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Q and A with Dan ...

Can you share with us a little about your commitment to Education?

I suppose my strong attitude about estimating education stems from the fact that nobody needs a license from the government, or even a college degree, to practice construction estimating, or even hold the title of construction estimator. Nevertheless, to do it at a high level requires us to have many of the same skills that licensed professionals must have, such as architects, engineers, land surveyors, accountants, and even lawyers. It's not just the technical skills we must share, but it's also the communication skills too, like writing, speaking, and presenting, that allow others to believe in our abilities to calculate costs and have our employers and clients make financial decisions based on the work we do. We must continue making ourselves better estimators by learning new things, re-learning what we think we already know, and keeping our minds sharp and open to new ideas and technologies that will help us develop professionally at a rate where the users of our work output will continue to trust us to do our important work. This is the same reason I am a firm believer in ASPE's Certification Program. It is a way to set ourselves apart in a highly technical, and competitive, world.

Can you share with us one of your favorite Educating moments and why?

I enjoy receiving messages from my former students telling me about their careers in construction. Every teacher makes a difference in the lives of their students, but most never really know the extent to which that is true, so the unexpected moments of outreach from former students lets us know that we remain in their minds, months or years later. Hopefully something we taught them has remained as well, and has served them in their careers, but the simple act of an email or phone call from a former student is golden.

What do you think the role of Education will play in the future of estimating?

It will continue to be of paramount importance, even more so than it has been. Estimators aren't just takeoff people or spec readers; we are well rounded professionals who must be technically oriented but also human oriented as well. We are risk analysts but also therapists, in a manner of speaking. We must deliver cold hard facts while understanding the way our news will be received. We must be correct, but also convincing. We must be willing to accept that we might be wrong, but also forgiving when dealing with the mistakes of others. I would like to see estimating education evolve to include topics related to understanding human nature, as well as understanding new ways of doing the technical work.

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