Episode: 118

Jason Schroeder

THE MOBILE WORKFORCE PODCAST

Mike Merrill:
Hello and welcome back to the mobile workforce. Podcast. I'm your host, Mike Merrill, and today we are sitting down with my good friend Jason Schroeder, who is the owner at Elevate Construction, who provides training and consulting services for construction and the industry, as well as social media, content, coaching, and some other pretty remarkable in person training. So today we're going to talk about collaboration and the overall science behind productivity and how to use a proper baseline that will help you to compare results from a business perspective in order to make your teams more productive. So thanks again, Jason, for joining us. Looking forward to our conversation today.

Jason Schroeder:
Wonderful. Thank you for having me. Let's do this. I'm ready.

Mike Merrill:
Sounds good. All right, well, let's get started right here off the top. The term productivity is a pretty common buzzword that we hear in the industry a lot. And, uh, it is defined lots of different ways depending on how people are using it, maybe loosely. Um, but from your perspective, how would you define the word productivity?

Jason Schroeder:
Well, the first step in my mind is I've learned to not associate with busyness. And I think in our industry, we really have leaned towards the, hey, are we busy? Are we working? Are we doing something? Instead of are we doing something the right way? Or are we doing something, uh, or doing the right things, basically. So, like, uh, for instance, for me, is the typical in construction, hey, there's an open area. Why aren't there people over here working? And that's just busyness, right? That's not productivity. That doesn't mean that we're making money or doing things well. But if we have good flow through a construction project and we have the right crew size and we're doing things according to good productivity rates, then we're making good productivity or we're making good production. So I think the distinction between business and productivity would be where I would definitely start. And, uh, I just think that we have it way wrong, especially superintendents. And I get to say that because I was a superintendent, especially superintendent on construction, if somebody said we want to speed up or where the project is behind, they would say, well, let's throw more manpower and materials at the problem. Let's throw money at the problem. And that's actually probably one of the worst things you could do. So hopefully that answers the question. But that's my perspective.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, it does. That that's a great response. Uh, love the thought. Let's not confuse being busy with being productive. So why do you think it's so hard for companies and individuals sometimes to really pin down what actual productivity is?

Jason Schroeder:
Well, it's interesting that you say that, because, uh, your statement could not be more accurate, because people will talk about production over and over and over, but they don't know. And I never knew. So I'm not saying that I was any better than anybody else, but nobody really knows. What that word means. We have to grab some concepts from manufacturing in order to really understand that. So you'll hear in my books and podcasts and the people that I associate with, people like Adam Hoots or how makeover people in the industry where there's a book called this is Lean by Nicholas, uh, Modik, and, uh, they talk about production laws. And these production laws, you could call them, at minimum, a good rule of thumb. At the most, you could say they're a law. Just like gravity. The law of gravity. Right. And these are little's law, the law

of variation, the law of bottlenecks, and Kingman's Formula. And I can summarize all four of them for us right now. From manufacturing, we learn that we'll go faster and be more productive. The smaller our batch sizes are, the more we level work, the more we actually finish as we go, the less variation we have. Um, and then the more we look for an optimized bottleneck. And the fourth one is when we consider that a task really doesn't just take that time. It takes that time plus whatever variation the crew experiences or how productive they are. So those four production laws, little's law, the law of bottlenecks, the law of variation in Kingman's Formula, are laws that manufacturing, like car manufacturing, uses every day to increase productivity. And they're on the way up. And in construction, we don't use those laws. We don't obey those laws. And so our productivity is going down. And I think that's the biggest misconception is that we're guessing instead of using math and science.

Mike Merrill:

Wow. Yeah, that's a great response. It is very interesting that you bring up those laws, because for me, personally, being a contractor by trade, uh, it's really the only industry that I've known and worked in as an adult. And so I've heard these terms likely before, but I don't know that our audience would be super familiar with them, or they're probably like me in the same boat. So I appreciate you bringing those up to us today and also the comparison for us to really consider and, uh, think about the actual science behind those things.

Jason Schroeder:

I love it. I hope that was clear. I know that that's kind of a high level description, but just in summary, if we bite off too much work, we're going to go slower. If we have a variation of how much work we have, it's not leveled, we're going to go slower. If we keep starting things and never finishing, we're going to go slower. If we keep changing things, we're going to go slower. If we have one or two things that aren't going well that we haven't optimized in a string of other activities, we're going to go slower. Right. And, uh, if we're overconfident on how long a task takes and we don't enter into the realm of reality with that, then we're going to go slower. So, um, that's a neat little summary. Uh, the other thing that I would say about productivity is that people don't typically take into consideration what I call labor productivity, which is that, um, overtime only works for about two to six weeks until you start to exponentially lose production. When you have large crews, uh, you lose production. You lose productivity because, uh, of the complexity of communication. You lose productivity with larger crews because you have them doing different tasks and they have context switching. You, uh, lose productivity because it takes time to onboard new workers. So usually when somebody says, hey, I'm just going to go bring more people or add more people to the crew, that's actually going to slow us down for quite some time. It will take a minimum of seven days to onboard a new employee. So when a general contractor says, oh, bring more crews, more people, more bring more materials, more and more and more, um, we're literally just trying to put out a fire with $100 bills. I mean, that's how much money we're wasting. So keeping that work consistent, having a really well trained, consistent crew keeps that labor productivity part of the equation steady to where we, uh, can really make good money. If you think about great trade partners or great subcontractors, um, they're cross trained, but they do really specialized work over and over and over, and it allows them to get really good at it and to run that play using a football analogy, to run that play over and over and to perfect it and really make it productive.

Mike Merrill:

Wow, now you're speaking my language when you talk about labor productivity. So that is something that makes a lot of sense and is a language that I'm used to speaking, of course. And uh, it makes me wonder with the listeners here, what is going to perk their ears or their understanding as it relates to establishing those benchmarks and that baseline? Where do they work from to start to measure what is actual true productivity? Um, and then, of course, how do we find the sweet spot so that day in, day out, month in, month out, we're actually finding ourselves being productive?

Jason Schroeder:

Well, I do have an answer to that. This isn't an exact, uh, science, meaning you can't just go to Rs memes or some database or somewhere and say, hey, these are my production rates. But, uh, there is a scheduling system called tax planning which breaks buildings up by area and by crew. And it's interesting

in construction, if I said, what are the different types of flow that we have on a construction project? People might give different answers. But they would most of the time say, well, it's the workflow, it's the flow of the work. The other thing that I would say, it's interesting, uh, and we, uh, would have to email back and forth the studies on this, but I'll give you the high level. The bottom 25% of workers, meaning the bottom 25% of workers, when it comes to productivity, are actually more productive than our bid units. So if you're an HVAC contractor, or a concrete contractor, or an electrician, you can take the bottom 25% of your workers, average out their productivity, and it will be better than what we currently bid. So then why do we still lose money? It's all of the in between. And if you then take the top 25% of workers, they're four times more productive than the bottom 25% of workers. So why are we losing money? It's not when they're working. It's all of the in between. So when a foreman comes on a project site as a crew and they're like, oh, I hit a roadblock, I'm done. Pause, I'm going back to my trailer. That's not when we needed that foreman. We didn't need the foreman when the work started and the work stopped. We needed the foreman to prevent the interruptions in the first place. So the baseline is, uh, two things. Number one, can I get continuous work without starts and stops without roadblocks? Number two, if we can do that, how long does the first representative area on that project take? And you can usually do better from there.

Mike Merrill:
Wow.

Jason Schroeder:
All right.

Mike Merrill:
Lots of other great information there. So really, if we boil this down, first of all, what does a contractor really need to focus on to get this rolling? Like, if we use example of a play, uh, a dress rehearsal or opening night, how are we going to get this thing going and really get a dry run in there so that the company actually has established parameters that make sense. And they can really start measuring those things more accurately. Because when I look back on projects that I've seen and I have been a part of in the past, I've wondered how do I really determine what that baseline is and how I'm measuring results? Um, how do I know what the very best place is to be and how can I start measuring from metrics like that that are actually going to be meaningful and add to the bottom line, which is the goal, I think, of every contractor?

Jason Schroeder:
Uh, well, I can answer that. So a lot of times we have projects where there's not a lot of repetition, but I would say about 80% of projects have repetition. Meaning if you're on level two, you're probably going to have four zones on that level two, right? Or you might have more, but you'll have work that you can break up into different areas. And understanding how long it takes you to do that amount of work density in an area, um, will really help out. The analogy that I like is, have you ever seen a professional football team win the Super Bowl? Uh, by running all brand new plays? That football team, it's like every play that we ever run is brand new. Are they going to make it to the Super Bowl? The answer is no. The answer is no. And so what we have to do is take our work, like, uh, if we're an electrician, every service entry section that I go do, I'm going to track per the work density, or how much work is in that room, how long with how many people did it take me to do this. Or if I'm pulling feeders vertically up the building, how many linear feeder, how many floors can I pull, or how much conduit can I run with? How many people per segment? Or if I'm building an electrical room on each floor, how long does it take me to build to fit that out with equipment and to pull the feeders and to land and terminate the cables into those panels per room? M for the amount of people that I have. And I'm constantly going to be aware if I care about my schedule and my productivity, how long should this take? Now, here's the brilliant part. Um, if I constantly am doing that, yes, there will be one offs. Okay, I have to go hook up this lighter, this new lightning protection system that I've never done before. But most of the time in construction, like, every building is going to have an HVAC system. Every building is going to have electrical rooms. Every building is going to have column rooms. Every building is going to have, uh, duct. We're not doing rocket science here. We have a lot of repetitive tasks. So if we break those up and we get really good production rates that are not random, but literally, I can say with a three

person crew, I can pull 150 linear feet of whatever, and I really get used to my production rates, then that gives me a target. And the reason that a target is brilliant and this isn't new to anybody. Everyone's like, oh, yeah, this is talking about production rates, but nobody really tracks it. Um, civil contractors track it. Um, uh, they say, hey, I can put in 150 linear feet of force main in every day, right? They're really good at it because they do one thing over and over. Or a concrete crew can say, I can place 15,000 square foot of concrete every seven days, or something like that. But a lot of times, our overhead mechanical systems, our electrical systems, uh, the drywall, the framing, all of these things are so chopped up that we just kind of give up and we don't find those production rates. But if we do and we get those targets and we don't hit those targets, that helps us as humans to find what is the gap. Here's where I should have been, here's where I am. What's the gap? We're going to, in that gap, find a number of problems. Most of the time, these are the eight waste that people talk about and lean, right? We're over producing. We have excess inventory, motion, transportation defects, over processing, uh, weighting these waste. If we can actually get crews to find out what is non value add work and reduce that, we can increase production. And let me say a couple more things. Uh, if we can find out which of these labor productivity principles am I going against? Did I add new people? Am I working overtime? Did I change the leader? Did I change the crew composition? Am I having them change tasks too much? Is it hard to communicate? Do I have two larger batch areas? Do I have an uneven amount of work? Am I failing to finish as I go? Do I have a lot of variation? Right? Do I have a bottleneck activity in here that I haven't properly dealt with? That's when once we have a target, we know where we are, we can close the gap by then identifying what's going wrong. And that's when we'll achieve greater productivity.

Mike Merrill:

Okay, yeah, I think you really encapsulated the thought there. Uh, and I think, um, essentially what you're saying is we want to avoid collisions and also not having those start and stop events that actually really disrupt the progress of the project. Um, one of the things that it makes me think of especially, is as a trade contractor, you have got other subcontractors that you don't have control over. I mean, everybody's running their own show, so to speak. So how does that collaboration work within the project with multiple teams from different companies and then also software products and solutions that they're using to manage those processes, as well as other things that collaboration really has an impact on? And how do we leverage those things appropriately as multiple teams on multiple systems in order to make sure that we are as a whole remaining productive on those projects?

Jason Schroeder:

Well, it's huge. And I'll put two plugs in here. So most people in construction have heard of the last planner system, have heard of collaboration, have heard of things like pull planning, uh, huddles, things like that. I would say that if we have a good master schedule or a tax plan that puts everything on a rhythm, that is the kind of schedule that I, as a trade partner, as a specialty trade or subcontractor. That's the only type. If I right now owned a mechanical business or I was an electrician or I was a framer, I wouldn't sign up for any schedules that weren't location based, meaning Area A, Area B, Area C, Area D and didn't schedule me throughout the project going from area to area in a flow. I wouldn't sign up for that because most construction schedules, it starts out really nice and then at the end it's vertical. And they expect us to be on eight floors at different times. And it's just absolutely ridiculous. All they're doing is throwing money away and we're hurting trade partners. So first of all, uh, collaboration comes in preconstruction with the plan and we have to have that crew flow, we have to have that trade flow. The second thing is, um, 100%, the foreman or what they call the last planners have to be involved with identifying, ah, seeing and removing roadblocks ahead of time and coordinating and collaborating on their work and making real commitments. So I would say that a project will fail if they don't plan with flow in the beginning. And then a project will fail if they don't get the buy in with the trade partners on site as they're doing their work. And a project will really fail if those foreman and last planners don't see and remove roadblocks ahead of time to clear the way for the work. Uh, that's really what happens. Most of the money, like in construction, we lose money from estimating, estimating bus, loss of productivity, uh, rework and schedule slip. So let me just say those four again, we lose money from estimating bus, we lose it from productivity loss, we lose it from rework and schedule slip. All four of those

come from good preplanning and the removal of roadblocks so that we can go do our work in an even manner. Very rarely do we have a problem where a crew is left alone and can do their work and there's nothing in their way and we lose money. Very rarely could you imagine an electrical crew, uh, doing work and they have the whole building to themselves or the whole floor or whatever. They wouldn't lose money. It's just not heard of. And so we don't have project sites where they have the whole building to themselves or their whole floor. So what is the key? It's that collaboration that you're talking about. It's those interfaces. It's making sure that we don't have the overlaps, the trade stacking, the being in each other's way, so that even though other people are working around us in that building, we can still work in a continuous flow, literally. And I'm not saying anything that's new that your listeners won't, uh, resonate with. Everything comes down to flow. When you think about Toyota, BMW plant, when you think about these lean companies, everything comes down to flow. Can we get the work to the customer in the shortest possible time with the highest level of quality at the lowest possible total cost? And that's really what we're looking at. And so we will extend the time and reduce the quality and increase the cost when we have roadblocks and when we don't have a plan and when we don't collaborate.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, I'm really enjoying you delve into this topic and find it super fascinating. I think, uh, even if folks are listening to this conversation and feverishly taking notes and trying to understand and dig into what it is that you're talking about specifically. I think one of the things they should keep in mind is where the wills actually fall off in most of these scenarios is in the training side or the culture of how companies receive this type of new information. So how do we get a foreman or a site superintendent to actually buy off on things like this? And then also, how do we follow up with them to make sure that they're adhering to these things and that the crews are actually plugging into them and promoting them as opposed to being resistant to them and avoiding them.

Jason Schroeder:

Well, that is so that's really, uh, interesting. That's what our business does primarily is training. So we have a little bit of experience with that. It usually comes. So first of all, we have to quadruple the amount of training that we do. We really just kind of as an industry, just gave up on training people. I mean, I remember back in 2001, two and three, um, I used to have to go through six weeks of training every year, minimum. You know, uh, I mean, just as an early on field engineer, I know some companies that will have you go through two to four weeks of onboarding just before you went out to work. And we've lost that. We've lost that culture. And we're just so busy and doing such big jobs that people have just lost focus with that. And so we have to quadruple the training. The other thing is we have to start training at people in a non stupid manner. If you pull somebody into a room with a PowerPoint, all you're going to do is piss them off and bore the hell out of. People want hands on, active, engaging training and they usually want it in three different forms ongoing training, coaching, and then these Immersive events where they can make massive change really quickly. So, events, coaching, ongoing training. And it's usually a pairing of those three that we have to do, uh, I would say, for anybody listening, if they're well, Jason, I like the concepts that you talked about. You need to pick up. Uh, I'll be very specific about this. Um, the book, Tact Planning and Integrated Control will tell you about the master scheduling system. There's a book called The Lean Builder, which will tell you about the short interval scheduling. And, uh, that's written by a great group of folks. Ah, and it will help you really get down to that fundamental production level implementation, uh, on your project site. And there's a number of other books, but those two learn about tax planning and learn about the Last Planner system. There's another one, uh, for construction companies, it's a scheduling system called Scrum. It's an agile system that's scrumm. And there's a book called Scrum the Art of Doing Twice the Work in half the time. And then there's one by Felipe engineer that's called construction scrum. So if you know Tact Last Planner and Scrum, you're really going to do well, uh, from a scheduling standpoint. And if you really want to learn about production and how to implement things on a production level and increase flow, there's a book

called this is Lean, and that's by Nicholas MotoG and Parole. And that's just a fantastic read. So hopefully that helps.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, that's actually very informative. I know even in our business within the software industry, I'm very familiar with the term Scrum and what that means there. But I think it's interesting that you're using that in this analogy here. Um, I've never heard of it from a construction perspective and application standpoint. So that's pretty fascinating as well, you.

Jason Schroeder:
Know, it is, because if you go to BMW or Toyota, those manufacturing, uh, companies are not based on pull. It's not, hey, I get done, I pull somebody behind me. They're actually based on attack time, which means that they have a rhythm. They do a certain amount of work on a rhythm. It's like a drumbeat. And then when a car comes to an area and they want to pull a motor into it, that's a pull system. They pull from that inventory into the line, and then when the inventory of motors gets low, they'll replace it. So you have tack time and you have pull. And so the pull system is based on a normal Kanban system. But in Scrum, I'm saying the normal beat of the project has to be by location on a certain tack time. And then we pull everything else into it. Information, manpower, uh, materials, everything based on Scrum systems, where we can bring in those resources just at the right time, according to pull systems. And so the main scheduling system, like I said, is tacked and tacked time. And then we pull in the resources using systems like Glass Planner and Scrum.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, I'm hearing you there. That makes total sense. Uh, I'm recognizing also that there has to be other software tools or processes that will help get this type of data and information to the right people in the right hands in a timely manner, and allow everybody to be able to work from the exact same source of truth. So what would be your recommendation to have as far as tool sets to do this more effectively?

Jason Schroeder:
If you're talking about, well, uh, I'll tell you, in construction for general contractors, I'll tell you, most of the problem that we get into is when we use programs like P Six, Asta, um, or Microsoft Project, those tools are not designed to help us. Those tools are designed in a way that it actually hurts us from a production standpoint. So that's the first thing that I would keep in mind. Um, this might sound silly, but, uh, programs like Excel, tacting, T, uh, Modi Site Map, and one day, I think intact, there are softwares that do the Tact time based planning, and then there are other softwares out there that really align, ah, the last planner system and allow you to do full planning with it. I've used a number of them. I think they have a long way to come before I can officially recommend some and then scrum there's a number of software as well, uh, but it can be just as simple as using a visual board like Mural or Mural, um, or using stickies on the wall. Some people don't like it, some people do like it. The bottom line is, whatever. Um, I feel like technology should really do things that humans shouldn't do so that humans can do the things that they should do. And humans should do what you are saying, which is collaborate. And so what software should do is do mathematical calculations, uh, database management, information management, things like that. And so my only caution would be among the number of software out there that would really help general contractors and trade partners. Just thoroughly test it out and only use it once, you know, that it's worthwhile. Because most of the time, right now, at least right now, maybe not in the future, construction technology, chosen wrongly, will hurt construction companies and slow them down because it wasn't tailored to their application. So I hope that helps.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, that actually sounds like good advice. So let me ask you this then. Um, what are some of the key aspects that companies need to really watch out for or make sure that they have in place in order to ensure that they have the right solution and they don't make that misstep within their technology?

Jason Schroeder:
Stack that's a great one. It's not about having enterprise solutions. It's not about how wonderful it

looks. It's not about the salesperson. It's not about whether. Or not. We own stock in the company. And it's not about, uh, whether or not the software design fits within the company systems. It's literally these three things. Is the application, um, addictive useful and relevant to the people in the field? Can the people in the field get addicted to it? To where they want to use it? Just like Facebook on their phone? Is it fast enough to do what they need to do so there's less friction? And is it relevant? Meaning does it actually add value to what they do? That's it. So selecting a software, uh, for a specific task in construction is a lot more like trying to scale your social media account on Facebook than it is like designing a software. Let me say that again. Construction technology is a lot more like scaling your social media account than it is the designing a software platform. I have literally seen project management software get designed and scaled and it's like, wow, it does this and it hosts your drawings and it has a quality checklist, and it does your safety reporting. And then you go look at it and the safety reporting, you only get to the end form after 23 button clicks. There's no way in at hockey sticks that any foreman is going to make 23 button clicks on a stinking phone or an iPad or a computer to log in as safety, uh, observation. You've got one or two max. Can I pull up this on the phone? Can I snap a picture and then voice detects a description? That's it. You got two button clicks. And that software better be just, uh, addictive useful and relevant, and with as little friction as possible, so that they can capture that data in the field and make it useful for people that are already too busy.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, that's interesting, actually. That many button clicks or too many button clicks could actually be physically unsafe at that point. Yeah.

Jason Schroeder:

Literally, you stop and you're like, oh, I'll do a safety observation and I'll be here for literally seven minutes. Three to seven minutes, and I can't see through my glasses and I got to take my gloves off. Meanwhile, there's a project out there that needs to be, uh, observed and overseen. It's just ridiculous. It's very disappointing.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. Interesting. It's like you have boiled all these things down to some very simple things that seem rather practical. And if you took your CIO or your CFO, or your It administrator with construction company hat off and just be a normal person for a minute and think through it logically. Okay, does this meet your criteria? And if so, then I think you're right. I, um, think in that case, you have a way better chance of finding success and accomplishing your goals. Uh, as opposed to just having the fanciest wiz bang software out there that actually nobody ends up using.

Jason Schroeder:

Yeah, I agree. Um, because most process improvement managers and people that have the title, they like to work in Silos and they don't know how to scale through people. Literally, that's like the two things that you have to do. You need to be able to work with people and scale through people. So if I was going to hire a CTO or somebody who is helping us with technology or process or implementation, I'd first look at their social media accounts. Are they able to create content training or systems that people will actually consume? Do they get the likes? Do they get the views? Do they get the engagement? And if they don't, how in the world are they going to get the likes, the views, and the engagement for a training app or a project management application or for a training video that we're doing on the company? The answer is we won't. We're no better than college professors at this point that write a book frozen in time without any collaboration or input that you're forced to buy because you're a part of that class. Uh, I want more Wikipedias than I want college books. Let me say that one more time. Like Wikipedia. Anybody can come on and add to it, right? They have a review system. If you want to know something, do you go down to the library, to your local university or library and go find a book and search your pages? Or do you bring up Google or Wikipedia? The answer is obvious. You bring up Google or you bring up Wikipedia. So our systems need to be as seamless and frictionless as that every time we create these fancy databases and these boring videos and these boring trainings, and I'm going to create this boring operations manual. We're more like professors writing books than we are like Wikipedia, right?

Mike Merrill:
Oh, I love that. Well, I think your point is well taken there. You've definitely made a believer out of me. Um, so what do you think? If you were going to summarize all this great stuff from our discussion today and wanted to give the listeners with one final takeaway, what exactly would you encourage them to do?

Jason Schroeder:
I can say that in a couple of short sentences that we have become so focused on having that we've lost track of becoming. And I got that from it was in a movie with Morgan Freeman called Lucy. And I picked that movie. I picked that movie quote up and I just loved it. We as human beings, and especially in construction, have focused so much on having and we've lost track of becoming. We used to become things. We used to actually learn our trades. We used to actually do training. We used to actually progress through the ranks. We used to actually enjoy getting better and better and mastering the trade. I remember back in the day, my dad was a truck driver, and he would drive ready mix trucks and somebody could say, oh, he's just a truck driver, but he was the best truck driver ever. He was always washing it, always helping the customers, always improving things, always finding little better ways of doing things. And I think nowadays we've come up with this concept of life should be easy, it should be comfortable, there should be no friction. Um, technology will do most of what I need to do. If I get a college education, I've basically earned my way. And oh, by the way, the industry, uh, I've got them by the you know what because they need me so I can charge whatever I want and then hop from company to company. We've started to focus so much on the benefits and the packages and the perks and the salaries and the comfort and the technology that we've lost track of the fact that there's human beings behind these positions, and that we are human beings behind these positions, and we're eternal beings. And that here's a surprise. Whether somebody is an atheist and agnostic or religious, there's no way in hell after this life that we're going to be sitting on a cloud somewhere, drinking my ties and being happy. There's no way human beings are going to be stagnant and be happy. If you want to be happy in this life and in eternity, you'll be working, serving, progressing, learning, advancing, uh, solving problems, being with other people, all of those things. That's what makes for real happiness. If anybody doesn't believe me, then they should go on a Hawaii vacation longer than two weeks and they'll be so damn depressed that they'll be just itching to come back. I don't care how much money you give somebody, if they don't start doing something or progressing or learning or serving with it, they're going to be miserable. They're going to be depressed, and eventually they're going to probably hurt themselves. And so that's the main point, is that people coming into construction and people that lead people coming into construction, it's all about training, it's all about development. It's all about progressing. It's all about getting better. It's all about increasing that productivity like you're talking about. It's not about all the technology will do it. Oh, they'll do it. It doesn't matter anyway. I'll get a job anywhere. I can hop from company to company asking for an unreasonable salary. Oh, I just went to college. Now I want to go straight from that to being a project manager. No, it's all about doing the work, putting in the time, and becoming someone who adds massive value. And that's really what it comes down to. And that would be my closing message. And what I would say in addition to that is because people have gotten complacent and lazy. Nobody in construction knows what they're doing. That's going to be offensive to a lot of people. But I'm just anybody listening? Me, you, everybody in construction listening to this podcast. We have no idea what we're doing. Nobody knows what production even means. Nobody knows how to schedule out there. Nobody knows how to run a good job site. But interestingly enough, the information is available. So what's the problem? The problem is we're not digging deep. We're not learning, we're not being curious, we're not getting this information, we're not scaling. And so we're doing ignorant and stupid things over and over and over to the detriment of the people that work on our project site. So my summary is we need to start doing better at learning and teaching. And we need to be learning and teaching the right things. Because the information is out there. It's just not widespread because people aren't looking for it. Literally. My biggest problem is the construction industry needs something that they don't want. They need a medication, they need healing. But they don't want it. So they're not going to go to the doctor. And so that's the trick that we have to figure out is how do we get this industry to want what they need to want, the healing that they need to want, the medication that they need to want, the solution that it needs to

increase production, happiness, work life balance and enjoyment in our industry.

Mike Merrill:
Wow. Lots to um, unpack there. So really as I listen back to what you're sharing here, which is great, uh, just an awesome perspective. No matter how good people think that they are doing or how successful they are becoming as an organization or as a company in the industry, there is so much more good to get out there. And I'm thinking, according to what you're sharing, there's a lot more opportunity that we could be leveraging and taking advantage of. So as an organization, as an industry, let's wake up and just try to be better. Let's pick that fruit that's available to us, the low hanging stuff and stop being satisfied with just a status quo and playing hide and seek for grand a week. Is that right?

Jason Schroeder:
Exactly. That's right. How would we feel if the medical industry started to invest most or all of its money in technology and stopped training the doctors? How comfortable would we feel going into a hospital? We would be out of our minds, freaked out. And that's what we're doing in construction. And I love technology but we need both. We need as much investment in human development and training as we do technology and automation.

Mike Merrill:
Yeah, I love that you're sharing this. And I honestly don't think that if you asked people out there, are you doing enough training? I don't think there's very many that would say, yeah, we're doing more than adequate training. And of course we have organizations like OSHA and M. Shaw and other organizations that mandate that we do these trainings, uh, and enforce that we do them, give us checklists to go through minimal amount of training hours per year, et cetera. But because of steep fines and liability and it's expensive. Uh, there are companies that help ensure that these things happen appropriately, but the elective training that might be nicer and better to actually have to help us to truly be more safe to your point is actually more productive in the end. And productivity means more profit. More profit means, well, we're going to be in business longer and be able to take better care of our employees. So I think that these are very interesting concepts and topics. Um, that all the podcasts that we've done almost 100 now, uh, are not necessarily covering in this way. So I've really appreciated you bringing this up and sharing your wisdom in this area. Um, you've talked about a lot of references, great, ah, books, you've gathered all kinds of great information and I just think it's a super impactful topic and I really have appreciated you coming on and sharing with us today and, uh, look forward to keeping in touch down the road as well.

Jason Schroeder:
Okay, I love it. Appreciate it. And on we go.