

# More Thoughts on Improving Tent Rental Operational Efficiencies



## Overview

A key component to improving profitability in the tent rental business is and will always be working to realize further operational efficiencies for the business. Teeco Solutions has worked with and studied the best practices of many tent rental operators for over a decade. Certain practices continually resonate as smart repeatable approaches to improving operating efficiencies. There's no question that there are a lot of moving parts to operating a profitable tent rental business. We trust that you'll find one or two helpful tips in this paper that will help take your commercial tent rental business to the next level of operational efficiency and profitability.

## Establish Subcontractor Relationships

When operating a tent rental business, it becomes evident pretty quickly that it is nearly impossible to be an expert at all facets of the business. Many highly successful operators have found that by forming partnerships with reliable subcontractors for certain aspects of the job can deliver greater efficiencies and drive a higher level of quality in the work performed. For example, many tent rental operators have found that forming relationships with reputable flooring and scaffolding contractors when it comes to laying tent floors and erecting large frame tents. Another consideration is that of electrical. Electrical contractors can be invaluable to ensure that work is performed in a quality manner and compliant with local code. All this said, before forming any kind of subcontractor relationship an owner/operator would be wise to carefully screen and ensure that the work performed by the subcontractor is of the quality of work that your firm is known for delivering. A poor performing subcontractor becomes a poor reflection on your business. One job gone badly can be difficult to overcome in terms of the damage done to an operator's reputation.

Another approach to subcontracting is to consider a competitor to handle a job that for whatever reasons your operation is not in a good position to handle. For example, the job may call for a large frame tent and you may not have sufficient tent inventory or labor to handle the job. In this case, when working with a competitor you may find that there is sufficient revenue potential in the pricing of the job for your business to realize a modest mark-up and still price the job competitively. On the flip side, this same competitor may come across certain jobs that do not fit his operations, but might be something that could be a natural fit for your operation.

There may well be other opportunities for your business to bring value to the competitor's business. You may have a Teeco washer in your operation. If so, you are in a position to provide tent-washing services in preparation for an event. Delivering a bright white tent at a fraction of the cost that the subcontractor could deliver by manually washing the tent material can bring significant value to the contractor-sub relationship.

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Another opportunity to bring value to a subcontractor relationship would be to deliver power tent stake driving and pulling services. Renting a PowerCrew tent stake-driving machine to a subcontractor can save considerable labor expense and make for short work in driving and pulling tent stakes on a job. These situations can create a great “win-win” for both your business and that of the subcontractor.

## Steps to More Profitable Jobs

To help further improve efficiencies and profitability for your jobs, get other members of your operations team to take a look at the site and the job description before hand. Thinking the job through with other members of your team will bring some great ideas to the table that can surely improve operating efficiencies and profitability of the job.

Additional opportunities to increase operating efficiencies may well include:

**Staging of set-up times** to allow for set-up of smaller tents off to the side in the early stages of setting up the job. By doing so, you may find that valuable time can be saved in the event of potential inclement weather.

**Negotiating start times with the customer** - Sometimes events will dictate a very specific start date and time for set-up. You will want to identify the customer’s reason for doing so. Often, set-up times are established based on issues of space utilization (e.g. The event is to take place at a downtown location and it would be important to schedule set-up at a time when there will be minimal foot traffic possibly after midnight on a certain weekday.) Knowing the reason behind the customer requested set-up time will provide greater insight from which you will be able to negotiate a more opportune time for your crew to initiate set-up. Additionally, by asking questions of the customer about the site location, you may learn that the customer has a small space that will serve as a perfect staging area to allow for the set-up of 10x10s or 20x20 tops a day earlier or hours earlier. Then when it is time to set-up for the event, your crew will be able to carry the tents to the final location. There will likely be times when you can get creative and negotiate with another business or parking lot operator to provide some valuable space for event staging. Taking these extra steps to move the logistics in your favor can help to dramatically beat deadlines for event set-up times. All of these actions ultimately can lead to a very satisfied customer that provides great referrals and repeat business.

**Advance Team** - Sometimes sending a small crew (2 workers) out to the customer site a day or two in advance to physically mark the location of the tents and placement of the stakes with spray paint can save valuable time when the equipment arrives at the site.

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**Divide and Conquer** - If the job is significantly large consider breaking it down into smaller jobs and make small crews responsible for their particular part. Meet with those crew leaders well in advance. Show them the scope of the entire project and make sure that they understand their part and how it fits into the larger scope of the event. Make certain that the crews are aware of their deadlines and make every crew responsible for getting the materials to the jobsite, ensuring the proper timing for the sharing of resources (jackhammers, trucks, forklifts etc...) with other crews.

**Other Opportunities** for improving operating efficiencies may well include the use of truck equipment. The job site may only accommodate smaller trucks vs. larger vehicles. Assessing the other requirements for the job in advance of the set-up date will also be helpful. Consider the following:

**Equipment Needs** – What other equipment will be needed at the job site? What about the need for forklifts, tent weights, flooring. What's the plan for raising the pole tents? Teeco Solutions newest piece of equipment the PowerCrew series makes light work for the raising of center poles, as well as delivering the capability for automated tent stake driving and stake pulling. If using tent weights, is it possible to make use of square concrete weights instead of round weights? Square weights tend to nest on a pallet better. Will the job site capabilities allow for the use of a forklift or a Teeco PowerCrew unit to be able to move an entire pallet to each individual tent location placing each weight on the spot in which it is required? The use of power equipment can be a whole lot more efficient when handling large quantities of tent weights.

If the job is to make use of water weights think ahead as to how the water weights will be filled. It will take considerably longer to fill the weights with a garden hose as opposed to having access to a fire hydrant if one is in close proximity to the job site. Depending on the size of the job, it may be wise to consider hiring a water hauling company to come in and fill the barrels. Another approach to hauling water is to make use of a large plastic tank often used in watering livestock or for dispensing liquid fertilizer, and place the tank on the back of a pick-up truck. Gravity feeding of water into the barrels can be very efficient just as long as a large diameter flexible hose is connected to the tank.

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As for the use of the use of ropes in tying down equipment and materials, your crews will be better served by making use of ratchet straps for everything. Ratchet straps are a whole lot quicker to tie down loads and at the same time a whole lot safer to use.

**Labor Management** – Based on the requirements of the job, is it possible that the majority of the laborers show up at the jobsite to start their day. This approach will be significantly more efficient as apposed to showing up at the warehouse and paying the workers for windshield time to travel to and from the site. These small changes in operating procedures can mount up to significant improvements in efficiencies and job profitability.

## Summary

The challenges of efficiently and effectively operating a tent rental business are many. But many of those challenges can be properly addressed with good planning and resource allocation. When going about the day-to-day operations for your business and planning the work or your crews, be smart and maintain an open eye and an open ear to opportunities to improve both the quality and efficiency of how work is being performed. At the end of the day, it's the little improvements that will pay big returns in both improved profitability and customer satisfaction.

**Teeco Solutions** is in the business of helping commercial tent and party rental operators mechanize traditional labor-intensive processes to improve operating efficiencies and bottom line profits. Teeco Solutions' line of reliable, high quality tent washers, dryers and work site power equipment is designed to improve operating efficiencies and productivity while improving the quality of products and services delivered. Teeco Solutions is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, USA but our long list of satisfied customers can be found around the globe from coast to coast in the U.S. to across the pond in Europe and way down under in Australia. Contact us today for a complimentary assessment of your tent rental operations and let us help you uncover hidden operating efficiencies and profits for your business. We can be reached toll free in the U.S. and Canada at **877.712.9172** or via email at [sales@teecosolutions.com](mailto:sales@teecosolutions.com). From Europe dial +011-314-968-3555, for European technical sales dial +4670853660 or in the UK dial 02033 569655.