

Service

Safety

Quality

MAY, 2010

the Block

C O N N E C T I O N

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*“There is
no
substitute
for
quality
and
Customer
Delight.”*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

You may remember me talking about what a great car company Toyota was because they listened to their customers. Toyota gave their customers what they wanted. Well, they don't look so great any more! Why? It appears they have been caught in a giant cover up. Yet they remain the most profitable of all the car companies.

What is the thought here? It is pretty simple. They got carried away in their own self importance and started believing their own press releases. It's a danger that faces any business on their road to high achievement. It's easy to do. You just get a little complacent, just a little too caught up in self importance and a little sloppy. Sloppy in how they treated their customers and themselves. When a company no longer seeks the best from each person and their subcontractors and suppliers then they can easily go from the top of the mountain down to the bottom. It happens very quickly. Look at how quickly Toyota's reputation has been damaged. People just love piling dirt on this once great company.

How do we go about avoiding the Toyota debacle? First of all, never let our guard down. Secondly, don't accept mediocrity in our work or in our attitudes. Don't accept any jobs done less than correct. Don't cover up our mistakes. It's best to admit them and fix them than to hope no one will discover them. Work efficiently, and safely. This is all pretty basic stuff. However I think we would all be surprised to find out how much shoddy work is going on in our industry right now. There is no substitute for quality and **Customer Delight**. As a matter of fact it's wonderful when we point it out to our customers. We need to show and express the fact that we are doing a better job than most and that we will continue to do that in the future. It is important to look for solutions to daily problems both long as well as short term. Look for ways to economically give our customers what they want. Keep a productive workforce and keep a great attitude! Most of all keep those **customers delighted**.

It's been a tough quarter. There are a lot of our people hurting and I want you to know we are doing everything we can to correct our work situation. It is going to happen, I just can't predict when. The engineers tell us they are picking up, which is a great sign. Let's just make sure that when it comes to our time we are ready to do the best job we can. I know it's easy to say, but let's keep our spirits up and work together to make this happen. We are all in this together!

ELECTRICAL JOINT ARBITRATION BOARD

- MIKE DEGER

A letter received from the Electrical Joint Arbitration Board on April 2, 2010

The partnership between the employers represented by the Electrical Contractors' Association of the City of Chicago and the members represented by Local 134, I.B.E.W. has existed for more than a century. Labor and management have always upheld the integrity of the collective bargaining agreements and will continue to do so. Both employer and employee are expected to follow the terms of the collective bargaining agreement being utilized.

During this period of high unemployment, many allegations from many sources are being reported concerning employers and employees agreeing to work for less than the negotiated rate, reporting less hours to the fringe benefit funds than are actually being performed, collecting Supplemental Unemployment Benefits while working for cash.

Any credible charges regarding these issues brought before the Electrical Joint Arbitration Board will be fully investigated and severe penalties could apply if any inconsistencies are discovered.

CUSTOMER DELIGHT

An email sent to Mike Deger from Wil Raske, Data Center Operations Director at Rush University Medical Center

I wanted to write a note of special thanks for electrician journeyman Rick Madison's outstanding catch and quick remediation today in our Data Center test area. An electrical circuit was so hot it was glowing and hissing and potentially close to possibly a much bigger four letter word problem we won't mention. He should be given special recognition for possibly averting a major problem in our Rush University Medical Center's Data Center.

Please make sure this exemplary performance reaches the top of the ranks at Block Electric. Averting a possible disaster like this one will, as well be raised through the ranks at Rush to exemplify Rick's performance, concern, and dedication to the work he and Block Electric do for us here at Rush University Medical Center. Please extend my most sincere gratitude to Rick Madison and Block Electric.

PROJECT WINS MERIT AWARD

One Superior Place is a high rise located in the River North area of Chicago and is one of the largest rental buildings on the city's north side. Block Electric recently completed a landscape lighting project at One Superior Place Pool Terrace. The project won a merit award from the Illinois Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects.

Thank you to Michael Block, Bill Kuta, and Gary Jones for a successful project.

ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations and thank you to Sheila Symak for her years of loyalty, service, and dedication to Block Electric. Sheila joined us on May 10, 1985 and this will be her 25th anniversary.

NEAR MISS—THE ONE THAT ALMOST HAPPENED

- DREW BOYCE

What is a "near miss?" Webster defines it as: "A result that is nearly, but not quite, successful." What does this mean to industry? It simply means that a serious accident *almost* occurred. Someone trips over a pallet, but doesn't fall. Two forklifts *almost* collide at a corner. A tool is dropped, but toes are missed...this time.

Statistics tell us that for every 300 near misses there is one serious injury. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 4.2 million recordable injuries occurred during 2005. If we multiply each injury by 300, the result is 1.2 billion *near misses* for 2005 alone. This equals about 9.5 near misses per worker in 2005.

So what does this tell us about accidents? Look at the figures. If you reduce the number of near misses, probability tells us you will then reduce the number of injuries that happen.

The Same Things That Cause Accidents Cause Near Misses:

- Unsafe acts, such as improper lifting; walking under an overhead load; cutting, grinding, or chipping without safety glasses; not using proper Personal Protective Equipment, etc.
- Unsafe conditions, such as poorly maintained equipment, oil or grease on floors, welding leads that have been laid in walkways, trash and boxes that have been left in hallways, etc.
- Hurrying and taking risks to get a project done faster, or to wrap up a job at quitting time.
- Distractions or not concentrating on the task that is being performed.

Report Near Misses *Before* They Become Accidents:

- Once a near miss occurs, report it immediately to the nearest foreman or supervisor. The potential for such incidents exists all over the workplace, so *all* employees—not just supervisors--must help identify them.
- If the near miss is a result of an unsafe condition, don't continue to work under that condition until the problem has been corrected and your supervisor gives the okay to proceed.
- If the incident is a result of unsafe acts, be certain that everyone involved has been alerted to their actions before they continue with the job.

Near Misses Are A Warning:

Letting a near miss go unreported provides an opportunity for a serious accident to occur. Correcting these actions or conditions will enhance the safety within your facility and provide a better working environment for everyone involved. Don't let yourself or co-workers become statistics--report near misses to your supervisor.

Prevent An Accident That's About To Happen!

MARATHON MAN

Congratulations to Leo Keigher who ran in the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 19, 2010. Leo finished the 40k run in 4 hours 20 minutes and 47 seconds.

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What Not To Eat While Driving

You know not to text while you drive, or chatter on your cell phone, or fold an origami swan, or anything even more foolish. Right? Well, the same thing goes for eating. Here's a list of foods to enjoy at home or your favorite restaurants, not behind the wheel:

- **Coffee.** It's hot, it spills.
- **Tacos.** Messy. Even under the best circumstances,
- **Burgers.** Also messy, and the grease can make it hard to grip the steering wheel.
- **Doughnuts.** Especially those filled with jelly gets squeezed out onto the hands.
- **Soft drinks.** They spill, of course, but they can also fizz leading to a momentary loss of concentration as the soda travels up your nose.
- **Chocolate.** Tastes great, but it can melt over your fingers, again creating problems in holding onto the wheel.

BIRTHDAYS

Greg	Gorski	05/04
Chad	Fowler	05/04
Steve	Slager	05/08
Joe	Sambucaro	05/13
Eric	Crutchfield	05/17
Eric	Aponte	05/18
Miguel	Chagoya	05/20
Mike	Haines	05/21
Todd	Giusto	05/21
Jesse	Geiger	05/30



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A birthday was omitted from the April newsletter in error. Happy Belated Birthday wishes to Mike Arvesen 04/29.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kid on the Block team.
Eric Crutchfield

CREATIVE HIDING PLACES FOR VALUABLES

Although your chances of being burglarized are low, it does happen. Unless you've got a safe guarded by laser beams for that priceless heirloom, try some of these tricks for hiding your valuables:

- **Bookcases.** Many bookcases have a few extra inches of space beneath the bottom shelf, hidden behind some molding. Remove the molding and store valuables there.
- **Ironing boards.** You can hide important documents between the board and the padding. Also, the hollow area inside the legs (pull off the rubber or plastic pads) can be used to store rolled-up cash or small items.
- **Spice jars.** Pour the spice into a bowl. Then coat the inside of the jar with glue. Refill the jar, then empty it again. Make sure the jar looks like it's full of oregano (or whatever you used) and place money, credit cards, or other valuables inside.
- **Trash cans.** Place important items at the bottom, then use a liner to conceal them.
- **Dirty clothes hamper.** Thieves won't want to sift through soiled clothes.
- **Vents.** Your heating and air-conditioning vents can make useful hiding places. Burglars won't want to risk the time unscrewing each vent.

Happy Mother's Day!

