

GROUNDHOG DAY – RECURRING FIELD RELATED ISSUES IN THE BUILDING ENCLOSURE

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Starring iconic comedian Bill Murray, the movie Groundhog Day came out in 1993. In the years since its release, the film has grown in esteem and is often considered to be among the greatest films of the 1990s and one of the greatest comedy movies ever.

It also had a significant impact on popular culture; the term Groundhog Day became part of the English lexicon, meaning a monotonous, unpleasant, and repetitive situation. After watching the movie a few times over the years, I reflected on the construction industry and thought: It does seem like I am reliving the exact same day, over and over.

Now, I don't mean I wake up every morning and my alarm clock is playing "I've got you babe" by Sonny and Cher. I mean it seems that for the past two decades, I continue to hear the same issues play out on a large number of construction projects. I have thought out loud of what could be done to stop having the same recurring issues in the field.

In the movie, Phil Connors (played by Bill Murray), was stuck in this time loop that he desperately tried to get out of. The one key part to the ending of the movie is that he used this time loop to change himself and help others. He lived the same day over and over and used that time to learn, adjust, improve, and eventually found his way out and started to live a new day.

As I began to think about what I could do to change things, I took a few things off the list to start:

- Stealing Punxsutawney Phil
- Binge eating
- Driving a car down railroad tracks
- Learning Piano

Now that those are no longer options, here are a few things that I thought could maybe work:

- Believe that you can influence the construction process and not have to live the same day over and over.
- Take a more integrated project delivery approach that brings all parties to the table, way before bid date.
- Invest in more robust and detailed pre-construction meetings.
- Understand the value of trained and certified sub-contractors. Compare apples to apples and understand you get what you pay for.
- Stop value-engineering important things. Understand how a dollar spent in preventative measures will save hundreds of dollars in potential repair costs.
- Implement a quality management system that does root cause analysis and employs corrective action. Understand why the issue happened, how to correct it and then make sure it does not happen again.
- Mock-up's – the crash test dummy for buildings. Understand sequencing, material compatibility, trade scope, responsibility and create a standard to be met.
- Site verification and performance testing. The final test to verify we met performance expectations.

There are many more things that can be added to this list, but ones I feel stick out to me. I have seen the integration of these solutions on a number of projects and have been amazed at how smoothly things have gone.

So, we have a choice to make. Do we continue to live the movie Groundhog Day? or learn from our experience to make things better and no longer live with the status quo.

Apparently, the Groundhog saw his shadow this year, so that means I'm stuck with some more cold Manitoba weather and snow. It's been six weeks of this, and I am pretty sure I'm living the Manitoba version of Groundhog Day!

