

**Expert FAQ Section (Part 2)
with Bob Vance, Production Manager
June 25, 2018**



You've been with Ultimate Homes & Renovations as Production Manager since 1998. You must have seen it all over the years. What would you say is the top challenge in managing the Production Department at Ultimate?

> Scheduling Resources

There are many variables in the broader field of Production Management, and specifically in Project Management as well. Those variables are continually changing daily, sometimes hourly, and you're managing them across multiple projects while always trying to be fair with everyone involved (vendors, clients, employees etc.). Say, for example, a resource has an unexpected family commitment out of town and needs to be away for a few days. Also assume that any suitable alternative resource is scheduled elsewhere and unavailable. Lastly, the task to be completed needs to be finished before the next task can begin (in Production Management, we refer to this as being part of the critical path). This sort of thing has to be resolved somehow to keep the project on target and keep the customers happy.

In your past 20 years with Ultimate, what are some of the technological advancements that have helped improve your production management process?

Well, I don't want to give away my age, but when I started with Ultimate, the internet wasn't really a huge thing yet - it was still somewhat in its infancy. That obviously

changed quickly. Like most industries, it was certainly a game-changer in construction - for example, you could suddenly research new innovations quickly and confidently & find any product specifications online within seconds. Online efficiencies like Google Maps (or vehicle GPS) now make it almost impossible for a worker to get lost going to a job site. I just never have to deal with calls like that anymore. Of course, smartphones have become another huge advantage... obtaining product knowledge instantly over the phone and texting a link-able phone number to someone (instead of saying it to them over an old radio system and having them write down the wrong number on paper... well, those days are long gone. Lastly, email is everything now - confirmation of change orders, informing multiple people all at once about something important they need to know... etc. etc. - it's just so much easier to manage those daily tasks via new technologies.

Ultimate is known for its extreme emphasis on quality workmanship. Customers expect and deserve elite quality from a professional renovator. What would you say are the key steps you've consistently followed over the years to deliver on that mandate?

- Communication with employees, vendors and customers.
- Scheduling regular meetings, getting together with core people weekly to go over jobs to coordinate everything - this is essential to keep everybody "in the know" and on the same page.
- Establish long-term working relationships with reliable people - knowing what to expect. You just can't have a revolving door with vendors and employees because they are your key people in getting the jobs done on time, and getting them done properly.

What are your tips for managing the quality of work without hindering production speed?

Organization, communication and having quality employees & vendors.

What are some things homeowners can do to help your production process?

Product knowledge. Don't be hesitant to do homework on selections beforehand, so that it's not a daunting process later on. Of course, we have people at Ultimate who will

help customers through that process, but we need to have “a feel” for what the final goal is with regards to product selections. Everyone has different tastes.

What is your number one piece of advice for a homeowner about to embark on a full house renovation?

Do plenty of homework. This pertains to everything... the renovation company (e.g. learning about their track record in this industry), products you might want, the general scope of work that you might be looking for, and understand your budgetary needs.

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