

Working Smarter

There is nothing wrong with hard work. In fact, in the competitive world we live in, it's hard to beat good, old-fashioned hard work. Combine hard work with working smarter and now you have the whole package. And, you have the opportunity to really achieve great things.

Establishing a campus to house the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), the Labor-Management Cooperation Initiative (LMCI), the Finishing Trades Institute (FTI), and the Job Corps, is an example of working smarter. Although separate, these entities work hand-in-hand for the betterment of the industry. The efficiencies of being housed on the same campus are a perfect example of working smarter.

This is the way of 2010. If you don't believe it, take a look around. Everywhere you look, people are doing more with less. Companies are consolidating and merging with other companies that perform the same work they do. It is called "combina-

tion of critical mass". A fancy way to say we are going to become more efficient by having our working partners, and all the things we need to run our businesses, close-at-hand, and

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within arms reach. We are going to utilize that critical mass to provide stronger buying power, and then leverage that power to save both time and money.

These same fundamental principals hold true to each of us individually, as well. Not too many years ago there was a painter who worked for my company, Hartman Walsh Industrial Services, whose nickname was "Hillbilly". He was skilled as an industrial blaster and painter although, because of his size and strength, Hillbilly took to sandblasting, which is about as physically demanding as a job can be. He had the natural ability to do hard work. What made him special was his ability to combine his physical skills with his ability to work smart.

It would take Hillbilly longer to set up and lay out his equipment and

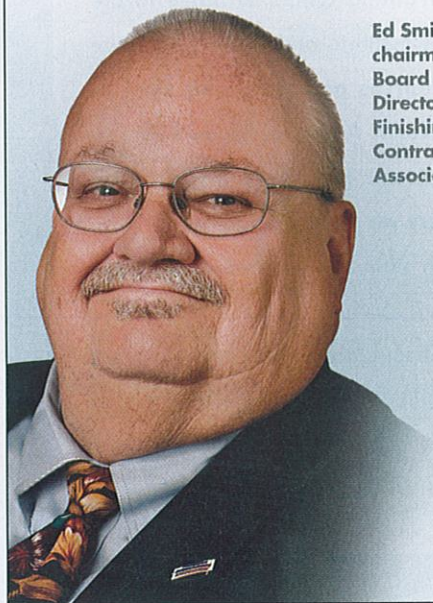
string out his blast hose than anyone else on the crew. He would painstakingly make sure everything he might need to get the job done was at hand and in good working order. But when it came time to turn on the blast nozzle, there was no wasted motion. Hillbilly consistently outperformed most other blasters and produced quality work.

The old axiom "plan your work, then work your plan" holds true in virtually every human endeavor. Private industry learned this lesson years ago. You see it in virtually every company as well as individual people who have thrived and survived, even in difficult

times. There are some smart people out there who have studied what works and what doesn't, and a sure path to failure is wasted time and motion. The inefficient cannot survive in these competitive times when every minute counts.

While organization may slow you down at first, the Hillbillies of the world show us that taking the time to organize and prepare pays off in the long run. By combining the locations of the physical offices, I believe that it will allow for great synergies to form, thus creating something greater than the individual organizations (IUPAT, LMCI, FTI, and Job Corps) could produce should they have remained as stand-alone entities.

As Chairman of National FCA, I know the National FCA staff work hard to do business in a well-organized manner. They are efficient



Ed Smith,
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because it is one way of working smarter, but also out of necessity. With a small staff, working efficiently is the only way they know how to work. Just as our labor partner, the IUPAT, is combining office locations with LMCI, FTI and Job Corps, National FCA staff works to continuously combine its efforts to ensure they make the most out of the resources available to them. Of course, this can't be done without strong organization and preparation: two keys to efficient and successful operations.

Whether you are organizing yourself to move offices and join forces,

organizing the duties of a small staff, or taking the time to set up your equipment like Hillbilly, I can't stress how important it is to take that extra time to plan. In the end, you'll no doubt be happy that you did.



Ed Smith is chairman of the Finishing Contractors Association (FCA), the only international trade association devoted exclusively to serving the unique needs of U.S. and Canadian union contractors in the drywall finishing, glass and glazing, floor covering, painting and decorating, and sign and display trades. All FCA members are signatory to collective bargaining agreements with the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. To learn more about the FCA, go to www.finishingcontractors.org, or call 301-215-7026.



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