

Why Employee Development is the Key to Everything

Written by: Richard Walker, CEO, XL Construction

The future of our industry is in a state of flux. From an increased demand for talent to more focus on cost competitiveness, disruptions are afoot. While analyzing your business model and tightening operating procedures are important, it is even more important to focus on one critical asset: your people.

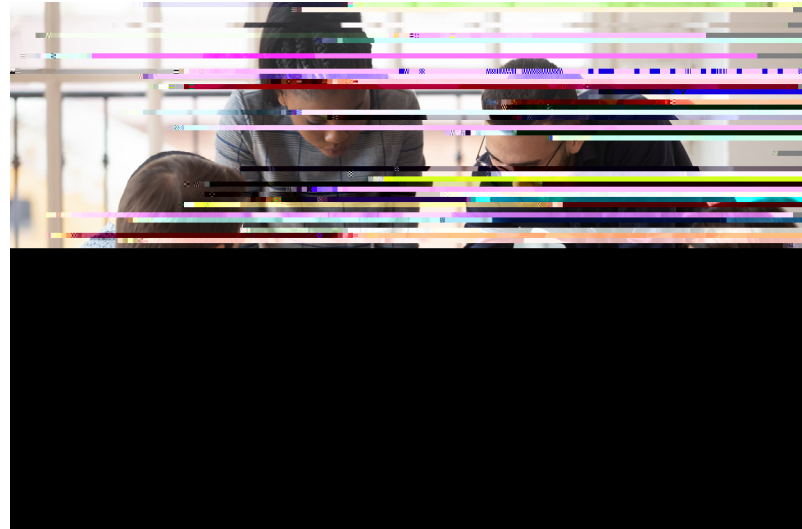
The importance of prioritizing employee development cannot be overstated. It's the competitive advantage too often overlooked.

Construction firms build things. But they construct much more than buildings: They also develop people. And if you help people on their journey, it pays dividends to them and the company over time.

The true value of any company is its people. Everything meaningful you do within your organization happens through people. This is true in any industry—it's people who make the decisions that determine a company's success or failure.

A focus on building people sparks two significant outcomes—both of which are good for business:

1. **EMPLOYEES ARE HAPPIER AND ACHIEVE MORE OUT OF LIFE** - They are better positioned to fulfill their unique dreams, which might be financial, a specific role, or possibly a better work/life balance or mastering a specific skill. Whatever it is, working at an organization that invests in them has a ripple effect across their lives.



2. **EMPLOYEES MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT ON THE COMPANY, ACCELERATING ITS SUCCESS** - For many companies, success is defined as profit. But more broadly speaking, it's also

are a byproduct of building people and have a direct impact on the bottom line.

Bonus: As employee retention becomes a more pressing issue across all sectors, investing resources in the people who power your organization makes employees less likely to jump ship.

Employee satisfaction does not begin and end with compensation. Money is always an important factor, but if the pandemic has taught businesses anything, it's that fostering an environment that provides opportunity and creates a sense of

belonging, pride, and respect amongst employees is often far more important.

Ask yourself: Are you creating a desirable workplace? Is it the kind of workplace you would want to operate in? What are you getting right? What are you getting wrong? What is falling through the cracks? It's easy to talk a big game, but if the day-to-day reality doesn't align, employee output will suffer—or they'll just leave.

It's never one-size-fits-all, but here are some employee-first initiatives to enhance and amplify your employee development practices:

Solid education and training programs, either in-house or from outside resources, ensure employees have the best information and latest thinking for excelling at their jobs. Arming them with knowledge builds competence and confidence.

As employees climb the ranks, their need for technical skill sets diminish and the need to hire, lead, and develop the people they manage increases. Leadership workshops, as well as self-awareness and communication training, empowers employees to build stronger, more effective, trusting, and reliable relationships that help the organization thrive. For this group on the rise, it's now their turn to take the torch and begin building people.


For experience in companies plotting their success going forward, and employees groomed for long tenures play a large role in keeping an organization at the forefront of the industry. This initiative gives organizations a roadmap for grooming its future leaders early and often.

Focus: “Be present” is a phrase often ignored in the workplace.

Focus on making yourself better in what you’re doing right now, without worrying about how you will get promoted. Be fully present in your mindset and execution, and the next phase will organically come into focus in time.

Have Patience: Nothing great is built overnight—including you. Take the time to achieve the skills and competencies needed at your current level. If you don’t, those deficiencies will come back to bite you later in your career. Remember: this is a marathon, not a sprint. Give yourself the time and space you need to arrive at each project and role in the best way possible.

Know What You Want: Your career is about more than a title. Get clear on what you truly want your days to look like: Is it more technical? More of a management role? Success is driven by staying aligned with what works for you. Knowing what you want and staying true to it gives you the best shot of loving what you do every day.

Any company is only as good as the people that power it. That takes mindful, ongoing investment from both the company and the individual employees. How does your firm stack up? Do you build your people as well as your structures? 



About the Author

Richard Walker, chief executive officer of XL Construction, is a nearly 30-year veteran of the construction and real estate industries with a passion for sustainable and innovative building design.

About the Article

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