Episode: 05
Tony Booth

THE
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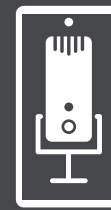
Mike Merrill:
Hello, and welcome to the Mobile Workforce Podcast. I'm your host Mike Merrill, and we're sitting down today with Tony Booth, a contractor coach, and the host of the Contracting Coach Cast Podcast. If you haven't checked out his podcasts in the past, you really should. Tony is full of a lot of wisdom, and a lot of practical tips for the construction industry. Welcome Tony, and we are so glad to have you here with us today.

Tony Booth:
Mike, I'm excited to be here with you as well. Thank you for inviting me on your show, and I look forward to having a great discussion today.

Mike Merrill:
Awesome. Well, thank you. So first of all, I am curious, tell me what drove you to become a coach?

Tony Booth:
well, through the years, I started in business as a small business. We had a family-owned business, worked in that small business, and we thought we knew what we were doing, and we were kind of doing our thing. Later in my career, that business closed down due to recession or succession problems, and I ended up working for one of the large businesses out there, for Skanska for a while. Getting into that environment and seeing the processes and procedures, and all the things they did differently, it just made me realize like, "Wow, what if I could have had this when I was running my small business? What if I had done just a small fraction of these things? How much stronger would that business have been?"

Tony Booth:
So, it made me want to like share that. So, as I was working there, I kept trying to help a lot of the subs that were on my projects, and I would teach them

a lot of the processes and procedures, and it really started to take on. I decided I really wanted to follow that path, to help small businesses learn some of those processes and procedures, and really be able to take their business to another level.

Mike Merrill:
Wow. Well, I admire that passion that you have. There's nothing like a good mentor/coach out there for sure. I know in my history, it was the same thing. I had good friends or other people in the industry, that we would always compare notes and share best practices. So, I've seen a lot of good can be done when we help others avoid the pitfalls that we go through.

Tony Booth:
Exactly, just sharing that knowledge. That's just not something that you see very often, especially on the small business side. They just feel strange about asking their competition or somebody in a different trade like how to handle certain things. So, that's what I want to be is that, I'm that person to help and guide people, and give them ideas on what steps they can take and do to make their business more successful.

Mike Merrill:
That's awesome. So, if you were to pick one thing, one main thing, what's that advice that you would give to most of these folks that you speak with? What's the most important thing that you would first have them fix?

Tony Booth:
The biggest thing is communication by far, and that's in construction in general. Really, if you look at the problems that we have on construction projects, in construction businesses, a large majority can be drilled back, you peel back the onion, you're going to find out somewhere along the line communication

failed. Whether it's from the design or the owner to the contractor, to the contractor to the supplier, whatever, you really dig it back in, a lot of it just comes down to communication failures.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. It sounds like you're describing, there's a wall between maybe the office management executives, where the decisions actually are made on paper, and then the people out in the field, they're making decisions, boots on the ground, there's a barrier or a wall there. How do we get rid of that, get over it around it?

Tony Booth:
Well, I look at it, again, a good analogy to think about for that lack of communication, and it is what happens a lot of times, if you think about it, the projects build originally during the estimate in the office, there's management that gets involved during contract negotiations, and they've got the whole job in their head, they know how to build it, they know what they want to do, and then they start the project, and none of that information transfers out to the field. You think about the thing nowadays with the DIY furniture you get, you get all this box, it's all flat, and you've got 19 different pieces in all kinds of nuts and bolts. Think about that thing coming without a set of instructions or two pictures, and basically, you've got to try to figure out how to put that together, right?

We do the same thing in construction way too often. Maybe not to the extreme of no directions or no instructions, but we give very limited instructions out to the field. That engineer that designed that piece of furniture, and that manufacturer, they know exactly how it should go together, and what piece goes first. But, if they don't give us that when we get it in our house, it will take us forever to figure it out. We do the same in construction, right? We've got a set of plans, we have an idea how we're going to build it in the office, and then we ship a crew out and tell them to start framing something or start installing countertops. But, nobody told them step by step. While these guys are seasoned professionals out in the field, we know that, it doesn't hurt for them to have good guidance to do their work.

Mike Merrill:
Oh wow. Sage advice. I'm thinking back to my days as a framer, and I remember so many times that, we would frame a wall normally the way that we would do it, and then, you turn one more page over on the blueprints, and there's a very specific nailing pattern, or something that you had to do different. Those things get missed often because people don't read the plans.

Tony Booth:
Right. The bad thing was, somebody in your organization probably saw that nailing pattern at some point, before he ever got out there to install that wall. The estimator already carried an extra couple man hours, because we knew we had to double the framing in that area and everything else, but it never made it to the field, and now, we're going back and adding stuff or changing stuff.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. So, we're back to that communication thing that you had mentioned earlier. So, how do we have better quality communication between the field and the office, to address those things, so they don't become a problem?

Tony Booth:
Well, it starts... To me, that's a whole cultural thing of the organization. One of the things I see a lot of people try to do is, they think they're going to fix it with some software. I am a full owing component of the best communication software, and platforms, and project management, but if you don't use those tools, what good are they? Like, somebody's got a Slack in their organization, but there's no communication going on in their Slack channels. It's like, what good is it? It's a great tool, but you have to use it.

So, it really starts in the management and leadership. It's got to start from the top down. The top leadership has to be good communicators, and they have to get that through. They also have to be ready to take it from the bottom up, get that feedback. I always try to tell all my listeners and my clients, we've got to go solicit feedback. As a leader, your job is to learn how to listen. That's just as important as guiding someone, is

understanding, is that communication going through right, and are we getting feedback?

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, that's great advice. I know I always say, the best leaders are actually also wonderful followers. We have to follow in order to lead. I love what you said about the communication from the field back to the office. I know in my experience and background, it was the same thing. I'm now a part of a software company for construction, so I see the other side of that now. I, like you said, I wish I could just rewind the tape and go back and apply all that I've learned here to my young fledgling construction company. Back to communication, what is the driving force? You mentioned that executives or management, ownership to be behind it. What's behind that?

Tony Booth:
It's really a shame, it's a shift in the mindset. For whatever reason, we've always felt like the people in the field don't need certain bits of information, and there's things they don't need to know. It's like the old... You used to see the things in the break room, like they treat me like a mushroom, right? Where they put you in a corner and just pile stuff on top of you. For some reason, that that has been the trends for years. It really is about shifting the mindset of your leadership. The buzzword going around for less 5 to 10 years has been servant leadership, but it really is that type of leadership. It's shifting that mindset in leadership.

A lot of times what we see in construction, and that old mindset is, we assign something as a manager, we forget about it, and then we expect it to happen, right? Like, if I'm a VP in an organization, and I've got a project, I'm going to assign it to my PM and say, "Okay, there you go," and then I forget about it. Maybe go see him once a month, and check in on the project. We never do... The three things I always try to enforce upon people is, number one, you have to outline expectations, which takes good communication. Don't just give them the project, outline the expectations of what you want people to do. Then as leaders, it's our job to support them along the way, give them the tools they need, and guide them when they get off course.

I always used to have a thing with all my guys that I ran and everything was, simplify the PM's role on a project, was to put the tools in the toolbox. Our thing was, we ran... A PM managed the paperwork and stuff like that, and we had a superintendent that was in charge of getting stuff done. I used to tell all my PMs, "Your number one priority is making sure that superintendent has the tools and information he needs to get the work done. Because, if we're not getting work done, it doesn't matter what we're doing. We're not making money. We're not making our clients happy. We're not doing anything if we're not putting our product together." So, it's that servant kind of way of looking at things and shift in that mindset, that really drives that whole communication.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. So, what I'm hearing is that production obviously, that's what this is all about. It's about actually getting something accomplished, not only correctly and on time, but at some point, you've just got to start framing the wall. You can't over plan, aim, aim, aim, aim, fire.

Tony Booth:
Right.

Mike Merrill:
Then on the other thing you mentioned, as far as communication goes, I really love how you framed the fact that there's almost got to be a plan to execute on the plan, so, kind of rules of engagement. It sounds like everybody needs to be aware of what that plan is on a regular basis. Then, my favorite part that you said is that, you basically check back in, and give that feedback loop, making sure you're still on course. I think of an airline pilot or somebody that's-

Tony Booth:
Right.

Mike Merrill:
We're descending underneath, we've got to have that trajectory planned appropriately in order to make sure the planes able to hit the runway.

Tony Booth:

Right. We've got to have those warning signals when things are getting out of… They start to go off. The only way to know that is good communication. If I've got several teams that are out building projects where, if I'm communicating with them, and we've got that dialogue, then we can start to see what's happening, and we can make those adjustments before we get too far off course. I totally agree with you. You can't sit and plan everything forever, right? To me, you've got to have a plan, but we know that the plan is going to change. But, at least we have a plan, we know where we're trying to get. Then, it's adjusting. It's the traditional plan, do, check, act. We've got to make our plan, and we go out, and that all requires good communication.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. Like you, I'm a proponent of software and systems. I manage those things. If you've got good systems and good software, you really can keep people on the same page all the time or daily, at least.

Tony Booth:

Right. The thing I like about using good collaboration tools and stuff, and we can talk in a little bit more detail about this later, but so many times people try to do things in big meetings, and I've never been a huge fan of too many meetings, when me as a project manager, I can have a discussion Monday morning with my superintendent, on all the tasks we expect to accomplish that week right. Now, I don't have to have it with everybody on the project. If I have good collaboration, software and tools, we're going to have that stuff.

The key point is, the superintendent and the key roles can have that discussion, and then it can filter down where it needs to be face to face. But, the rest of it can all be picked up. If I've got somebody in the main office that's worrying about materials, can then look in my system and see, "Oh, here's what they're doing this week." So, it saves a lot of… It makes a lot of savings in communication time, and wasted time of repeating messages over and over again, or getting too many people into a meeting to try to figure something out.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. Nobody likes to redo what they just did, so I think everybody benefits if we can avoid having to tear something apart that we just put together, and then to redo it, we're wasting materials, time, opportunity cost. The list goes on.

Tony Booth:

Absolutely.

Mike Merrill:

I love what you said about having software or something in place to communicate with. You'd mentioned at the top, communication's key to all of this. Well, I sure believe that's just critical. We've all played the old tin can phone game, where you go around the circle, and you get back to the beginning, and it's amazing what the message becomes one that's changed hands 10 times.

Tony Booth:

Absolutely. That's where having those systems, and using a good platform for communication solves all those, not all of those problems, but it solves a lot of them. It really eliminates… If I have a discussion or I have the comment to be made on a drawing, or a supplier, or anything like that, by having those tools, everybody sees it. Instead of me just saying to the superintendent, "Hey, the guys are laying that wall out. It looks like it's different from the recent drawing that we got, you better check it." Well, if I just say that to him in passing or her, and then they don't think to act on it right away, what can happen? It continues to get laid out wrong, it gets installed wrong.

Where, if you have the systems in place to streamline all that with a good platform, then guess what? Everybody's getting that notice. Everybody that's important knows, "Oh I can, with the good tools, we can earmark that person that's doing that layout. Hey, whatever you're doing, check this." Just way better ways. The technology nowadays just provides such great tools for us to communicate with. We just need to learn to use them better.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. I think along with that, it's almost where the field intentionally depends on those tools. It's not just somebody barking at them, "Hey, you forgot to check with it." They need to depend on it. I think there's good or better ways to make sure that that happens. In your experience, how have you been able to successfully direct companies to count on those tools and actually utilize them more properly when they're not?

Tony Booth:

It's really like we were talking about earlier. It's that making sure, checking in, supporting the teams. It takes a little time, it takes a little effort to get everybody to that. They're used to pulling out a set of paper drawings, now they're going to a collaboration software. So in the beginning, it takes a lot of... I tell people, sometimes you have to micromanage a little bit in the beginning as you're adapting something like this. Keep an eye on your teams and remind them, "Hey you sent that email the other day, but that email, that conversation should have been inside the platform." Or, "I know you called me about this the other day, but you didn't follow up inside the platform. You calling me doesn't let the whole team know. Make sure we record that back into the platform."

So, it takes a little micromanaging to get people used to it. But after they get used to it, what I've found with guys I work with, once they got used to those tools, and they realize they can communicate back as well, so now the guy in the field can ask questions and make comments back, like, "Hey, I thought we should do it this way." Then, they all start to see the benefit of it, and it becomes much more adapted by the entire organization.

Mike Merrill:

I think the operative word that as you were just sharing that, I hear, and the word collaboration just keeps ringing in my ears. It's that back and forth, that's active living, breathing. Our job sites are breathing organism. They're alive. They've got to keep moving to remain healthy. They've got to make sure that certain parts of them are going through a certain process that it's designed for, in order to be completed properly.

Tony Booth:

Right. The other great thing I like about having a good platform with all those tools in there for communication is, we're not interrupting people at our convenience. They're able to learn and pick up what they need to know at their convenience. So yeah, we've got... If a change comes in on a layout, but the guy doing the layout, he's working over on another side of the project today, but we're going to interrupt him in the middle of the day to tell him that what he's laying out a week, two days from now, has a change to it? It's important that he knows, but do we really want to interrupt him with a good platform like that? That change is noted in there, we're able to give the communication when it fits our time, and they're able to absorb the communication when it fits their time. So, it's not that interruptive disruption that often happens with traditional tools of communication.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. You've used the word platform a lot, which I love also, because to me that means it's a commonplace where multiple people can interact and share information. Paper is not a platform.

Tony Booth:

No.

Mike Merrill:

Excel, really isn't a platform either.

Tony Booth:

It's not. It's just a piece of paper that's been digitized. Same thing emails, it's just mail delivered a different way. There's nothing collaborative, there's no platform there. It's me sending something to you, you send something to me, not us collaborating on anything.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. How often do we get a read receipt or, "Oh, I see you read my..." But, that doesn't mean they understood it, digested it, acted on it.

Tony Booth:
Right. The traditional, back to that structure in an organization, think about what happens to that newer assistant PM or PM that's on your team now. He gets something in an email telling him to do something, he doesn't necessarily understand it, but he feels like, "Well, if I ask the question, am I going to look stupid?"

Mike Merrill:
Yeah.

Tony Booth:
So, when it's in email, you feel like you've got to be more strict in your communications, where if it's a nice platform, then it can be easier to talk back and forth. It just makes for a better way of communicating, because we feel like we're there together.

Mike Merrill:
Back to the paper and spreadsheet idea, I'm part of an organization, About Time Technologies, it's something that we do, also collect data digitally. I know often when I'm speaking, or doing webinars, or meeting with customers, something that comes to mind for me is, when we have tools, technology tools that are a platform where multiple people have access and visibility, you can manage data, not drama. So, there's nothing to talk about. I have the data in front of me, I already know, you already know, you can eliminate so many unnecessary cycles of back and forth.

Which to me, thinking back in construction, a lot of times we introduce hesitancy, even when we're completing our direction we're giving, we're injecting something that causes doubt or unsurity. Like you said, people might feel stupid by re-clarifying or confirming. So, sometimes we can over-communicate using ineffective tools.

Tony Booth:
Right, yeah, exactly. I often tell people that you can't over-push that limit. You'll probably never over-communicate, but you can, if you're not doing it effectively and you're not doing it the right way. I don't agree with micromanaging whatsoever. If I have to micromanage someone, if you have to micromanage

someone, then you're not getting that benefit of having someone there that can be productive. But, we have to with them, and instead of communicating directions, we communicate expectations, and then give our support and follow up.

That's how you build self sustaining teams. That's how you have crews that go out in the field, and the minute they hit a problem, they're coming right to you, "Hey, I've got this problem." Because, they feel like there's that open communication and the ability to communicate on things, not this feeling like, "Oh okay, you gave me this problem, and I guess it's my job to solve it." Like, "You couldn't help me here?" Kind of thing.

Mike Merrill:
So, I'm hearing an effective feedback loop, or a process that's established to communicate that.

Tony Booth:
Yeah, absolutely. As leaders, for everybody out there, whether you're the crew lead, whatever position you're at, when you have people that work for you, one of your first things to do is learn to listen. Learn to listen to their feedback, and be collaborative with that. I remember early on in my career, on a job when I was real young, and the superintendent's telling us to do things a certain way, and I'm asking, "Why couldn't we do this instead?" His immediate answer was, "Because I told you to do it the other way." That's not good collaboration, right?

Mike Merrill:
Right.

Tony Booth:
Maybe if you he'd have listened to me, I don't know if I had a good idea, I just remember him just shutting everybody down. My idea might've been stupid, but at the same time, it might've been good, and combined with his knowledge, we might've found a new way to increase productivity by 10% or 20%, or eliminate errors. The people in the field have a lot of knowledge that we don't tap well enough, in my opinion. We way too often think that they really don't understand, but

they do. The more we allow them to know what's going on, the better they understand.

Mike Merrill:
That's the other thing, and I've learned over the years, I wish I would've learned it earlier in my construction career, but those people with boots on the ground with the hammer or whatever tool, operating the backhoe, they are running your business.

Tony Booth:
Absolutely. They are your business. They are the ones... It doesn't matter how good you are back in the office, or how good you are going to meet your client, it's those frontline people that are making a difference in your business. Without them, we don't get anything done.

Mike Merrill:
Well, it's like in sales, we say nothing happens till somebody sells something. Well in construction, it's the same. Till somebody builds something, there's no money.

Tony Booth:
There's nothing.

Mike Merrill:
It's just an expense, right?

Tony Booth:
Uh-huh (affirmative). No, exactly.

Mike Merrill:
There's a few things that you talked about there that I really liked, on the communication side. What processes or tools or methods have you seen be effective for communicating from the field to the office?

Tony Booth:
The most effective thing that I've taught a lot of people to do, I call them drop-ins. It comes from an old book I read years ago, Management By Walking Around. It's really about, as a leader manager, and even crew leads, this applies to anybody, if you have people that you're directing their performance and their work, we've got to walk around, and we've got to be out there and see how they're doing. We've got to drop in and just talk to them. Not drop in and give directions, but sit, spend five minutes with your laborer that you've got assigned to clean out the job site. It's Friday afternoon, we want to get the job site clean, so you've got a laborer, he's out there doing that. Stop in and see him. Stop by. Just drop by, talk to him a little bit, "How's it going?"

He might say, "Hey, it's going great. But if I had a wheelbarrow that I could carry with me, I could get this done in half the time. You never know what you find out." Or, they might tell you something about what their perception is of the business, or something that they've overheard. That's how we get good feedback. So, as a manager leader, sometimes we've got to take that production blindfolds off, the blinders that get us focused on why is he not working hard enough, or why is she not doing this right? Sometimes we've got to take those off and just be human, and speak to our people, and just open up for feedback.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. I love that. I think that's great advice for anybody running a business, not just construction. In our software business, same thing. It's a boots on the ground. I think too, to your point, if that's the exception or that's weird, that, "What's he doing on the job site?" And everybody puckers and it's nervous, that's not good either, right?

Tony Booth:
Exactly. I've had to have that conversation with many of my clients when we talk about it. They're like, "Oh well, when I show up on the job, the guys seem to scatter and go to work, and everything seems to go a certain way. It's like they feel awkward talking to me." I said, "Yeah, that's a key indicator that you have a communication problem in your organization. If those people don't feel like they can come talk to you about

anything, then you're not getting all the information you should be getting."

Mike Merrill:
So, I'm hearing the culture aspect of things is important, not just the right technology tools, not just a platform, not just communication in terms of digital or software systems, but just being a person and being present.

Tony Booth:
Yeah. Having a little empathy. It all comes around that idea of servant leadership. I always look at... I've always looked at my employees a little differently in that, they choose to give me eight hours a day. It's not that I choose to give them a position or a paycheck. There's thousands of other companies they could go to work for. They choose to come work at mine. So, it's my job to be grateful for that and help them.

Mike Merrill:
You're advocating to empower them, like I said earlier, to be partners or owners in that business, take ownership quite literally.

Tony Booth:
Yep, yeah definitely. When it's done right, you get that. People buy into your whole organization, and they're part of it. They want to see the success. But, that takes sharing information, and really letting them understand what's going on and what's expected of them. Why do we do what we do? Why is it important that, when we write that email to the client, we follow certain guidelines? Why is it important when we turned an invoice in that it's done a certain way? All those things have meaning to the leaders. But, if we don't tell everybody in the field why it's important to us, then they don't know why they should be doing it.

Mike Merrill:
So, it also sounds like there's a lot of nonverbal communication that impacts how these projects run, the way we behave and handle ourselves, interact.

Tony Booth:
Absolutely. You think, with the people that are on the projects, with the people that are going by the projects, the clients, the suppliers, they all pick up on our cues of how we manage our project, and how we communicate. The better we do that, the better people are going to want to work with us, work for us, be a part of our projects.

Mike Merrill:
Well, and what I've seen too is, again, businesses that we work with every day, when they're using technology tools that are accurate and instill confidence, it's not just in their management, but if I'm billing somebody that I'm doing subcontract work for, using an automated real-time tool that is accurate and verifiable, and you can have competence in, they're going to be trained and grown to understand that that's how you run a tight ship, and you're tracking your money just like you're tracking their money, and they're going to work with you that more readily without quite the arguments that contractors like to get in sometimes over.

Tony Booth:
Absolutely. No, that is a great point because, that is something that just really extends all the way through the job site. When that trade contractor knows that you run a tight ship, he's going to be explaining that, or she's going to be explaining that to her people, like, "Hey, this is important to them, this is how we work for them." But, they also like that too. Who doesn't want that? Nice, calm, good communication, good flow on a project, we all love to work on those.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. I think when I think back too, not just when I ran my construction company, but again today and everybody that we interact with, 99% plus of people out there, they really do want to do a good job. I think it's the exception completely that somebody really doesn't care.

Tony Booth:
I totally agree. I totally agree. To me, I've always felt it's a rare exception, and I've always looked at it... Again,

another little way I always looked at my people was, if they're not performing up to par, then it's probably something I haven't done well enough yet. I'm going to give them the initial benefit of the doubt, and I'm going to pay a little more attention and work with them. Now you're right. There's that 0.1, or that 1% out there that's maybe not improving. Maybe they're not a fit for your organization, but don't immediately wipe them out, write them off, because they're not living up to maybe expectations we didn't communicate well enough with them.

Mike Merrill:
Well, I think too, peer pressure works all kinds of different ways. There's negative peer pressure and then there's positive peer pressure. I saw this. I worked on crews or I worked with people that were very hard, diligent workers, and then I worked with other people that they were happy to go down and sweep out the bosses shop, and do busy work, because they didn't like getting in and working hard necessarily all the time.

Tony Booth:
That's right.

Mike Merrill:
So, that culture of wanting to work hard, wanting to be diligent, wanting to do a good job, is also I think it's pervasive where, you can elevate the level of the whole crew by just having that kind of culture from your leadership in the field.

Tony Booth:
Absolutely. Totally agree.

Mike Merrill:
So again, you've been at this for a long time. I actually listened to a few of your podcast episodes. You've got over 1600 of them, so wow. How has that changed your perspective over the course of years that you've been doing this? What's different for you today than maybe when you start?

Tony Booth:
I would say, I'm more excited about where things can go, because the more I've spent time learning more about construction, learning more about leadership, about people, because I can't be a good coach if I'm not a good study. So, the more I've learned that, and the more advancements I've made myself, I guess I'm much more optimistic about abilities to change, about the future, and know that we really can make a difference in construction, and it really can move forward. As much as people sometimes think it's stuck in the stone age, I totally disagree. It's definitely shifting a lot, and going to shift a lot more.

Mike Merrill:
Like you, I'm very excited about the tools that we have today. I'm sure you remember like I do, before cell phones existed in construction, and that was a whole different animal than what we-

Tony Booth:
Oh yeah.

Mike Merrill:
Having said that, as I think back and as we wrap up a little bit here, if you've got some sort of hack or superpower or something that you've really been able to develop over this history of yours, what is your secret sauce, if you have one?

Tony Booth:
I would sum it up as focus management and batching. I learned this years ago as a project manager, and I didn't realize how well I had done it until a new superintendent came on a project with me, and about three months into the project, he's like, "How are you able to do everything you're supposed to do, when every other project manager I work for in this company, has to spend 12, 14 hours a day?" I was like, "I don't need that much time." But what I do, I focused and learned to block out interruptions. I plan out my day, I set blocks of time out. If I'm working on invoicing, nobody else is coming in to the office, and I'm not answering phones for that hour to two hours that I've got to get the invoicing done.

If I'm writing an RFI, I'm not stopping in the middle to do those things. It took a while to teach everybody on the organization that this is how it worked, but I got it to where, if somebody in the field had a question, they knew to come in. If my door was shut, they would leave a post it note on the door, "Come see me when you're done." Or if my door was open, they might poke in, if I was busy, I'd say, "Oh," and they go, "Okay, come find me."

So, I would take blocks of time, focus on tasks, then take the other time to go have that communication and that dialogue. So, that's where to me, technology and platforms help with all that too, because now I can have that system to organize everything. Because, it's organizing your focus, I think matters the most, as far as getting your productivity done.

Then the other thing I do is, a lot of communication. I used to have what I always called the little mini-talks. Basically every day, there was a different topic that I would discuss with my superintendent, so that we weren't wasting each other's time for an hour going through everything on the project. It was like, "Okay, I'm going to go see the superintendent. We're going to talk about this week's tasks. That's it. I don't want to hear about changes. I don't want to... Let's just talk about what we've got going on." We could spend five minutes, get a lot of communication done, and then go back to doing our thing. So, it's really about managing that focus. You do that right, plan ahead, avoid putting out fires and all those things.

Mike Merrill:
I love that great advice. So, what I'm hearing is the coach calls a huddle, right?

Tony Booth:
Yeah, absolutely. That's a great way to put it, a huddle. Those are the things I always like to do, is little huddles. We don't need the entire team. That's perfect. You don't need the entire team. You need the people that are about to execute the play. That's all you need. Two-minute, five-minute huddle, boom. Off we go.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah. The past, the past downs don't matter. You've got the next one you've got to focus on. So, it's better to be up moving forward, up the field, on your projects and all of that.

Tony Booth:
No, that's a great way. I'm going to steal that one from you.

Mike Merrill:
No problem.

Tony Booth:
I'm going to start using the huddle for that. Thank you.

Mike Merrill:
Free of charge, no problem. Well, thank you so much, Tony, for spending a little time with us today. This was very enjoyable. I sincerely enjoyed having you on, and look forward to, maybe we can do this again down the road.

Tony Booth:
Absolutely. I'd love to. Thank you for having me on as well. It was a great conversation. I enjoyed it, and definitely ready to do it again.

Mike Merrill:
Sounds good. Well, thank you all. Again, if you liked this conversation today, and were able to learn anything new, or pick up some helpful tips or hands, please follow us on Instagram, @workmax underscore, and subscribe to the show on iTunes or your preferred podcast platform, and then you'll never miss any of those insightful episodes. Also, please give us a rating and review. Five star reviews will help us to continue to provide this, and help you to improve your business, and in turn your life.