

ASAM General Membership Meeting  
February 12, 2020  
Construction Advancement Forum: Owen-Ames-Kimball

**Panel representing Owen-Ames-Kimball**

- Jeremy Amshey, Director of Operations
- Adam Tweedy, Director of Preconstruction
- Josh Szymanski, Chief Strategy Officer
- Cade Dammen, Director of Field Operations

**General Information**

- Founded in 1891
- Currently has 115 West Michigan employees
- Specialize in publicly funded work
- Will do about \$250 million this year
- Backlog is strong, looking at capacity through this summer.
- Next summer looks very strong

**Approach**

- Educating clients; providing enough lead time
- Schedule accordingly
- Communications: trying to communicate with owners, contact team members

**Opportunities**

- So much of our work is public, we go through pre-qualification process after the bids come in.
- On private jobs we have more options.

**Delivery Methods**

- Design-Assist: We see that trend continuing.
- Bidding Communication—two places to sign up:
  1. Bidding system
  2. Subcontractor Newsletter: bid opportunities email

**What makes a good subcontractor vs. a great one?**

- Attitude: team player, point us in the right direction
- Planning: Know the schedule; participate in our start-up meetings.
- Knowledge: Know the code, help look over drawings, let us know the issues.
- Responsible: take ownership and pride in the project.

**How can we learn from you?**

- We have a mentorship program that new employees can go to.
- Post-project communication program: At the end of a project, we want to get something in writing showing not only what we did well but also how to work on things that may not have gone well.

## **QUESTIONS:**

### **Q: What makes OAK different than other GCs?**

**A:** Majority of our projects are public, so we're not able to use the bid process. Also, we've always tried to do the right things; if you go with your gut, in the end you're going to do the right things.

### **Q: How are you attempting to maintain your culture, as you grow?**

**A:** We've developed an assistant superintendent role. We hired a number of younger individuals; they will learn the way we do things, how we deal with owners. We've tried several formal processes, but mostly it's about being mentored.

### **Q: What trade contractor trends are you seeing in terms of safety?**

**A:** Answers:

- Developed a safety committee.
- Third-party safety consultant auditing the site and getting involved in project from beginning.
- More attendance at ABC events for safety.

### **Q: Is the pre-con safety briefing standard with OAK?**

**A:** Yes, safety starts in pre-construction meetings, making sure we have financing in place for handrails, guardrails, stairs and scaffolding.

### **Q: Any predictions for the future?**

**A:** Much of our public work is scheduling three to four years out, so we're feeling really bullish, even about 2022 and 2023. We're looking forward to increasing hiring.

### **Q: What do you do to attract talent, and where do you find them, how do you retain them?**

**A:** A big part of this is how we treat them. We've done entertaining events for our people, but we're also looking at where they're going to be next.

- Our turnover is very minimum. We don't see a lot of jumping around.
- Some of them have worked places where they were not appreciated.
- We do a lot of prep on the front end to make sure projects are set up right, and have our teams working in the area so they're home at night.

### **Q: Have you experienced a shortage of qualified trade contractors recently?**

**A:** All of us have a little bit. We're trying to juggle the schedule and be up front about everything. Being respectful of your time up front, communication.

### **Q: With the public work you do, are you seeing any push from owners regarding diversity?**

**A:** We see that come and go with our public owners. We're still participating with municipalities who have those goals. Half of the interns we've hired this year are female. It's part of our recruiting strategy. It's owner-driven and we don't see much of it in this busy environment.

### **Q: How do recent marijuana law changes impact OAK's procedures? Any impact?**

**A:** OAK requires a drug test and marijuana is part of that. Like alcohol, it's not allowed on the job site.