to a fabulous 2012!

Yours Truly - **Suhaiba Neill**

***save THE DATE!** more details on the next issue...

SEPT. 14-15, 2012 AST 13 Oakbrook Marriott, Chicago IL



Editors **NOTE:** Finding a Unifying Theme

By Mike Kelly, mike@crestwoodpainting.com

As a new editor of the Painters Rag I was desperately seeking a clever unifying theme for this issue – to no avail. Seemingly a hodge-podge, I then realized that I met Ray Rahni at the PDCA Expo '08 in Los Angeles (and again in New Orleans '09). John Peek's piece came about as a result of an off-hand comment he made at Advanced Shop Talk '10 in Charleston. Dan Brady and I share the same business coach/peer group and Julie Gehrke was very welcoming some years ago to this (new) Residential Forum member.

Operating a contracting business is never easy, but association with PDCA and the Residential Forum has certainly helped me build a stronger business. The key, though, is that I didn't meet any of these people in sunny Kansas City. They were all investing in themselves, and their businesses, by actively participating in PDCA - and Forum - sponsored events.

Seeking out like-minded professionals, learning about and trying new tools and materials, networking, actively building their businesses – these are traits common to most PDCA Residential Forum members. Fortunately, most of my competitors don't share that vision. How's that for a unifying theme?

**A Note
From the
Editor**

The PEDESTRIAN'S CORNER

by Doug Imhoff, imhoffpainting@msn.com

Re: Draft Holiday Letter to employees & stakeholders of Vandershade Painting Co.

Dear Friends, Family & Staff,

It is that time of year again to share with you our modest success in this adventure we call the painting business. 2011 has been yet another dozen months of very good (near-record) performances on behalf of all departments and staff members...

As is customary and proper, we'll begin with Sales: the sales team - for those of you who don't yet know our salesman, Rick DeLamborghini, is our sales team - posted an acceptable 28% increase over projections, and an adequate 27% increase over last years' over- performance! Many of you who don't know Rick personally may be unaware that Rick is also a gourmet pie baker and his pies are regularly featured on the Food Network. In his spare time Rick is fond of saving stranded polar bears... wow, where does he find the time?

Well, as has been the case in each of the last 10 years (all the years this company has been in existence) the modest numbers generated by Sales necessitated an increase in production: this year our Installations Dept. saw the addition of 6 full time employees and another pair of Project Managers. ID (installation dept) keeps reaching for the stars, turning in an average of 12.5% under budget, with an Add-On/Base Sale ratio of +34%. As usual, ID has a perfect 100% client satisfaction score. Wow, good job guys!

Next, our office staff, Judy, has done her usual good job. Judy has updated all our RRP training manuals, our RTW (Return to Work) program, and the ATM-2 (Apprentice to Master in 2 weeks) was successfully shortened from last years' painfully long ATM-4. Judy has also managed to find a 7.5% savings in our work comp & liability insurance, and our new Employee Handbook has been adopted by the State Labor Board as their new industry standard. Nice turn Judy!

Marketing (Larry) also went just about as projected with a Direct Mail return-call ratio of 32%, just ahead of our goal of 30%. Got to hand it to him, whatever he's sprinkling on the postcards is working great! Good job Larry!

Finally, numbers look good too. Our quick ratio is 7.5, net is a modest 22%, labor is 28%, and we're going to be able to increase our Retirement Trust contribution to 8.5%, beating the market by a handful of digits. Nice work Bubba!

And it wouldn't be a Holiday Letter without a word from our intrepid owner and chief brush cleaner: Mr. Shady Vandershade who chimes: "Swell".

Attached please find your final paycheck for 2011, along with your year-end \$ bonus and as a little stocking-stuffer: airfare, hotel & game tickets to Superbowl XLVI in Indianapolis! Have a great Holiday and we'll see you all next year!





The PEDESTRIAN'S CORNER REDUX

A mixed bag:



Seriously though, it's that magic time of year when all who care to know take a look back on the year past and measure the accomplishments against the projections, and analyze their performance. Unlike Shady

Vandershade in the holiday letter, not everything works out twenty percent above projections. But then, who ever thought it would?

We all do. Mom always said that; everything works out for the best. That statement is an elixir all wrapped up into a thoughtless morsel that allows us some emotional wiggle room in the event everything doesn't work out for the best. It's the palliative that keeps on palliating if we just keep telling ourselves that; and eventually it'll prove itself a splendid example of the blind squirrel-finds-a-nut adage. That's especially true if we're not in the habit of looking back occasionally. And that's the magic. It is the very same magic of not setting any goals to begin the year with; we tip-toe through the years blissfully aware of only one thing: everything works out for the best. How do we know? We don't know! And if we don't know where we're going, any road will take us there. Only in the parrallel universe are we permitted comparison; but we don't live there so our only alternative to grinning ignorance is: projection, measurement, analysis, and fine-tuning.

This brings me to another point (for those many beginning to wonder if I have one at all):

Is it really a good idea to be connected with everyone all the time? Never one to miss an opportunity to bark at the caravan of progress, I go dragging my feet into the cold technological cavern of social networking - a term that used to mean pressing one's fleshy palm against that of another human being in front of whom you are standing - has now become a term that means tweeting and updating your status on a regular basis. Is it not leaping boldly across the line of over-exposure? Yes, it is. We're following fast the thumb generation (my term), where will they lead us? Facebook, twitter, and all the other gadget-based socializing & networking is beginning to show some downsides; witness the latest trendy offering from technological agency: managing your tweets for you! Too busy to update your status in a timely manner? Have a tendency to tweet things you wish you could un-tweet? Don't worry, they'll do it all for you! A few months ago Ashton Kutcher stepped into the poop with a tweet that wasn't well thought-out, after some apologizing and hand-wringing his publicist announced that tweets to followers would henceforth be "managed". Stunning. Whose tweets are they then? If a person can't be counted on to behave civilly

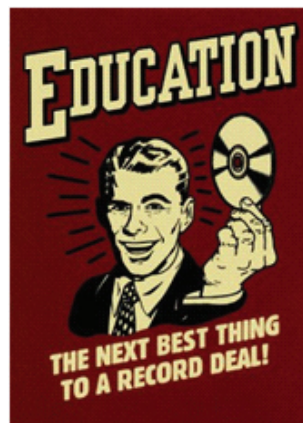
while tweeting would he also be prone to committing party-fouls and find himself not on the invite list? If you tweet daily about what you're doing what does a monthly newsletter begin to look like, a summation of status updates and tweets? Can socialization-tactual be replaced by socialization-virtual? Without risking the loss of the skills that socializing necessitates? And finally, witness the regular-guy-zation (again, my term) of people once venerated. I don't want to know what my personal heroes are doing right now! If I knew they may no longer be my hero. It is the next stage in the evolution of Critical Theory: not only is no idea or thing of any immutable value, neither is any one person once they're recognized as fallible through the ever-open eye.

Alas, we're not going back, and I'm in the boat too so I intend to go cautiously into this realm. Better to keep my mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it always and remove all doubt. A good general chooses which hills he is willing to die for.

So as I wade cautiously into the warm water of resolutions for the year; I resolve to look back more carefully, cognizant of what I wished for and more attuned to the indicators on my dashboard, ever wary that although things always work out, it is only for the best when effort, attention, persistence and review are the tools worn-out through repetitive use.

Membership HAS ITS BENEFITS

by Ray Rahni, ray@painttrack.com



Every time I invite a fellow painter to join PDCA they ask "how many jobs can you get" out of membership?

We all know getting more jobs is not the only reason one would want to join a trade association such as PDCA! It is rather the education that can help painting companies win more work.

Since I joined PDCA a few years ago my company has had steadily grown 12-15% year after year regardless of the national economic outlook. This growth is not because other PDCA members throw leads my way but rather the education that membership provides. It is this education that has helped me fine-tune my business practices.





Hire a Contractor OR DO IT YOURSELF?

by Julie Gehrke, julie@signetpainting.com

The immediate response is, “It’s cheaper to do it myself. I’ll go buy the materials and get started this Saturday.”

And possibly, as even I have done in the past, “I’ll pocket the insurance money and come out ahead.”

This is a valid dilemma that many people face. It pays to take the time to do a more lengthy analysis of the situation.

I will take a model from ethics and apply it to the situation. Be patient with the process and the cream will rise to the top!

Review the facts: There is a home improvement to be made that requires, labor, expertise, accurate materials, adequate tools, miscellaneous sundries and possibly a timeline for completion.

Estimate the problem: Setting aside that a contractor will have more in depth knowledge of the best materials to purchase for the situation, and already own the tools; the main conflict is paying for the contractor’s labor versus spending one’s own time.

Solutions that could be possible: Do it myself, hire a contractor, or pay the unemployed neighbor/brother-in-law/uncle – cash.

Outcomes of each solution above:

Do it myself: The job gets done using my time in the denomination of labor. Any unexpected findings or mistakes took more time and money. My level of expertise shows in the outcome. Best case scenario: money was saved by my time and I am happy with the outcome.

Pay the unemployed neighbor/brother-in-law/uncle – cash: The job may or may not have the desired outcome. Either guilt or pleasure with the job outcome could have implications for the future of said relationship: awkward or friendly. Money may have been saved – with the reality pending on the quality of the job outcome. Risk of job outcome and risk with relationship were taken.

Hire a contractor: Two outcomes emerge depending on the quality of the contractor – which is why referrals are important. First and best outcome is that expectations were met and exceeded. There may be a realization during the job process that more detail and skill was required than originally thought. Your home was disrupted for less time. You spent your time doing profitable things (both for the soul and the wallet). Risk was very low because contractor carried insurances to guard you against any injuries occurring on your property, any job related mistakes with costly repairs and many other things that fall under liability and worker’s compensation insurance.

The second outcome is that you are disappointed with a shoddy job or the poor ethics of the contractor choice you made.

Likely impact of each outcome listed above:

Do it myself: If the job goes well, the impact is one of pride and though time was spent and unexpected issues arose, you felt you came out ahead by spending your extra time rather than cash, to do the job yourself.

Pay the unemployed neighbor/brother-in-law/uncle – cash: The cash helps said person through a tough time. You are happy or not so happy with the results. The relationship in the future with this person hinges on the job outcome. Want to take that risk?

Contractor: If you did your homework and hired a qualified contractor, you are happy with the outcome and no longer feel any sting of spending the money on hired labor because you realize the job has a professional appearance, the unexpected findings were remedied with more skill and ease than you would have been able to deal with, and the timeline allowed you to enjoy your home sooner than if you had tackled the project yourself. Invisible risk benefits like injury or damage liability were realized.

Value of each outcome:

Without belaboring any point already mentioned, if one simply looks at the value that the money path followed, it speaks for itself. In the do-it-yourself scenario, even if the lowest amount of money spent is the outcome, there is a risk that the quality of the job may not last as long as having it professionally done, which means the lower amount spent was not a good investment in the long run.

Cash payment to a friend in need will bring them a short term benefit but the relationship is at risk pending the outcome.

Payment to a contractor helps Main Street keep tradespeople employed and able to maintain health benefits. An employer stays in business and the employees spend their earnings on taxes and on consuming goods that create a strong economy. Notice how the money path in this scenario included insurance, safeguarding you against risk and putting money into that sector as well. The money also flowed to the manufacturer who had the best material solution for your project. For each additional maintenance free year you gain from the money paid to a contractor, the return on investment increases.

The next steps are to evaluate all of the above, make a decision and then defend your decision against its main weaknesses. This is called the RESOLVEDD (yes, two D’s) method (Pfeiffer & Forsberg, 2005).

I hope you enjoyed this lesson in Dilemma Solving 101 – and happy home improvements to you!





Overnight **SUCCESS**

by **Tom Lopatosky**, tommylop86@hotmail.com

For those PDCA friends and family that get frustrated by the daily grind,

particularly this time of year, it is great to be reminded of the legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, who for the first 17 years of his collegiate coaching career never won anything; but after that ran off 10 NCAA



championships in his next 12 years - a feat that more than likely will never be matched. Did his success happen instantaneously? - absolutely not. His success was based on years of relentlessly perfecting a system that would ultimately lead him to his accomplishments. Don't give in. Perfect your personal system towards success, lead with a positive attitude, and keep your eyes on your ultimate goal. As difficult as things may seem sometimes, fight through it and you will get there. Have faith in this, yourself, and the higher power and it will happen. Believe that.

Epoxy and **POLYESTER FILLERS**

by **John Peek**, john@peekbrotherspainting.com

For years and even before I was a painting contractor I was aware of polyester fillers...

The main one being Bondo. I used it to repair all the dents and dings in my extended ego (read car) in high school and college. When I started painting, of course I began using it and other brands of similar formulations on homes and came to find that what is good for thin repairs on a car may not be good for a thin repair on the siding of a shiplap sided home. After a few months in the sun, I was back removing the remainder of what the sun had not delaminated for me. The problem was that polyester filler is not formulated to do two things very well: adhere nor flex with wood substrates...lesson learned. I do keep polyester filler in the truck though, as it does work well for effective interior repairs to heavily damaged lock-sets and dead-bolts that have been blown out. It dries super-fast especially so because you can "goose" it with extra catalyst.



Opposite polyester resins is epoxy. Epoxies are each uniquely formulated to a specific dry time and thickness/viscosity as well as dry flexibility properties and adhesion - and they do adhere! Most of these are overnight dry which is why painters who don't give a hoot for quality of the repair rely too heavily on Bondo so it will cure in 2 minutes and they can get home to beer and Oprah while the repair fails as soon as the check clears. Various epoxies are

made for craftsmen and proper wood repairs should be in your tool box. Here are a few I always have on hand:

1. Flex-Tech (<http://www.advancedrepair.com/>): this product comes in a double tube that is pumped out of a double barrel caulk gun. Buy the gun with your first order...it is worth its weight in gold as it assures you get the exact balance of resin and hardener. This product comes out like thick peanut butter and spreads in a "Jiffy" but will hold its shape in the deepest repair. It is easy to tool with putty knives in large holes and is better than the others for old rusty nail holes that you have set deep in siding and do not want to rise up and show their ugly old heads again!
2. There are many epoxy fillers available that are wood colored, two component and composed of epoxy and light weight micro-spheres. PC-Woodie, System Three (www.systemthree.com) and Abatron (www.abatron.com) are three of this type. Use surgical gloves and mix the two dough components together and push them into the repair. A neat trick is to use white vinegar to wet your putty knife and smooth the repair for minimal sanding.
3. Smith Co. (smithandcompany.org) makes a watery epoxy that I buy in two gallon kits of equal parts hardener and resin. This stuff soaks into raw wood and hardens. This key feature can add years to the durability of your paint jobs. Take, for instance a new raw wood panel door. We have all experienced the rot at the hinge side rail and stile joint after a few years even after priming and painting properly from the start. The problem nowadays is that with all those joints, compounded by the core being lesser quality wood and the fact that most doors fool both carpenter and owner with a thin fancy veneer that will pull away from the joint; nothing is going to keep that door from pulling apart and letting water and rot in unless you pre-treat it. With Smith's epoxy, mix up a good pint to a quart and

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brush on a coat to the top and bottom of the door (let it soak in and do it again especially on end grain), behind hinges and all cut outs for hardware and especially at lower rails and stiles... I even go further and soak the whole door and then caulk the open gaps on the top and bottom of the doors with Vulkem. This door has been prepared properly!

often sold by the epoxy manufacturer and can be either a very thin epoxy that plasticizes the wood or an acrylic that chases water and impregnates hardener in the wood. Note: after the repair is totally complete I will go just outside it and drill 1/4" holes where water might get in again and insert boric acid pellets that will disperse into the wood and prevent rot if water should ever enter. Also use a polyurethane caulk like Vulkem (oil based) at upper facing seams that could open up in the future... sure it takes a few days to dry and you cannot paint it "in minutes" but aren't "time saving" products like cheap caulk that you can "paint in minutes" what cause premature failure in the end? Shoot... if you are going to be using a \$45 tube or can of epoxy... sell yourself, do it right, sleep at night and be a craftsman - goll dern it!

The process for most repairs is the same: get rid of the wet, feathery, lignin-free wood. Like a dentist, you have to use whatever tool: a drill, chisel, 5-1 and get that bad wood out. I then drill pilot holes all around the repair and in the sides and base at an angle and soak the surrounding wood with consolidator (see Smith's Epoxy below). It is

Hope these tips and products will help you.

Getting your financial house **IN ORDER**

by Dan Brady, dan@danbradypainting.com

Are you making money on every job you do?

Do you know exactly the productivity you need from your employees to make your job profitable? If you don't it's time to put some financial resolutions in place for your business for 2012.

In my business we job cost every single job. Now I know a few of you are groaning when you read that, but bear with me. It's important. Otherwise you won't know what the best jobs are for you and your crew... and even more importantly, you won't know when a job is starting to cost you as much - or worse - more than you've bid.

Whether you're a one-man band, a two person team or a larger organization with several employees on the payroll, you need to cost our each job and make sure that it's profitable.

Too many small businesses don't do that. Here's a scenario I've seen time and time again. A painter decides to go out on his own. Working for someone else he's making \$10 an hour. He starts in business charging \$15 an hour for his own work. It seems like a big pay raise, but as a



business owner there are a lot of hours when you're meeting with clients and bidding on jobs - hours that you're not earning money for painting. So our painter hires some apprentices. Now he has more overhead, which the \$15 per hour rate doesn't cover. If our business owner doesn't

start job costing and bidding appropriately, in a few years his dream of business ownership will be shattered and he'll be looking for work.

You Don't Have to Be a Financial Genius to Job Cost Effectively

When I started in business I had several advantages: I was experienced in what the job of painting entails and I had a finance degree plus five years experience in sales.

Even so, I've learned more about job costing with each year I've been in business. It doesn't have to be difficult, it doesn't have to be time consuming and it can be done effectively using an Excel spread sheet.

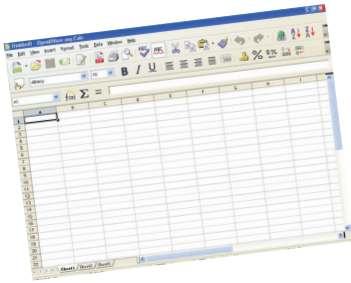
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On mine I include:

- A list of all my employees
- the rate of pay for each employee
- payroll expenses
- taxes
- insurance
- material costs – I use 14% based on my experience with past jobs and national numbers for the trade



I've set up the spread sheet to Calculate each job for me including gross profits, actual revenue per hour and revenue per employee per day. At the very end of the spread sheet it calculates for me an actual gross profit or loss for each job. Using this system I

know exactly where I am at any time

during the year. Plus I can put this into another spread sheet that averages all the jobs we do in a month or year and calculate our gross profit for the year.

The benefit – this year by the end of January I will know what the gross profit for all the jobs we have going during that month and I'll continue to have those numbers at my fingertips all year. Gross profit is a gauge of how my company is operating overall. If I see a pattern of jobs that don't return my target gross profit, then I know I need to take a look at productivity and at the bidding process.

How to Use Job Costing to Save a Job Headed South

This spread sheet is especially handy when you have a big job that's taking too long. Before you let your profit completely evaporate, you can use the spread sheet to figure out how to bring your costs down and keep the job profitable. I start by figuring out if I have the right mix of employees on the job.

To do this, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Do you have all your crew leaders on this job?
- If so, do you really need them all or could some be leading a team elsewhere?
- Is the difficult, highly skilled painting done?
- Is your crew working on finishing up and cleaning up?
- Do you really need more than one highly skilled person there to close down the job?

Using the spread sheet you can make some projections on what your costs will be if you finish the job with three apprentices and one crew leader instead of four of your highest paid employees. This is something that's made me much more profitable in 2011 – working hard to make sure I have the right mixture of employees and skillsets on the job.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is to know your numbers inside and out. Unfortunately too many business owners don't have a system in place to track their profits and losses on their jobs. They know they're busy. They know that invoices are getting paid. But they don't know if they're actually making a profit.

Learn from others in the industry

One of the best business decisions I ever made was to hire a consultant to be my coach. I had to put the cost on a credit card because I knew I needed the good advice they could offer and I knew I needed to find a way to pay for it. The first thing they taught me was to build great systems and hire great people to run those systems. One skill I've developed that has had incredible payback for me is to find smart people and listen to them. Through my consultant I now meet with a group of peers from around the country three times a year. We compare our revenue, our payroll, material costs and a number of other financial markers.



By comparing my business numbers with others in the same industry, I learn what our company is doing well and where we can improve.

Other Benefits of Job Costing

One of the greatest benefits of job costing is through the follow up I do when a job starts to take too long. I look at this time as an opportunity to involve your employees in helping keep the company profitable.

My team understands that we need to make a profit if I'm going to pay the kind of wages they want to earn. I share numbers with them and if a job starts looking like it will be unprofitable, I often bring them into the process of solving the problem.

For any job that isn't as profitable as expected, we talk about production rates, about staging, about their approach, whether my bidding was off or whether they haven't been hitting the ground running. Everything is taken into consideration and there's no better way to get your employees involved, invested and growing within your company than to involve them in what it takes to stay profitable and keep the future bright.

Discussing what went right – and wrong – gets some good conversations going. It also lets me identify apprentices that have the potential to be crew leaders in the future and get them on a track that enhances their skills and ability, which also enhances their value to the company.

By putting systems in place that make it easy to share numbers and expectations and to show everyone just what the company needs to do to grow and succeed, I've reaped another great benefit, employees who are vested in my (and their) success.





Hard AT PLAY

by Suhaiba Neill, sneill@johnneillpainting.com

Twice a year we hold an all company meeting on a Friday afternoon.

The men wrap up on the job around 11 am and we all meet in a fellowship room at a church near our shop for lunch and a company update. As you can imagine, the agenda doesn't change much from year to year. We review the state of the company, things that are going well, things that need improvement, and our overall goals for the next six months. Unfortunately, it's not very engaging and I'm sure to a good number of the men it might as well be Charlie Brown's teacher up there talking.

A few years ago we decided it would be a nice change of scenery for the men if we could incorporate a team building activity into the agenda as well. Finding a suitable one has not always been easy. We've done a "survival on the moon" group activity, a paint related word search with a prize going to the person that finished first, played a game called "what's in your pocket", again for prizes, and even had our meeting in the park one spring followed by a company softball game. This year's activity however, was by far the most successful. Through an internet search I found an activity called "tallest tower" and modified it to fit with our group. In a nutshell, the company is divided into teams and given a brown paper bag of supplies



and a very short list of instructions – This is an activity to work on communication, collaboration, and teamwork. The object is to build the tallest freestanding tower possible with the materials provided. You will have fifteen minutes. Good luck!

As soon as I said go, they were off and running. It didn't take long before they realized that although they were all given the same items, the quantities varied from bag to bag. Some tried to bargain with another team to give them some tape (the hot ticket item), some tried swiping the tape when no one was looking, but ultimately they all stuck to what they were given and did the best they could. For the entire fifteen minutes though, the whole company was fully engaged and hard at play. When the clock stopped, the winner was determined and rewarded with a bag of candy (it was the Friday before Halloween, and who doesn't love Snickers?). Then we began the debriefing with a few questions, which included – did anyone think to team up with another group? One person said yes, but most people when given this task will assume that they have to stick to their assigned groups.

We went on to discuss that while most of the time everyone works with the same crew (2-3 men on average), we are all ultimately part of one big team. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and keeping that in mind when tackling a difficult project can help ease the load. Remembering that a fellow Foreman or expert at a particular task is only a phone call away can save hours of time and energy, allowing everyone to excel while completing projects.

We will continue to foster and develop the importance of collaboration in the year ahead, keeping in mind that some of the greatest results are produced when we can all come to the table with an open mind and truly work together as a team to achieve a common goal. In our company, that equates to bringing jobs in on or under budget and complete customer satisfaction. Here's to working hard, but also having fun while doing so in the year ahead.



Our Newly Redesigned Website is up & Running

Check it out now!



PDCAResidentialForum.org





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The Craftsmanship FORUM COLUMN

1. **When I am done painting a room, sometimes the dust from the non-drop cloth floor coverings goes up into the air while removing them. Do you have any suggestions?**
We suggest that before you take up the non-drop cloth coverings, you vacuum the dusty coverings. Then you can prevent that dust from becoming air bourn. Ref. COP RI-GL-2
2. **After I put plastic down over the furniture and then put drop cloths on top of it, the drop cloth slides all around. What should I do?**
Apply spray adhesive on the plastic to keep the drop cloth from sliding. Ref. COP RI-GL-3
3. **Sometimes when painting baseboards, dirt will be found in the freshly painted surface, even though we have washed them before painting. How do you suggest fixing this problem?**
Clean all surfaces in the room before beginning your painting so that there is no surface that can have dirt that can be kicked up. Ref. COP RI-PT-5
4. **We stained some interior trim, but any putty I can find to fill the nail holes is either too dark or too light. What can I do?**
Use one that is just a little darker but then add some glazing compound until the putty matches. Ref. COP RI-PR-3
5. **Is there a way to prevent the edge of my broad knife from leaving lines when I smooth out a patch?**
The edges of your patching tools can be rounded just a little to keep from leaving lines. Ref. COP RI-PR-5

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