

“Some of My Men Don’t Think They’ll Like It...”

By Justin Breithaupt, Jr.; Non-Stop Scaffolding, Inc.
800-845-0845 - breithaupt@gmail.com

This is something we hear a lot. Here’s how it goes: We approach a masonry contractor about the possibility of using Non-Stop, and he says, “I’ve asked my guys what they think about it, and some of them don’t like it, “ or “my men don’t want to use anything but frames.”

Now, is it the bricklayers or the laborers saying that? In our experience, we’ve **never** met a bricklayer who didn’t **love** working on Non-Stop. Eliminate all the bending down and reaching up to lay 35-pound blocks and that bricklayer will love you. And it’s the bricklayers that make your money so let’s keep them happy. Actually, all the resistance comes from the **laborers**. Let’s figure out why.

You build Non-Stop once, at the beginning of the job, on the ground, so there’s no climbing. No part weighs more than a sack of mix. It takes about half as much time as frames. From then on, the towers are moved from wall to wall with a forklift. That eliminates **all** the scaffold building and tear-down for the **entire duration of the job!** The laborers ought to like that.

Non-Stop lets you start the wall right off the scaffold. The bricklayers walk on the ground and the laborers walk on the scaffold. When the wall gets to a comfortable working height, the bricklayers’ walkboards are dropped in place in about 30 seconds. Nobody moves to another wall. There is no 25-minute work stoppage because they got scaffold-high. Everyone just keeps on working. That’s less work for the laborers. **They ought to like that, too.**

On frames, the laborers have to raise the boards and leftover materials every 4 to 6 feet. That’s about a 20-minute pain-in-the-behind (and hazardous) job they have to do many times a day. There’s none of that on Non-Stop, they just keep tending. **They ought to really like that.**

So what’s left for the laborers to do on Non-Stop? Tend the masons and crank the scaffold. The laborers raise the scaffold every 20 minutes or so. They crank for about 3 minutes and tend for about 20 to 30. Cranking is easy due to the winch gearing. You can land a pallet of split-faced 12s and crank it one-handed. They stay with the bricklayers all day long and keep them covered up with materials. **That’s all.**

We still don’t see a problem.

So why are the laborers against it before they even use it? **Fear of something new.** All they’ve ever known their whole lives is building and tearing down frames, hopping planks every 4 to 6 feet, and re-handling leftover materials. When they start working on Non-Stop, life’s a whole lot simpler, but it’s **different**, and it takes about a week to get used to anything that’s different, even if it’s **better** for you. But they will gripe and complain at first. Ask contractors who routinely use Non-Stop and they’ll tell you their laborers actually prefer it over frames, once they make friends with it, but it takes about a week.

A case in point: An old friend of ours, Red Vidrine in Ville Platte, LA, tells the story of a school addition job with multiple classroom wing additions, all identical. He took his new Non-Stop scaffolding out to the job and asked one of his foremen if he would give it a try. The foreman said no, he’d rather not, he could do just fine with his frames. Red asked another foreman and this one said sure let’s give it a try. As Red tells it, “That foreman finished an identical wing 3 weeks ahead of the first guy and they loved the scaffold - can’t get it away from them. I had three weeks worth of payroll money I got to keep for myself. Now I just go out to the job and say, ‘Here’s your scaffold. Use it!’”