



## "BUT THAT'S HOW WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT"

Many in the glazing business have heard this muttered by a seasoned glazier at some point in their career. The main excuse is that traditional methods are “easier” to do rather than learning a new way. The problem with this statement is that the industries' technologies from as little as two years ago can be outdated, especially as the trade continues to progress in product testing and research and development. It is important to keep finding new ways to improve and allow your field staff to contribute as the industry consistently take a new shape.

### Challenging Our Assumptions

In order to stimulate creativity and encourage others to accept new ideas, we have to ask people to challenge their assumptions. This may be difficult to do because practicing the same routine every day may be comforting and easy to do. However, it is important to be humble and realize that the traditional way may not be the most effective. Making this recognition will help you grow in your career.

When being open to improvement, you feel satisfaction after discovering a new method that saves time, material, and manpower. Finding new ways to do things also helps you advance your skills

as a glazier, making you irreplaceable in your field and be able to work with more complex projects. You can also increase teamwork with coworkers by learning from each other and respecting one another's ideas. Finally, keeping an open mind will make you a great leader because you can teach what you know and motivate others to contribute.

## Keep Learning and Improving

Evolving the way you do something is not as hard as you think. You may learn skills from a coworker, a training session, or even an instruction manual. Sometimes we refuse to follow outside advice out of pride or fear of being old-fashioned, but that prevents us from seeing obstacles a different way.

Matt Aragon, the YPG Committee Chair, remembers a time when he was in the field with a foreman who insisted that they must seal the heads of pressure bar screws or the system will leak. The foreman's reasoning was that this was the way he had always done it. In 30 seconds, they pulled up the installation instructions and found that this costly and time-consuming

activity was not even required.

"I've kept that story in the back of my mind to chuckle at until just the other day I found myself guilty of the same mindset," Matt remembers. "I had a newly hired engineer ask why I was planning on using a two-piece horizontal mullion when we could have used the leftover cutoffs from the verticals. What followed was my list of reasons why we have 'always done it that way,' but truth is, he was right! It took me three days to realize that I too needed to challenge my assumptions."



# Innovation in The Workplace

If you have a new strategy for completing a task but do not know how to approach your supervisor, there are ways to present your idea in a way they will agree.



## Know the Objective

Understanding your idea's purpose before presenting is crucial. This allows you to answer questions, know what to expect from yourself and others, and be ready to adapt when something does not go as planned. Thinking it through helps you feel confident about your proposal.



## No Judgement Zone

You can show good intentions by asking questions and listening to the purpose behind traditional methods. Chances are there is a reason why, and if not, you now know how to bring your supervisor to your side. People are more supportive of those who show curiosity, not judgement.



## Be Inclusive

Using words like “we” and “us” is better than “you” when presenting an idea. You are, after all, part of the team, and using this language implies you can also improve. This also includes keeping your own mind open when a coworker has an idea of their own.



## Read the Room

Present your method during a relaxed time rather than a stressful situation. People are more likely to accept new ideas with a clear mind where they can evaluate your proposal.

You can expect some push back at first, but if you approach people with humility and a desire to help them, they will quickly see that you want something better for everyone rather than a pile of mistakes to be corrected.

## Take the Initiative

Lastly, we must build a framework for best practices. This means creating a structure in your organization that enables people to stay current. If your company's network does not have a library of installation instructions, build one. If those instructions are not a part of your fabrication checklist, add it. If you are not holding a pre-job meeting with your foreman to go over critical installation steps, DO IT!

You cannot expect people to know what they do not know. Instead, build learning into your standard operating procedure with a positive attitude. In the end, the juice is worth the squeeze.

So, the next time you hear "but that's how we've always done it," remember that there are tangible steps that YOU can take to change that mindset. Do not be afraid to take the first step!



# GAME TIME!

Answer the following question for a chance to win a \$40 Amazon gift card!

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Have you discovered a new way to do a task (personally or professionally)?

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