

It's Time to Embrace the Humble Daily Report

As every member of the AEC community knows, in the real world, projects rarely go according to plan. In fact, according to a 2016 report by McKinsey & Company, large construction projects typically take 20 percent longer to finish than scheduled and end up 80 percent over budget.

Yikes.

But what if there were a single document that could help maximize profits for stakeholders on every project? Who wouldn't want to jump on that bandwagon? Thankfully, that document isn't a pipe dream – it actually exists. It's called the daily report, and it's the most important document in construction.

That's right, what may seem -like just another tedious chore for your foreman – the humble daily report –creates a valuable detailed history of the project from start to finish that helps stakeholders compare the planned cost, schedule and productivity with the actual results. If overruns do occur, an accurate story of the project's history will provide the necessary evidence to explain exactly why the project ran longer – and cost more – than expected. In the unfortunate event of a dispute once the job has wrapped, this can mean the difference between being compensated for those overages and walking away empty handed. But the only way those daily reports can work their magic is if they they're kept diligently (which means *every, single* day) and they contain the right information.

Here are five things that every daily report should have:

- 1. The correct date.** While this may seem like a no brainer, neglecting to include this crucial detail will render a day's report completely useless months — or even years — down the road when the project is finally complete.
- 2. Weather conditions.** These are another daily report must-have and should include precipitation levels, temperature, wind speed and whether those factors that affected the job site or the project's progress. If the weather did have an impact that caused downtime, a detailed description should be included in the day's report.
- 3. A thorough accounting of the day's available resources.** This includes personnel, equipment and building materials. How many workers were on the job that day? How much time did they put in? What types of equipment were utilized? What kinds of materials were used – and how much? Be sure to write it all down! And speaking of materials, a detailed inventory should also be included in each report, including the quantities of materials and equipment currently on hand, a list of items received that day, and whether deliveries were made on schedule.
- 4. A detailed summary of the day's progress.** It should include an up-to-date project status report that lists which tasks were completed, which are in progress and which were postponed. It should also have a description of any disruptions that delayed the day's progress. If a delay is ongoing, its status should be noted each day to ensure it's easily tracked. This is also the time to list any concerns about future project delays related to labor, equipment or materials, as well as possible solutions to help avoid them.
- 5. Any safety or environmental incidents that occurred that day should.** Includes the names of the employees involved, a detailed description of what happened, and whether first aid was given, medical personnel were called to the scene or the affected workers were transported to the hospital. Since these kinds of

incidents can have serious financial and legal ramifications, this section should be given extra special attention when they happen.

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While keeping detailed daily reports does take time, thankfully the days of having to fill them out by hand in triplicate are long gone. Today, there are software programs such as eSUBinc daily report module, smartsheet templates and mobile apps such as RakenApp for construction field reporting that make the process much easier and quicker. In fact, most apps on the market are template-based and automate the most common aspects of the report writing process, so users only have to input relevant numbers and names to complete their daily reports. And since the majority are mobile-optimized, updating them from a job site on a tablet or smart phone is a snap. If your company is new to daily reports, these tools are a great place to start. But if they don't provide the customization you or your stakeholders need, it's relatively easy to create your own templates using Microsoft Office or Google Drive, both of which are cloud-based and mobile-friendly.

There's no doubt that daily reports are a crucial tool to help you give your stakeholders with the true story of your construction project's journey from start to completion – and maximize profits. But if they're not kept daily, they will have been a waste of time for everyone involved. And while list provided here gives you a great jumping off point, you should always check with your stakeholders to make sure that the daily reports you're creating contain all the information *they* want to read. Then, once your project is completed, you should have a detailed story that ends happily — and profitably — for everyone involved.

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