# CONTINUOUS REFLECTION

## Introduction

Many in the building industry are familiar with the expression "Just Get it Done" (JGID). It comes from a good place, reflecting a desire among workers, partners and managers to do whatever it takes to complete a job or demonstrate progress and energy. Yet it often results in inferior outcomes as it emphasizes quick action more than deliberative forethought and individual performance over group achievement.

There's a better way, and it's based on an attitude of Continuous Reflection, a leadership mentality that ensures the entire project system is reflected upon as a unit, rather than as individual pieces unrelated to one another.

Projects and practitioners who adopt a mentality of Continuous Reflection have the potential to achieve a greater level of improvement and innovation on their projects and in their work.

# 1.0 What

Continuous Reflection encourages ongoing improvement in the work process and product. This is largely achieved through regular and ongoing dialog and seeking to foster a genuine respect for the skills and creativity of each partner. It begins with a change in the attitude of management in their perception about results, from one focused on action to one focused on value that is delivered. It encourages partners to exercise experience and thought in how they approach the work so the skills and creativity of teams can be fully utilized.

# 2.0 Why

Projects and practitioners who adopt a mentality of Continuous Reflection have the potential to achieve a greater level of improvement and innovation on their projects and in their work. When Continuous Reflection is the mindset on a project, the entire design and construction process is optimized to yield better results that are visible in all aspects of a job.

Continuous Reflection is based on the belief that there is value in taking time to reflect on recent performance so teams can avoid repeating the same mistakes and improve on or take advantage of circumstances that went well. Practitioners seek to examine recent performance to identify opportunities to improve the process. Such information comes from asking questions that focus on exploring the problem and examining different solutions, rather than pointing a finger or assigning blame. It represents a shift from "this went wrong" to "how can we improve this?"

These questions are asked in a spirit of respect for the expertise and skills of everyone contributing to the project. It promotes the dialog that allows opportunity for improvement and innovation. This in turn shows respect for people, their skills and creativity, which drives continuous improvement. This means including everyone in the discussions that examine the process and seek suggestions for improvement.

# 3.0 How

There are several steps leaders can take to foster a culture of Continuous Reflection. First, allow the team members to be empowered to invest in their work by trusting and respecting their skills and giving them space to exercise their creativity, then ask them to be accountable for their improvements through the results they achieve. When beginning this practice make sure to indicate to people your persistent questions are meant to offer improvement opportunity rather than assess blame.

Plus/Delta Lists are one of several tools that can be used during Continuous Reflection.

Pay attention to the use of language. For example, refer to "trade partners" rather than "subcontractors." Along the same lines, ask questions rather than dictate answers.

- What help do you need?

- What is in your way?

- Help me understand why you say that?

- What else is there to learn?

- How can we do it better?

Employ a non-punitive management style. Create a safe environment where mistakes can be opportunities for learning and improvement of the system. For example, if a worker digs in the wrong area, rather than simply having him dig in the right area, try to understand what within the process allowed that to happen. Be equally focused on the process as on outcomes.

Listening is another key skill. Be an active listener who is humble and has a desire to learn from and understand others.

Ohno Circles can be an effective tool for doing the kind of thoughtful observation that supports Continual Reflection. Commit to protracted observations rather than quick walk-throughs. This will help teams develop a more meaningful understanding of the processes, as well as gaining a deeper appreciation of the work of others, which will lead to stronger and more developed improvements.

Other tools that can be useful include the following:

- Plus/Delta Lists

- Regular retrospectives

- Lessons Learned captured in A3s

- OZ Principle

- Daily Huddle

- Milestone Retrospectives

## References

*Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling,* Edgar H. Schien

*The OZ Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability,* Roger Connors, Tom Smith and Craig Hickman

### Quick Reference

For additional readings and information, please see the below information.

# CHAPTER 11 – CONTINOUS REFLECTION
## Additional Readings

3.1 Good5Why Application in design environment

5.2 Mechanical Systems

5.5 Digital Design-Emdanat

5.6 VDC for Lean Project Delivery A3s

6 Final Changing Rolesppt

Barrett-Self-Organization and Synchronization at the Edge

BIM and Value Stream Mapping Robert Mauck

BIM Workshop Outline - Sellen

Case Study of Using an Integrated 5D System in a Large Hospital Construction Project

Case Study of Using an Integrated 5D System in a Large Hospital Construction Project

Commercial Terms to Support Lean Project Delivery

Contract Incentives to Improve Project Optimization

Developing the True North route map as a navigational compass in a construction project management  organisation

Integrated agreement on one page

Integrated Project Delivery An Example Of Relational Contracting

Interaction in the construction process-System effects for a joinery-products supplier

Kaizen and Job Satisfaction – A Case Study in Industrialized Homebuilding

LCI Congress Presentation 2012-Bagatelos and Lean Stream FINAL

Lean Journey-A Journey not a Race

Lean Journey-Lean Transformation of a Company

Production System Design - Work Structuring Revisited

Psychological foundations for incentives

Standards and Measures - Whole-building Metrics Driving Innovation and High Performance

Toyota Culture