

Cultivating a Company Culture Committed to Safety, Mentorship, and Education

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The construction industry is aging. Valuing the significance of promoting a culture that enhances safety, mentorship, and educational opportunities is essential to recruiting and retaining top talent to keep the industry thriving.

According to the [U.S. Department of Labor](#), one in five worker deaths in the U.S. occurs in the construction industry. Additionally, construction workers are statistically at a higher risk for mental-health issues than virtually every other profession. According to a study conducted by CIRP, [83%](#) of construction workers have struggled with mental-health disorders.

Today's leaders must be dedicated to listening to employees' voices to shape the construction industry, as future leaders will be formed by a culture committed to employees' mental and physical health, safety, professional growth, and overall workplace culture.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

One of the most significant components of successful leadership is leading by example. Leaders must take it upon themselves to implement and exemplify safety protocols, build beneficial programs for employees, and, perhaps most importantly, express moral integrity.

Leaders must encourage their employees to keep learning and growing to become the best versions of themselves. This can be done through – and many companies have already created – education policies that encourage workers to obtain



and assist them in obtaining their degrees, every step of the way, even financially. Education will help the employee both personally and professionally, and the company overall.

In addition to an education policy, encouraging employees to participate in training programs has shown high benefits – like ABC's STEP safety program. The knowledge and experience gained throughout these types of workplace programs makes construction executives better leaders, which trickles down to the rest of the team.

MENTOR FUTURE LEADERS

Some company initiatives might require new employees to begin mentorship programs as soon as they step on board. This starts with a personalized approach by pairing

a newcomer with a seasoned leader to learn each part of the business from their experienced mentor. From field-oriented quality-assurance programs to office-based tasks, the mentorship training provides hands-on knowledge that forms the comprehension of construction work. Investing in these leadership programs will reflect a priority not only in investing time on the front end to empower current employees, but also in investing in their role future leaders.

Beyond technical expertise, mentorship programs can further employees' commitment to strengthening interpersonal skills by building relationships with partners within and without the company. With a focus on negotiation tactics, relationship building, and conflict resolution, these skills distinguish a good leader from a great one. This results in significant benefits to team culture and member dedication.

PRIORITIZE PHYSICAL SAFETY AND MENTAL WELLBEING

The number one priority for every construction company should be its employees' physical safety and mental health. To take action on this priority, a training session, such as the "question, persuade, refer" method—a program with approval from various organizations, including TSPN, TAADAS, TDMHSAS and TDH — should be implemented. Sessions are led for team members, where participation in training is designed to equip individuals with skills and knowledge to help someone considering suicide. The QPR training course is just as vital as CPR training — it can save lives.

In addition to QPR and CPR safety training, construction companies can offer reduced insurance premiums for those proactively managing their health. This is a small gesture that can be done to make employee's lives a bit easier and show some appreciation.


Ultimately, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of construction teams is a top priority, and these examples are just a few ways to demonstrate a commitment to this goal.

GET CERTIFIED

To emphasize a commitment to safety, all site superintendents should be encouraged to obtain a 30-hour OSHA certification and assistant project managers a 10-hour OSHA certification. Leaders can do this by making it part of the onboarding process for new hires to receive this training. Additionally,

implementing monthly inspections by a third-party safety consultant to ensure that all safety guidelines are followed is another way to be safe.

Over the past few years, companies that have implemented these measures have seen a significant improvement in safety culture due to rarely seeing more than one minor issue or infraction in monthly inspection reports. This is a testament to the cultural changes enacted by leadership, and the staff's dedication to embracing safety guidelines.

The construction industry faces significant challenges, including a shortage of skilled labor and increased project competition. However, leaders must always remember that employees are their most valuable assets. It's their duty to provide them with a healthy work environment and a responsibility to prioritize safety for all. 



About the Author

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