

BY GREG WOLECK

Using a Daily Log to Streamline Production

As a **production consultant** with Remodelers Advantage, I speak with teams of project managers, lead carpenters, and site supervisors. Lately, a common theme has been that with the addition of new materials, energy codes, and specific sequencing of tasks, projects have become more complex, making it more crucial than ever to maintain a running record, or daily log, to effectively manage them. Keeping a daily log is an efficient way to record important details about the client, trade partners, and our own teams that can be used to improve the current project's closeout process and referenced on future projects to strengthen workflows and avoid repeating mistakes. It is also a means of communication between the client and builder; in some contractual situations, providing a daily log to the client is a requirement.

Everyone on the job must be involved in maintaining this record. If project managers and construction managers are unable to visit jobsites every day due to increasing workloads and labor shortages, the information recorded by trade partners in the daily log is critical data for the project management team and contributes to the post-project review process. Equally important, when trade partners are heavily involved in the work, it helps ensure accountability for their tasks.

A daily log can be as simple as a Word or Notes document. When using Word or Notes, we save the daily files to a "Logs" subfolder within a given job's main folder. Alternatively, a daily log can be part of project management software; it's a typical feature of Builder Trend, Co-Construct, BuildXact, and JobTread, to name a few. Even using a traditional paper form (see example, right) is sufficient, though this requires the extra step of scanning it so it can be emailed to all parties as needed. Regardless of the means, the following key items should be included in a daily log:

- **Basics.** Start with the project name, location, date, and contact phone numbers. Create a template with that information filled in so you don't need to re-enter it each time.
- **Weather.** Record a brief narrative about the weather for the day, especially if it impacted the work being performed.
- **On-site personnel.** Document the company names of trade partners, the number of people on site, and the specific work they performed. If trade partners are the only ones on site, they should fill out their own daily log. It is also important to record the names of your own team members present at the site, especially when self-performing work. This helps cross-check recorded hours with actual tasks performed. Additionally, documenting visits from the office, architect, or design team can be useful.

Daily Log		
Job:	Site:	Date:
Weather Conditions: _____		
Onsite (Trade Partners)*: _____		
*Company name, number of persons, hours worked, tasks completed Onsite (Company Staff): _____		
*Name, hours worked, tasks completed Deliveries: _____		
Visitors*: _____		
Remember to document conversations with visitors to site including client Planning Ahead: _____		
What materials, staffing, equipment, information, will you need in the coming days Changes: _____		
*Are there any potential changes/change orders on the horizon		
Please return to Project Manager by 4:30 pm		

■ **Deliveries.** Record deliveries in case any damage to the client's or a neighboring property occurs. This information makes tracking dumpsters and reconciling bills for lumber deliveries easier.

■ **Visitors.** Keep track of neighbors, salespeople, inspectors, and unexpected homeowner visits to ensure an accurate record of conversations that may be relevant beyond the current scope of work.

■ **Issues.** Document issues such as rot repair or hidden conditions. Communicate them directly to clients and designers as well.

■ **Photographs.** Attach several photographs or even a short video. I believe in taking daily photographs that capture the project's location as well as close-up shots for detailed analysis. Using a 360-degree camera will ensure nothing important is missed.

There are few restrictions for what not to do. No detail is too small or insignificant to enter. However, remember that the daily log is a public document that can be accessed by all. Therefore, maintaining professionalism and confidentiality when logging data is paramount.

Properly maintained, the daily log in production teams' processes is a primary tool for fostering continuous improvement, which, after all, is essential to maintaining and growing a profitable company.

Greg Woleck, a production consultant for Remodelers Advantage, is a former production management consultant for Helm Construction Solutions, and a project manager and lead carpenter for residential and commercial contracting firms.