THE SCAFFOLDING PLAYBOOK!

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTERS

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This webinar focused on the numbers scaffolding businesses need to know to stay profitable, productive and in control.

David Crowley from Scafit and Phillip Whitbread from GIA Scaffolding shared honest, practical insights from both sides of the Tasman.

While New Zealand and Australia operate slightly differently, many of the challenges are the same: tight pricing, rising costs, labour pressure, gear management, cash flow, productivity and the need to stop relying on guesswork.

The lesson was clear: there is no perfect model, but every business needs to understand the costs and risks behind the way they operate. Knowing your numbers is not just about accounting. It is about protecting your margin, managing your people, controlling your gear and making better decisions before problems become expensive.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 *Different markets, same pressure*

Both side of the Tasman operate differently, but the challenges are similar. Either way, you need to understand the cost, risk and pressure behind the model you are running.

2 *Profit leaks hide in the small details*

Profit is not always lost in one big mistake. It can disappear through old quotes, missed variations, wasted labour hours, damaged gear, poor planning or equipment sitting on site unused. Small leaks add up quickly when they are not tracked.

3 *Labour productivity is a key number*

Labour is one of the biggest costs in scaffolding. Knowing how many hours were allowed, how the crew is tracking and where time is being lost helps protect margin. This is achieved from great planning, leadership, communication and clear expectations.

4 *Gear management affects cash flow*

Gear is money. If owned gear is sitting unused, it is not earning. If hired gear is not returned, it keeps costing. Knowing what is on site, what is being used and what needs to come back is critical.

5 *Systems only work if people use them*

Good systems identify what is happening across labour, gear, quoting, compliance and cash flow. Software alone does not fix the problem. It needs leadership, buy-in and someone inside the business driving it every day.

THE MAIN 6 TAKEAWAYS

- Don't wait until the end of the job to find out the margin is gone.
- Outdated quotes kill profit. If costs or scopes change, review your quote.
- Labour & productivity matters. Your teams performs impacts bottom line.
- Owned or hired, unused and unmanaged gear can quietly burn cash.
- Systems prevent surprises: Systems help you see issues while you have time to act.
- Winning work is not enough. A job only matters if it is priced, managed and delivered profitably.

ACTION POINTS

1. During The Job:
Track labour hours, productivity, gear on site, gear returns, damaged equipment, missed checks, delays, variations, consumables and changes in scope. Give supervisors and leading hands enough information to know whether the job is tracking properly. If something is drifting, pick it up early.

2. After The Job:
Compare what was quoted against what actually happened. Review labour performance, gross profit, equipment usage, gear loss or damage, variations, cash flow and what needs to be improved for the next job.

3. Every Month:
Review your profit and loss, gross profit, labour return, cash flow, overheads, equipment utilisation and debt position. For businesses that own gear, keep a close eye on cash flow and equity. For businesses that hire gear, keep a close eye on supplier timelines, return processes and hire costs.

4. With Your Team:
Communicate regularly. Monthly meetings are not enough if the business is moving quickly. Use pre-starts, toolbox meetings, health and safety meetings and regular check-ins to keep expectations clear. A good culture does not remove the need for numbers, but it helps the team act on them.

5. With Your Systems:
Use tools that give you one clear source of truth. That could be accounting software, job management software, CRM tools, estimating systems, compliance software, asset registers, dashboards or reporting tools. The best system is not the flashiest one. It is the one your team uses properly and your leaders commit to.

CONCLUSION

The strongest businesses are not always the ones with the most gear, the biggest team or the cheapest price. They are the ones that know where they stand.

- They know their costs.
- They know their labour performance.
- They know their gear.
- They know their cash flow.
- They know when to push back.
- They know when a job is worth winning.

That is what knowing your numbers really means.