

# ON THE LEVEL



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Damien, Michelle, Rob and Tracey from Taupo Concrete pack down for the Bledisloe Cup dinner at the 2008 MCA conference while below, Phil Fairfield of Youngman Richardson works an improvised wet weather sales opportunity inside Ready Mix's big shed.





## From the office

Well, spring is just around the corner. What a relief. I know we have to have winter but it does appear to be colder and wetter than the past. Maybe it has something to do with age.

I was looking through some old notes I had jotted down at some time in the past as headings for articles or things to think about. This one jumped out at me.

What if a factory job came along? Would your staff jump ship and why? Something to think about is why our staff stay with us: is it their pay, is it that they are loyal, is it the culture of your company? The answer is yes to all of these questions.

Each staff member or potential staff member has a different set of values:

- Some will see money as the most important part of work – the old saying comes to mind, “It is just work, a way to make some money to do the other things I want to do;
- Then you get the staff who work not for you, but with you because like most of us, it is in their blood (concrete) and it is their passion as much as yours. They just do not have the skills, the ability or the money to start their own empire.

Do you know why your staff stay with you, or more importantly, do you know why they leave?

### **Conference: Whangarei 2008**

Once again thank you to those who braved the weather to join

us in Whangarei. There were about 90 of us which is great and we did have fun even through the trials and tribulations of weather and unhelpful hotel staff.

This conference proved to be the most challenging yet. We had one speaker not able to get through and the hands-on became the lake, but thanks to John and his team, it all came together after the 3<sup>rd</sup> or maybe 4<sup>th</sup> change and was a great success.

My conclusion from the game, “Are you smarter than a female concreter”, is that we are all equal and need to remember that, and all know our limitations. We should work our strengths and delegate our weakness until we can learn enough to make them strong. Remember, we can not do it all.

### **Conference: Wellington 2009**

This is already underway and just need to sort a hotel out that can hold all the vehicles we have. Next year’s theme is “The Customer is Always Right” and that will be the title of the debate.

We will not be hiring any stars this time as I have already had many volunteers to host within the industry, which I appreciate very much. We are going to call for papers this year and see what happens. We intend to invite the pumpers and the concrete cutters associations along.

### **Awards**

Once more the entries were of a high standard and you will see the winners further in the newsletter. Start thinking now for next year, but just a couple of pointers:

- when entering, make sure you cover all the criteria in your spiel;
- we need the signed form back;
- as part of the process, the judges may ring the client;
- do not forget the photos and take some closer shots as the finish is important too.

### **Council**

For new members coming in, you need to know that we have a council that runs the day-to-day of the association and works

on projects the association has asked to be done.

We are very busy, as at present we are working on:

- newsletter – on-going;
- website – has a way to go yet;
- conference 2009;
- rules and governance – this is really only just in the very early stages;
- disputes process – nearly complete;
- tips for engaging a contractor to go on the web – started;
- road show proposed for the future;
- best practice for placing and finishing concrete;
- working on criteria for a gold status member to be presented at next conference and discussed;
- membership – on-going, please keep talking people into MCPA;
- attending, BCITO, NAG, Sub-contractor Federation, RMCA meetings and training;
- the accountants – have needed a lot of sorting and bank changes;
- then there are all the bits and pieces involved in running the association;
- our associate council member Nick Hall wants to be in touch with the associates and work a bit closer with you.

You are thinking what a list; well, that is why you have us.

We have our council meeting on the Sunday morning of conference before we leave because this is one of two times we get together. We have telephone conferences in between. Sorry if this made some people feel a little bit put out, but we need to have a meeting at conference as we have new members to council who need to know what is expected and what we are doing.

The council has decided to change the meeting to Saturday afternoon before the dinner and this way we get a chance to say goodbyes which is something we miss.

– Carol McMillan

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# Wild and wet Whangarei

While the wind howled and the rain slashed down from a weather 'bomb', the Master Concrete Placers Association serenely went ahead with its 2008 conference. While delegates cheered and then despaired at the Bledisloe Cup match, the high tide rose a metre and a half over the nearby wharf and Whangarei city declared a state of emergency.

The weather did impact to a certain degree. Those flying in had a rough ride - those flying out had another rough ride.

Some Northland concrete placers left the conference to go home and tie down buildings and gear. We understand some got marooned between two slips for a while.

Delegates visited the Golden Bay plant at Portland and the Ready Mix plant at Whangarei, had discussions on technical issues, renewed old acquaintances and made new ones.



The bus driver was overwhelmed with the Ready Mix site visit.



Above: Lance Canute preaching the gospel on his latest innovation for curing concrete.

Below: a gray day for the field trip to Golden Bay cement before the storm struck.

Award winners: Clayton Bennett (Concrete Bindings Ltd) Angus McMillan (Angus McMillan Concrete Ltd), Clay D'Anvers (Clays Concrete Ltd) ; kneeling, Mike Moorcock (Rock Solid).



## Are you smarter than a female concrete placer?

With surprising leaps of intuition, the men almost prevailed in the contest at conference 2008. Only the last question pulled the girl's team ahead. Questions varied from What do isobars tell us? (*what moisture co-efficient makeup to wear on the job*) and why do

female concrete placers wear gloves? (*so they don't lose their jewelry in the mix*) and Is body odour good on the job? (*depends on the body*). Of a more serious nature were questions such as What does fly ash consist of? (*In general terms, fly-ash consists predominantly of silicate glass*

*containing calcium, aluminium, magnesium and/or iron, together with a small quantity of crystalline material and some unburned carbon*), If you are a subbie, when do you get paid? (*Sometime*) and Do you use additives in a confined space? (*Shit yeah!*)



Showing real application to the contest are the winning class of 2008: Cathy Castles, Helen Cheyne, Alvin McDonald, Kristina Salmons and Carol Waterhouse.

## Wellington 2009

Planning has started for next year's conference to be held in Wellington at the end of July.

The theme for the conference is  
"The Customer is Always Right"

Anyone interested in doing a presentation, or running a workshop session on any aspect of this topic, is invited to contact Carol McMillan: [carol.mcmillan@rocform.co.nz](mailto:carol.mcmillan@rocform.co.nz) before 30 January 2009.



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# Clayton takes two

**Hamilton-based Concrete Bindings Ltd won two of the awards at the recent national conference, both for big commercial jobs around Taupo.**

In the Best Commercial Award, sponsored by Danley Construction Products, Concrete Bindings won the section for a project involving a 9450 m<sup>2</sup> all steel fibre reinforced floor and yard area for Mokai Glasshouses, near Taupo.

The client for this job was Steel

Sheds R Us (Northland), for a contract that consisted of new 6500 m<sup>2</sup> glasshouse requiring concrete roadways for the conveying of delicate fruit, a new packhouse with chiller, 3500 m<sup>2</sup> offices and large areas of external pavement.

Laying the steel-fibre reinforced

concrete pads took nearly three months last year.

In the Holcim/Northland Regional Council Environmental/Sustainability category, Concrete Bindings Ltd won the award for a contract with Brian Perry Civil Ltd for Genesis Energy, re-lining Stage 1 (20,505m<sup>2</sup>) of the Poutu Canal at Turangi.

The canal had to be drained, expansion joints replaced, and concrete repairs were undertaken along the base of the canal. The work will prevent leakage from the canal and help ensure the integrity of the structure.

The whole job took four staff 14 days, working without a day off to take advantage of a good weather break.

Clayton Bennett, who set up Concrete Bindings Ltd seven years ago, said the company mainly does commercial projects which take the staff to a variety of sites around the North Island.

He was delighted to have won two awards and will definitely be entering again next year. He believes having the two national titles this year will be an excellent marketing tool, standing him in good stead when putting in tenders for work over the coming year.

*Neville Austin of Holcim with Clayton Bennett after the presentation of awards at Conference 2008.*



*Re-lining the Poutu Canal – the driving force behind the Tokannu power scheme.*





Two examples of the huge scale of the job



## Women undeterred by weather

When the weather gets tough, the women go shopping.

With distaff determination, they dropped inconvenient bits of their outdoor programme, boarded the bus and headed to Dunkleys Craft Show. Being careful not to trip up on the buckets around the floor catching water from the roof, most women came away with something – scarves, jewellery, ideas.

Due to flooding and power supply cut, they were unable to visit The Rock Hoppers Garden, so headed to the Marina for a wonder around the shops (at that stage a civil warning was out to shut up shop and head out of town), but still they weren't deterred!

In gale force winds and lamp posts swaying from side to side, the determined shoppers ventured along the Boardwalk, which was nearly under water by then. The Mohaka Cafe stayed open, so off they went for a lovely lunch, cuppa and a good old chin wag.

The girls' day off as rounded off by visiting Vuletich's Longview Estate, negotiating road blockages, falling roofs, fences blowing around, and a bridge almost under water, along the way.

Annette and Robyn would like to thank all the ladies that shared the Ladies Programme with them, and look forward to next year's one.



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**Congratulations!**

the team at

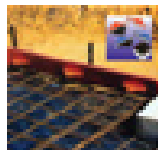
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# Getting quality from your 'possums'

by Jayme Broudy

**Quality control in the contracting business can be a little tougher than on an assembly line making paper clips, but it's the same process and just as controllable.**

If you get that possum in the headlights reaction when you mention quality standards, try this system.

## Gather and analyse the data

Hopefully you've kept records of the past quality issues. Gather and group the cases and you'll see patterns emerge.

Then you can concentrate on whatever's been causing the most problems. Note: This is a quick fix, not a cure.

## Establish clear standards

These are the backbone of your business. They include both what result is required and how that result is to be produced.

These must be as objective, detailed, and as quantifiable as possible.

This is "The Book" as in "going by the Book".

## MCPA Council members 2008-9

MCPA council members elected at the AGM were:

Chairman – **Angus McMillan**, Angus McMillan Concrete.

Associate representative – **Nick Hall**, Danley Construction Products.

Association manager, **Carol McMillan**

**Clayton Bennett**, Concrete bindings.

**Clay D'Anvers**, Clays Concrete.

**David Stewart**, Siteworks. **Rob**

**Buckeridge**, Taupo Concrete. **John Vuletich**, Vuletich Construction.

## Create guiding principles

These can be used in non-standard situations, e.g.: "When in doubt, always err on the side of going slower and doing it better." Make sure these are included in The Book.

## Make it the law of the land

Make it crystal clear: things are to be done in accordance with the standards and varying from standard is a termination offense. Carrots are fine, sticks also required.

## Develop detailed checklists

These should cover everything you want checked against standards on a job, and have someone OTHER than the crew that did the work do the checking.

## Monitor and analyse results

As in the first step, check for patterns in your results. What's the most frequent problem? What's second? Third? NOTE: The cause will *always* be that either:

- no standard exists;
- the existing standard is wrong;
- somebody didn't follow the standard.

## Revise

If a standard isn't working, change it. If you need another one, add it. And make sure you provide the revisions to everybody.

## Feedback

Make sure your regular meetings include a big quality segment. If quality's first with you, make it first on the agenda.

## Walk your talk

Make sure that you and your managers are in line with the stated standards, all the time, every time.

Include standards in each employee's job description and performance evaluation and document each employee's performance.

Do it this way, and evaluations are both objective and a breeze.

## Make sure the employees can do the job

"Let's see you do it" and train them if needed.

## Hire people with a reputation for high quality work

They'll cost more in wages and save a ton in callbacks and your reputation.

## Demote or dismiss chronic offenders

It takes the poor work off the front line, sends a clear message to the troops, and eventually weeds out employees who don't share your quality standards.

People who understand exactly what's expected of them, have the tools and training to produce the results, receive a consistent message from their managers, and are clear on how their performance is measured don't look terrified in the headlights; They LOVE the headlights.

Somewhere in your business, one or more of these things probably isn't happening. But they're all easy to put in place and your business needs them anyway.

They're the foundation of a standalone business, but that's another newsletter.

– Jayme Broudy is Principal of the Contractor's Business School

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[www.mcpa.org.nz](http://www.mcpa.org.nz)

This is the new look site.

We will be in touch soon with your login for the members only site.



# Conflict – an age-old problem

Working in a diverse environment is difficult: people have different value systems and different sets of guiding characteristics and it's inevitable that with differing generations working side by side, conflict will eventually, and inevitably, arise.

By developing an understanding and acceptance of others' generational viewpoints, you can learn to resolve conflict.

The ways of resolving issues can vary depending on the generation:

- **Traditionalist** (born prior to 1946): Appreciate them, acknowledge their interests, and explain the need for change and how it will increase value.
- **Baby Boomer** (born 1946 - 1964): Communicate the need for their input; jointly discuss an action plan.
- **Generation X** (born 1965 - 1976): Be honest and frank, focus on expected results, recommend tools and techniques, and don't refer to how it was in the old days.
- **Millennial** (born 1977 and

later): Give business reasons for change, tell them how they affect the company, tell them that you're there to help and keep in contact with them.

Try these differing forms of feedback:

### Use constructive feedback

- Concentrate on the objective or goal, not differences in work style or processes.
- Stress key points; try not to vacillate from the ultimate objectives or goals.
- Be specific about what you want; don't assume prior knowledge on another's part.
- Recognise others' points of view and don't argue.
- Practise respect and active listening with every generation.

### Pinpoint the problem and

### work on it, not each other.

Collaborate—Remember the ultimate goal and try to work for the common good of your organisation.

### Look at the outcome of the objectives and not the process

Consider options for completion of a goal while remembering that different generations may tackle a problem with a different process or style, yet reach the same goal.

### Consider the value each generation brings to the table

Younger workers bring technological savvy and creative thinking. Older workers bring experience and expertise.

[www.skillpath.co.nz](http://www.skillpath.co.nz)

## New ACC provisions now apply

The Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Amendment Bill (No.2) passed into law as the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Amendment Act 2008 in late June 2008.

Most of its provisions will take effect from 1 August 2008, with the exception of provisions which relate to witnessing a traumatic event at the workplace and changes to eligibility for vocational rehabilitation, which come into effect on 1 October 2008.

Provisions relating to changes in the determination of minimum weekly earnings came into force on 1 July 2008.

ACC has released a short briefing paper that outlines the purpose behind major policy changes introduced under the Amendment Act, the detail of the key changes, and a summary of minor policy changes and technical amendments.

For a copy of the briefing paper, link through to:

[http://www.acc.co.nz/levies-and-cover/news/PRD\\_CTRB091890](http://www.acc.co.nz/levies-and-cover/news/PRD_CTRB091890)



# Dealing with scaling

**Scaling is defined as a general loss of surface mortar, or mortar surrounding the coarse aggregate particles on a concrete surface. This problem is typically caused by the expansion of water due to freezing and thawing cycles and the use of deicing chemicals.**

Properly specified, produced, finished, and cured quality concrete need not suffer this type of deterioration. There is a distinct chain of responsibility for the production of scale resistant concrete.

### Specifying (architect/engineer)

The concrete must be properly specified for its intended service environment. For severe climates where it is to be expected that concrete in a wet condition will undergo cycles of freezing and thawing and the application of de-icing chemicals:

- concrete should be specified with a minimum compressive strength of 28 MPa (4000 psi);
- contain an appropriate volume of air (entrapped and entrained),
- have a minimum cementitious content of 335 kg/m<sup>3</sup> (564 lb/yd<sup>3</sup>);
- have a maximum water-cement ratio of 0.45.

These minimum specification requirements have produced positive results for many decades.

### Proportioning and delivery (ready-mixed concrete producer)

The concrete as proportioned and delivered by the ready mixed concrete producer, must comply with the aforementioned specification requirements. It is the responsibility of the

concrete producer to properly proportion the concrete mixture to comply with the specification and produce a workable mixture using locally available materials.

The proposed mixture must have sufficient workability that the concrete contractor can place, consolidate, and finish in a timely fashion. One challenging issue for the concrete producer is choosing the correct air content for the mixture. The appropriate air content is dependent on the maximum coarse aggregate size as shown in the following table.

Recommended Total Air Content for Concrete			
Nominal maximum size aggregate, mm (in.)	Air Content, percent <sup>a</sup>		
	Severe exposure <sup>b,c</sup> (Class F2 and F3)	Moderate Exposure <sup>d</sup> (Class F1)	Mild Exposure <sup>e</sup>
<9.5 (3/8)	9	7	5
9.5 (3/8)	7 1/2	6	4 1/2
12.5 (1/2)	7	5 1/2	4
19.0 (3/4)	6	5	3 1/2
25.0 (1)	6	4 1/2	3
37.5 (1 1/2)	5 1/2	4 1/2	2 1/2
50 (2) <sup>f</sup>	5	4	2
75 (3) <sup>f</sup>	4 1/2	3 1/2	1 1/2

<sup>a</sup>Project specifications often allow the air content of the concrete to be within -1 to +2 percentage points of the table target values.  
<sup>b,c</sup>Concrete exposed to wet-freeze-thaw conditions, deicers, or other aggressive agents (ACI 318 Exposure Class F2 and F3).  
<sup>d</sup>Concrete exposed to freezing but not continually moist, and not in contact with deicers or aggressive chemicals (ACI 318 Exposure Class F1)  
<sup>e</sup>Concrete not exposed to freezing conditions, deicers, or aggressive agents.  
<sup>f</sup>These air contents apply to the total mix, as for the preceding aggregate sizes. When testing these concretes, however, aggregate larger than 37.5 mm (1 1/2 in.) is removed by handpicking or sieving and air content is determined on the minus 37.5 mm (1 1/2 in.) fraction of mix. (Tolerance on air content as delivered applies to this value.)

### Finishing and curing (concrete contractor)

After concrete has been placed, consolidated, and struck-off, the concrete finisher is charged with using proper finishing practices to achieve an aesthetically pleasing, yet durable concrete surface. The typical recommendations for finishing are:

- bullfloat, darby, edge, and make initial grooves prior to the onset of bleeding;
- allow excess bleed water to evaporate from the concrete surface before floating the surface and making the second pass with edging and grooving tools;
- allow time for initial stiffening of the concrete to take place;
- make a final pass with edging, grooving, and floating operations. (avoid steel troweling exterior concrete surfaces, especially at later ages of stiffening as this can reduce entrained air and may promote scaling);

- allow additional stiffening;
- use appropriate broom to produce the desired texture (soft bristle for fine and medium textures, stiff bristle for coarse texture).

After the final texture is established concrete, must be cured to assure that the surface will achieve the desired properties to be durable.

Curing methods may include:

- moist curing with water, fogging, or sprinkling of absorptive coverings;
- spray applied curing compounds;
- plastic sheet cover (may cause discoloration on exposed concrete surfaces);
- exterior concrete should be allowed to air dry for 30 days prior to exposure to freezing and thawing cycles. In addition, de-icer chemicals should not be used on the new



**Example of scaled concrete surface**

concrete surface for a period of three months after the concrete has been placed — longer if the concrete is placed during the fall or winter seasons.

#### References:

Kosmatka, Steven H., Kerkhoff, Beatrix, Panarese, William C., *Design and Control of Concrete Mixtures*, EB001, Portland

Cement Association, 2002, 372 pages.

Collins, Terry C., Panarese, William C., Bradley, Bentley J., *Concrete Finisher's Guide*, EB122, 2006, 88 pages & *Concrete Slab Surface Defects: Causes, Prevention, Repair*, IS177, 2001, 16 pages.

– Portland Cement Association

## Concrete benchtop expo

The first concrete countertop design expo will be held in Sacramento this month – an exciting event where designers can learn more about concrete countertops.

It will follow the annual Concrete Countertop Industry Conference that draws hundreds of concrete countertop professionals from all over the world.

“We hope the Design Expo will inspire design and building professionals to make use of this versatile, moldable material for kitchen, bath, sink, tub, fireplace, and even furniture designs,” said conference manager Lane Magnum.

“We hope to provide them with the practical knowledge to create problem-free designs, and connect them with craftspeople who can collaborate and execute their creations.”

The Expo will feature a “show & tell” session led by concrete countertop professionals, allowing interested parties to learn from the experts.

Participants also will be able to view the showcase of concrete countertop examples, attend an educational luncheon seminar on design, and participate in judging the entries for the Designer’s Choice award.

For more information, about the Concrete Countertop Design Expo, visit

[www.concretecountertopdesignexpo.com](http://www.concretecountertopdesignexpo.com)



# Injuries hurt people and pockets

by Gordon Anderson

**Two Hawkes Bay companies have recently been caught short without any induction process, hazard register, procedures or training records, following serious harm injuries to their employees. Neither had the companies informed the Department of Labour (OSH).**

If this sounds like your business then I would strongly suggest that you consider reviewing your health and safety system, as the winds of change are now starting to blow from Wellington. If you don't think health and safety is an issue I would strongly recommend that you do for the protection of your business and your employees.

Any accident, regardless of severity, can impact on your bottom line. In the case of one of the Hawkes Bay accidents, a seasonal employee was using a saw bench, unsupervised and with no safety guard, resulting in the employee amputating three fingers on his right hand. If you can call it luck, two of the three fingers were sewn back on and the victim is now on the slow road to recovery and rehabilitation thanks to ACC.

The estimated cost to the company was \$5000, taking into account lost time, lost production, investigation time, etc. The scary part of this cost is that this is only the beginning of what the true cost can be.

A simple method to identify the true cost of an accident is to multiply the estimated cost by five which will include all the other contributing costs – we are now starting to get a ticket into the ball park!

What have not been taking into consideration are the on-going costs of:

- medical expenses;

- rehabilitation;
- potential cost of an OSH prosecution if it were to happen;
- legal fees etc., etc., etc.

Now we can start to see that the final cost is mounting and the concern is that this is only one example of what is happening in the New Zealand workplace every day.

If the estimated cost to the company was \$25,000, could your company afford this? To this cost we then apply the 30-1 principle. This is the rule that applies to the cost of recovery of the financial loss.

What this equates to is that for every dollar lost from this accident, the company has to turn over \$30 of additional products or services just to break even.  $\$25k \times 30 = \$750,000$ . Now that is scary!

In the current economic environment most contractors are working on slim margins and in many cases are cutting costs just to stay afloat. An accident, regardless of severity, has the potential to cripple a business.

In a recent SiteSafe publication it was stated that at least 70% of self-employed businesses that close down do so at least in part because of serious injury. Nearly a third are in the construction industry. (Source ACC). Could your business survive even a \$5000 health and safety incident?

## Policy promises

In the past two months we have been hearing the start of the rhetoric, policy and promises of both major political parties leading up to the election. One of the points made by the National Party is that it is its intention to review and to privatise ACC.

This is not a new idea and was tried last century for 12 months.

Prior to ACC and during the one year of privatisation, the insurance companies were the other providers in the area of accident insurance. It is my opinion that this will occur again and this time around will have a greater impact on every New Zealand business.

With the current international and national business, political, commercial and environmental upheavals occurring in all sectors of our life, this is now impacting on the cost of insurance. If ACC is privatised the insurance industry will be involved for certain, and this could have an impact on those businesses that have little, or have done nothing to manage their health and safety responsibilities.

## Rude awakening

If the Australian model is anything to go by and is applied by the insurance companies, then many businesses are in for a rude awakening. What I believe will occur is that all businesses will start on an industry sector benchmark for the cost of the insurance and if an accident occurs, their accident insurance cost will rise and keep rising based on the number of claims made.

In the last attempt to privatise ACC I was contacted by an insurance broker to audit three farming companies as they had ticked the box to obtain a 10% discount on their insurance cost for having health and safety systems in place and surprise, surprise – there were none.

Many of the business owners reading this article will have a number of insurance policies in place:



# Delaying tough decisions costs money

- Statutory liability protection to pay the legal fees if needed;
- Third party insurance;
- Reparation protection policy and others.

But these don't insure against the potential impact on the business. Remember, you cannot insure against an accident.

If the insurance companies were to introduce compliance auditing, could your business front up and be able to prove that you have taken all care and responsibility to protect your employees and as equally important, your business?

I do suggest you read the fine print, as it will more than likely state, that in order to be compliant for the purpose of the insurance policy, the business must comply with the laws of New Zealand – of course, the Health and Safety in Employment Act is one of those laws.

*To protect your business and save insurance costs if the winds of change do occur:*

1. Review your existing health and safety systems and make sure they are effective and working.
2. Involve your staff in health and safety.
3. Make sure that your equipment is safe to use, with all guards in place.
4. Check your personnel health and safety records to ensure that if there is an issue you can prove responsibility as an employer.
5. Discuss your responsibilities with your insurance broker.

*Gordon Anderson is a consultant with TQS management systems and services.*

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## New members

Mauvae Concrete Ltd. Auckland. **Mark**  
 NZ Concrete Services Ltd. Warkworth. **George Maginley**  
 Total Outdoors Solutions. Hastings. **Dean Arnott**  
 Millennium Landscapes. Auckland. **Richard McIntosh**  
 McLeods Concreteing Contractors Ltd. Gisborne. **Eughan McLeod**  
 Foundations and Floors (2005) Ltd. Rotorua. **Glenn Edhouse**  
 Rock Solid Concrete, Inglewood. **Mike Moorcock**

*by George Hedley*

**When you postpone making tough decisions or firing people, subcontractors, suppliers or consultants, it costs you time, energy and lots of money. Quick and firm decisions are hard to make but they do get to the bottom of your business problems fast.**

When things go bad, they generally don't get better. Eventually you'll have to make the decisions. So, why not make them sooner than later.

Here are some thoughts and rules to follow:

### 1. It's about results, not activity!

Some people stay busy at their job but don't get the results you expect from them. Give them clear targets to hit. If they don't hit them, give them a quick warning, coaching and a second chance.

If they still don't get the results you want, fire them fast. Staying busy are excuses people use who don't hit their targets. They blame their poor performance on just about everything except themselves.

They don't take responsibility or accept accountability for their actions. These people ruin a good company and take all your time to manage.

### 2. Attack problems

When you postpone making tough decisions, you also delay solving the problem. Delaying the inevitable cause's stress, grief, lost sleep and lost money. Problems don't get better. They get worse and harder to solve. Do it now or do it later.

### 3. Go with your gut

You know what you should do. If you think something's wrong - it probably is. So go and do what you need to do right now.

### 4. Be pro-active with communications

Know and follow your contracts. Use them as a tool to get the results you want. When you tiptoe around problems, they only get worse and cost you lots of money.

When you're not getting the results you expect, put people, subcontractors, suppliers, owners and consultants on notice they must perform or you will replace them per the contract.

### 5. Fire fast

Everyone sees problem people and the damage they do. The longer you don't act, the more you irritate others. Everyone is waiting for you to do what you need to do. When you don't do what you should, you lose respect as your good people continue to put up with poor performers or a bad attitude.

When you aren't getting the results you need, use those famous words: **"You're fired!"**

Immediately you'll feel relieved and the pressure will lift. You can now work on solving the problem instead of working with the wrong people, suppliers, subcontractors or consultants. Your attitude will change from negative to positive. And your team will rally around your decision.

What are you waiting for?