

Young Leader Profiles

At Your Service

Project manager Matt Witte works hard so customers don't have to.

In May, AHS Inc. Project Manager **Matt Witte**, 25, finished his first marathon, but he is no stranger to going the extra mile. Witte has been doing just that for customers since joining AHS in 2005.

As a project manager, Witte is responsible for "scope, schedule and budget," making sure customers get exactly what they ordered, on time, at the price promised. He coordinates all permitting and deliveries and works with subcontractors at various job locations.

"Ideally, the customer gives us a purchase order and then doesn't have to do anything else. We try to eliminate pain on their end of the project by trying to do everything for them. That's what I try to make sure happens," Witte says.

That type of customer service is what lured Witte to AHS in the first place. After earning his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Cincinnati, Witte joined UPS Supply Chain Solutions as a facility engineer. There, he hired AHS to help with a project and came away impressed. "I liked what they did and how they did it," he recalls. "I saw an opportunity for growth in my career, so I came to work here at AHS."

Witte spends about 50 percent of his days at the office, where he arrives about 8:00 a.m. "Usually the first hour or so is my planning period for the day to line up the tasks I want to get done," he says. The rest of the day is spent calling customers and subcontractors, double-checking engineers' work, and doing administrative tasks related to each project he's working on.

But it's on the other 50 percent of his days that Witte really makes his mark. When in the field, Witte starts around 6:30 a.m. "I want to be there before the crews to make sure everything looks okay. I like to take a look around before meeting with them," he explains. Witte spends the rest of the day checking and re-checking dimensions and ensuring all facets of the job are running smoothly. "I really try to think

of everything that could go wrong before it does go wrong." He also is sure to double-check everything to make sure everyone is held accountable for what they're supposed to do. "Customers buy from us based on the fact that we'll communicate well to them and the project will go in as they want it to. Communication is really our job, in my opinion."

From Better to Best

Communication is a skill that Witte continues to perfect, along with the others that he says make a good project

manager. "It's critical to be able to communicate with all kinds of people, from the warehouse employee to the vice president of engineering to an owner," Witte says. "Knowing how to balance that, the ability to think analytically and a good mechanical background are the three things needed for success as a project manager in this industry."

Witte's work ethic also sets him apart. "I work standard hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., but if someone calls me at 9:00 p.m. with an issue, I don't hesitate to answer the call or even get in my car and go help them if I can. That's what gets us repeat business and makes our company who we are." As Witte continues to grow in his position and in the industry, he hopes he serves as a role model to others.

"A lot of times, people don't care that much about what they do, and they'll just put together whatever to get sign-off. But it's about going beyond that and taking things from better to the best that it can be."

Although Witte has worked on as many as six projects simultaneously, the usual load is more like two or three at a time. Maintaining contact with everyone while traveling around the country can be a challenge, particularly with smaller projects that don't require a project manager on site full time. "It gets to be a juggling act at times, trying to make everyone happy and keeping the details of each job straight," Witte says. "But it's really fulfilling when an installation is complete, it works as it's supposed to, and the customer tells us we did a great job."



Matt Witte, project manager at AHS, Inc. (Cincinnati, OH), works hard to help customers.