

The Effects of COVID-19 On a Commercial Construction Company: A Case Study

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 resulted in many states issuing stay-at-home orders and closing businesses. In some states, construction was deemed essential and allowed to remain open. Dempsey Construction, Inc. is a Southern California commercial construction company that was permitted to continue operation with the exception of a brief lockdown in March and April of 2020. Despite being permitted to remain open, the company had to face many direct and indirect challenges resulting from the worldwide pandemic. In addition to schedule adjustments, daily cleaning on jobsites and in the office, and increased material prices and lead times, Dempsey also had to contend with the unknowns of the future. Projected job loss, subcontractor and developer relationship changes, and the crash of specific construction sectors were all indirect impacts that Dempsey had to contend with amidst the pandemic. Despite the negative impacts of the pandemic, many employees were able to find positive changes due to COVID-19. The worker relationship onsite became more caring, time spent traveling to meetings was significantly reduced, and on a more personal level, many employees were able to spend more time with their families. The pandemic highlighted Dempsey's ability to survive a recession through conservative practices and proper planning.

Key Words: COVID-19, pandemic, construction, stay-at-home orders, solutions

Conclusions

- Heavily impacted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with stay-at-home orders, clean workplace regulations and a loss of projected work totaling \$40 million.
- Direct Impacts - schedule adjustments, daily cleaning on jobsites and in the office, and increased material prices and lead times
- Indirect Impacts - Projected job loss, subcontractor and developer relationship changes, and the crash of specific construction sectors
- Solutions - The worker relationship onsite became more caring, time spent traveling to meetings was significantly reduced, and on a more personal level many employees were able to spend more time with their families.

Research Questions

1. Identify and analyze the direct impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the field and office employees and work production of a commercial construction company.
2. Identify and analyze the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on a commercial construction company.
3. Identify and analyze what solutions can reduce the impact of COVID-19 on a commercial construction company.

Methodology

- Semi-formal interviews with Dempsey Construction, Inc. employees
- Dempsey Construction Inc: commercial general contractor based in Carlsbad, CA.
- Medium sized company with roughly 50 employees
- broad range of positions interviewed

