

Partners **IN** Progress

SMACNA & SMART—Building a Future Together

January 2021

**“Every act of communication is a miracle
of translation ...”**



SMART

HVAC
Industrial
Architectural
Metal

EXPERTISE

PERFORMANCE • TRAINING • STANDARDS



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Resolve to Build the Best Teams in 2021

January 1 marks the opportunity for new beginnings. For many people it is a day of reflection, looking backward over the previous year and resolving to do better in the coming year. New Year's resolutions have a long history, dating as far back as 4,000 years with the ancient Babylonians who made promises with the hope that if those promises were fulfilled, favor would be bestowed upon them in the coming year. Ancient Romans carried on the tradition of New Year's resolutions in January, a month named for Janus, the two-faced god. In Roman culture, the first day of the new year likewise became the traditional time for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do better in the future.

Every year millions of people continue to make resolutions for positive changes in their lives. Common resolutions are to exercise more, lose weight, quit smoking, or read or travel more. New Year's resolutions do not have to be limited solely to personal improvement. This month's issue of *Partners in Progress* provides valuable insight into things SMACNA and SMART partners can resolve to do to enhance the teams that will make our industry stronger.

Having the right team in place is key to achieving organizational and industry goals. Past editions of *Partners in Progress* have emphasized the value that diversity brings to team success. Important aspects of diversity are, of course, gender, race, and cultural background. But diversity does not stop there. Gen Z, or individuals born between 1997-2012, will soon comprise one quarter of the global workforce. "Lost in Translation," beginning on page 4, emphasizes why it is critical to our future to understand and engage this generation. Learn which media platforms are most effective in communicating with Gen Z and why members of Gen Z are the best spokespersons to promote the sheet metal industry to their peers.

Turn to page 6 to understand why you want to make sure your organizational teams include individuals who are curious, risk-taking, and resistant to failure. You will learn how "Gamers," with their unique thinking and problem-solving skills, are particularly adept at dealing with any kind of uncertainty (think pandemic).

For a real-life case study on a labor and management team that has employed problem-solving skills and ingenuity to take on larger and more complex projects over time, see page 9. Check out how Local 103 and Norpac in Montana overcame logistical, weather, security, and wildlife challenges on a project in America's most beloved national park.

On page 11, industry expert Stephane McShane provides step-by-step advice on assembling teams with a cross-section of expertise to analyze current processes and identify and implement improvements. Ms. McShane explains how these



improvements increase operational effectiveness and create organizational cultures that people want to be a part of.

Are you overlooking the leadership potential of introverts in your organization? "Hiding in Plain Sight" on page 13 emphasizes that while introverts are not self-promoters, they have valuable insight on reading others in the room and can be great team leaders when tasked with shepherding a group through a difficult project or task.

Union organizers are important members of the SMART team. This month's "My Journey" on page 14 follows the career of Local 9 Organizer Tim Moran and provides a glimpse of these frontline workers who work tirelessly to further our industry.

There are relatively few of us who would not jump at the opportunity for a 2020 "do-over". I personally might be that person shoving people out of the way to get to the front of that do-over line. But it is time to look forward, not backward. The SMACNA-SMART *Partners in Progress* staff wishes all of you a healthy, safe, and prosperous year and hope you will take the opportunity to make and keep a resolution to assemble the union, chapter, and contractor teams that will lead our organizations to success in 2021 and beyond. ■

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Check out the brand ambassador recruitment and referral campaign from *Partners in Progress* to find out why sheet metal workers say,

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Lost In Translation

Learning to speak the language of Gen Z to get recruiting results

By / Natalie Bruckner

TFW you didn't oversleep, that's a W! If you managed to understand that sentence, congratulations, you are speaking the language of Gen Z. For the rest of us, translated into "Olde English," it means: That feeling when you didn't oversleep, that's a win!

With many of the 61 million individuals born between the mid-1990s and 2012 now entering the workforce (and estimated to soon make up a quarter of the global workforce), understanding Gen Z, also known as digital natives, is imperative to the future of the sheet metal industry.

SMACNA and SMART have been adjusting their recruitment efforts to speak directly to this particular generation, and Lisa Bordeaux, consultant to the SMACNA/SMART Best Practices Market Expansion Task Force and an expert in recruitment efforts aimed at young people, has been offering her insights into what steps the industry needs to take, and why.

"It's important to recognize language has evolved," Bordeaux says. "A phrase or word that means something to the Baby Boomers or Millennials doesn't necessarily mean the same thing to Gen Z. So the burden of that translation is on us now to ensure we attract them into the industry."

But where do you start? Bordeaux explains that the best place is in how we talk about the industry. "The challenge we have in sheet metal is being able to speak in a way that is both appropriate and

attractive to Gen Z," she says. "Sheet metal doesn't own a place in the minds of those not familiar with the industry like an electrician does, for example. I've advocated to add the word 'engineer' to the name 'sheet metal' as it becomes appealing to not just Gen Z, but parents, too. The word 'engineer' somehow puts that person in a different mindset. It's an area for potential opportunity, and while I wouldn't want to take away the pride we have for the sheet metal name, we also need to speak to the specializations within our industry so others can understand and get excited about it. That responsibility falls on the contractors, hiring managers, and recruiters to talk about the roles in a new way."

To better understand what Gen Z is looking for in their careers, it's worth doing a deep dive into the similarities and differences between Gen Z and past generations.

Unlike their predecessors the Millennials, who came of age during the Great Recession, this new generation was in line to inherit a strong economy with record-low unemployment—that is until COVID-19 hit. This has reshaped the country's social, political, and economic landscape, and Gen Z sees an uncertain future and is, therefore, seeking stability.

In addition, Gen Z is the first generation to never know a world without the Internet. "Smart phones are probably as important to them as electricity was to past generations," Bordeaux says. "Their brains are wired differently as a result of this."

Bordeaux's statement is backed by numerous studies. In fact, the Brain Research Institute at the University of California has found that digital natives' brains were more actively engaged while scrolling through a webpage than while reading printed text. They are also more likely to multitask than older generations because they use different media at the same time.

Bordeaux says understanding these points helps recruitment efforts and provides the industry with a great opportunity as SMACNA and SMART offer many of the benefits that Gen Z is seeking.

"First, our industry offers stability and growth; second, we can provide Gen Z with the opportunity to pursue different roles—from design to installation—because while Millennials looked to become the CEO, Gen Z want to be challenged by doing various things and working through roles rather than staying in a fixed role," she says. "They truly are multitaskers."

At the top of the Gen Z list of career 'wants' is something that lies at the heart of SMART and SMACNA: mentorship. Bordeaux says now is the time to shout it from the recruitment rooftops.

"Part of the challenge with mentorship is how we talk about it in the industry," she says, noting that Gen Z wasn't necessarily raised with the idea of "apprenticeship".

To them, the idea of an apprenticeship is that they will be the person at the bottom of the totem pole, a lackey. It just doesn't feature in the movies they watch or the music they listen to. "But, their world is all about mentorship," Bordeaux says. "When they need an answer they go and watch an instructional video on YouTube. Mentorship is appealing because it is empowering. We need to think about what we are saying and present it differently, because really, what is apprenticeship if not mentorship?"

But mentorship these days is a two-way street, and as with any interview process, it must be a dialogue. "Being open to reverse mentorship is essential," Bordeaux says. "Other generations can learn a lot from Gen Z, and they in turn find value in bringing their knowledge about technology, for example, to the table."

While recruitment efforts specifically targeting this new generation are still in the early stages, there are a few companies that have it dialled in. Ryan Jenkins, a Gen Z expert and partner at *21mill.com* says that those organizations that are successful in appealing to Gen Z are offering an exceptional candidate experience. "Gen Z is much less likely than previous generations to do business with a company where they have had a poor experience as a job applicant," Jenkins says.

He adds that featuring on *Glassdoor.com*, which anonymously reviews companies, and building your brand through personal, experiential stories are other ways to attract this generation. "Around 70% of candidates look to company reviews before they make career decisions and 69% are likely to apply for a job if the employer actively manages its employer brand."

Carol Duncan, CEO of General Sheet Metal in Clackamas, Oregon, and Best Practices Market Expansion Task Force Chair, has introduced these points into her recruitment and branding efforts, and it's paying off. Her branding features people stories



that help prospective employees visualize themselves in the same position more easily.

"For Gen Z, it's very much about the stories that speak directly to them," Bordeaux says. "I teach my clients to present a more focused recruitment effort and get your people to tell their stories."

With studies showing that more than 70% of Instagram and Snapchat users watch stories on both platforms daily, it's as good a place as any to get the word out there and draw more young eyes to the industry.

It's even more effective to get Gen Z themselves involved in that effort. Delve into Instagram, YouTube, or TickTock and you have countless examples of this younger generation telling their story about sheet metal. Just one example is Gabby Smith (better known as @gabbersxxo on Instagram), a Local 25 apprentice at Independent Sheet Metal in New Jersey, who regularly tells her story to almost 2,000 followers. Caio Torres, a 23-year-old sheet metal worker in Boston, shares his journey as a sheet metal worker @sheetmetalthvac on Instagram, too, and has followers regularly comment on his posts.

What it comes down to is: the next time Gen Zers get phones out at work, don't get mad. Get focused, and ask them to take an active role in posting their story. "The trades really are the best kept secret," Bordeaux says. "Now it's time to learn to communicate that in a language Gen Z can get on board with and get them to help with raising awareness and recruitment!" ■

Natalie is an award-winning writer who has worked in the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, the United States, and Canada. She has more than 23 years experience as a journalist, editor, and brand builder, specializing in construction and transportation. When she's not writing, you will likely find her snowboarding, mountain biking, or climbing mountains with her rescue dog.

5 WAYS GAME THINKING

By / Kate Dames



If you're one of those people who are skeptical about the value of games, think again. Gamers have unique thinking skills that are valuable, especially in times of uncertainty. Below are five examples of how game thinking improves productivity in an organization and creates collaborative teams. But first, a look at thinking styles.

There are many different thinking styles, each useful in different scenarios. Each style is useful in some aspect of work or daily life. It is not a one or the other, rather, it is choosing which one to use in a given situation. An agile mind is flexible enough to be efficient in all the different thinking

styles. For an organization to be optimally productive, you need to practice and become proficient in all of them.

Logic thinking, for example, is useful for procedural work like computer programming and analysis. Lateral or creative thinking, on the other hand, is useful for innovation and problem-solving. You typically don't want a call centre agent or doctor to be too creative and would prefer they stick with what they know. You do, however, want the visual designer or movie producer to be creative in their thinking. Parallel thinking, yet another common thinking style, is useful for decision making and focus or when there are time constraints.

Game thinking is a unique style of thinking and is extremely useful when dealing with any form of uncertainty or complexity at scale. Navigating through a pandemic and the uncertainty it brings calls for applying more game thinking. But what exactly is game thinking? And how is it different from other styles of thinking? How does it improve collaboration?

1. Gamers are Goal-Focused

In the average organizational environment, the goal often gets so fuzzy that people don't realize they are not contributing to it. In fact, being seen as important often becomes the goal, neglecting—and even forgetting—the very reason an organization exists. Rather than moving towards a goal, it becomes a competition to add “more”—more features, more recruits, more employees, more meetings. In fact, many see a calendar filled with back-to-back meetings as a status symbol. There's an illusion that being busier or bigger equates to being more important. This distracts the people from the actual goal. The most exclusive brands are often the small, boutique-like brands focusing on a niche target market, rather than trying to please everyone. Think Tesla, which focused its original model on a small percentage of car lovers. Think Nespresso, who only makes coffee machines. Then think designer brands with their unique signature styles that immediately differentiate them from the bigger, more commercial brands.

Each time you add something more to a product or organization, the goal or essential value proposition becomes slightly fuzzier or more diluted. It becomes harder to achieve your goal with every new team, new feature, or new customer. The shift is, however, so gradual that no-one notices until you need 80% of the available effort to deal with the impact of unintended changes. That leaves available less than 20% of productive time is available to add value.

Gamers, on the other hand, would never play a game if they had to spend 80% of their time performing maintenance.

IMPROVES COLLABORATION

Everything they do is driven by a goal or win condition. Do you fight the monster to get a valuable treasure chest? Or do you avoid it because it's an unnecessary obstacle that keeps you from finding the princess you have to save? Do you explore the cave to look for valuable artefacts that will aid you in your journey? Or do you move on without looking around so that you can get to the main cave faster?

A More Goal-Focused Organization

With game thinking everything depends on the goal and your relationship to that goal. Even when the goal is unknown, the focus is on solving the puzzle that will reveal the win condition. The goal might be clarifying the goal, but it remains focused on that one thing that you want to achieve.

Now imagine an organization where every decision is to achieve a mutual goal. Rather than following a schedule planned by a project manager or dictated by a team leader, imagine if you could give your team goals to achieve. Imagine allowing them to find their path and overcome the obstacles towards that goal without interference or restrictions. After all, planning is done when you know least about a project and the only guarantee at that time is that your knowledge is limited.

2. Gamers are Curious

In the average group environment, especially larger organizations, people are discouraged from questioning rules, procedures, or decisions. The insecure project manager or foreman often wants to be seen as the one with all the answers. When team members see issues or opportunities that the person in charge didn't see, they hesitate to share because they are worried the boss will be offended. This results in a reactive workforce that only does tasks given to them. They often blatantly ignore obvious issues—or work around them—to get a good review or just reduce hassle.

Gamers, on the other hand, are naturally curious. They constantly look for clues, “Easter eggs,” and secret doors. If there's a door they will attempt to open it. If there's a big red button, they'll push it to see what happens. They'll explore the room thoroughly looking for secret doors or valuable artefacts before moving on to the next location. When they kill a monster they first search the corpse for anything valuable, to increase their resources, abilities, and strength. Game thinking is resourceful thinking.

When you present a gamer with an impossible goal, they'll try different strategies to find an answer. Compare this with the average member of a large organization who follows the same procedure even if it doesn't work because that's what

they've been told to do and doing anything else will get them into trouble. Where game thinkers look for possibilities, the average person looks for excuses.

An Organization Motivated by Harder Problems

Imagine an organization where you reward people for solving puzzles and problems rather than following a pre-planned schedule. Or imagine rewarding employees with bigger, more difficult “monsters to fight” (aka bigger projects or more complex products) when they learn a new skill. Imagine a team motivated to explore more efficient ways to solve an existing problem.

When you allow people to try new things you cultivate curiosity. And it's the curious minds that will help the entire organization “level up” because they are the ones that will find the “shortcuts” and “hidden treasures”.

3. Gamers are Risk-Takers

The average organizational environment attempts to mitigate risks and steer away from anything that has not been thoroughly analyzed. The larger an organization grows, the safer it tends to get.

Banks, for example, will gladly give a salaried employee a loan to pay for a holiday they might not be able to afford, simply because they can prove their ability to repay debt. They won't, however, give a talented teenager with a lot of potential to become a big earner a study loan if their parents aren't wealthy enough to guarantee regular repayments.

A gamer, in contrast to the typical large organization, goes towards the challenge or conflict rather than choosing the safe option. When presented with a choice, the gamer will most probably choose the risk, as long as they think they have a chance to survive the encounter.

A Braver Organization Filled with Risk-Takers

Now imagine an organization where people are brave enough to go where no-one else has gone before. Imagine a culture where people take calculated risks that reap valuable returns. Imagine a team where people are motivated to gain more experience, find more “treasures,” and “level up” their skills. A great team needs more than just risk-takers, of course. A good game is balanced with easier and harder challenges, as no-one can constantly participate in high-risk choices. The focus here is that safety (as in lack of risk) is not going to get you to that next level. It will keep you where you are, which is only occasionally the best choice. The typical gamer wants to get better.



4. Gamers are Team Players

Even though most organizations like to believe they actively contribute to team effectiveness and collaboration, in reality, by having a team leader or manager and performance appraisals, people spend a lot of effort trying to be seen as better than their peers. The typical organizational design cultivates competition where each person wants to stand out, beat the bell curve, and get that bonus.

Most large organizations, unknowingly and unintentionally, reward competition rather than collaboration. If you have an organizational structure based on function rather than product, you are most certainly rewarding competition. When only the top performers are rewarded, you're also creating a culture of competition.

Gamers, on the other hand, play primarily for the social aspect of games. The most popular games are multi-player games or collaborative challenges where the goal is impossible to solve by one player alone. To win you need allies with different skills or abilities that will help you kill that monster.

There's no hierarchy, only a goal that's impossible to solve on your own, which is ultimately also the goal of any organization. You look for allies that have something you don't have, rather than trying to be better than them at what you have in common.

A More Collaborative, Diverse, and Autonomous Team

Now imagine a team where each person contributes something different and valuable to enable the group to achieve a goal. Imagine having an autonomous team with an explorer (who tries out different tools and techniques), a socializer (who maintains harmony in the group), an engineer (who can solve problems and fix things), and a designer (who can make something look really awesome). Then, imagine teams that manage themselves, freeing you, as a project manager, to grow the team and organization and build on the organizational vision.

5. Gamers are Resilient

While most organizations are adverse to risk-taking and only invest in solutions that have been proven to work, gamers spend as much as 80% of their time failing. All these failures, however, don't deter most players from trying again. And again. And again. Rather, each time the player fails they become more resilient and determined to win. In fact, they look forward to losing as that means that they're fighting a bigger monster, getting stronger, and learning something new. They've re-framed the negative connotation that people have with failure into something desirable. They know that the more frustrating the failure, the bigger the win.

Scientifically, our brains' dopamine centres don't light up when we win, but when we perceive the possibility of winning. When players are engaged in a boss fight—that super hard stage level right at the end of a game level—it feels hard but still achievable. They know they're about to level up and possibly win a big reward, so if they fail, they are motivated to try again.

A More Resilient Organization

Now imagine team members that are willing to try again and again. Do they try until they solve that sticky problem rather than give up at their first failed attempt? Imagine a team that is not demotivated by failure, but rather motivated to try even harder.

Rather than seeing failure as bad, gamers see failure as feedback that tells them they either don't currently have the skills or resources needed to achieve the goal or they need to try a different strategy. Imagine an organization where team members look at failure the same way.

The ultimate superpower is imagination. Gamers stretch the possibilities available to us in daily life. They see solutions or strategies that are simply not possible to someone who has been taught to precisely follow rules and procedures. Gamers can imagine alternatives and strategies and possibilities that no supercomputer can ever imagine. They can even create worlds.

Now imagine a job site or office where nothing is impossible and people use their minds to create solutions rather than excuses. Imagine a workplace where people look forward to obstacles because then they have an opportunity to demonstrate their full capacity. ■

With 20 years' experience in the software development industry, Kate specializes in helping teams get unstuck, communicate, and ultimately be more productive. She believes in efficiency through fun, implementing lean, agile, and playful design as tools for process improvement and organizational change. Learn more at funficient.com

This article was reprinted with permission from peopledevelopmentmagazine.com/2020/12/07/5-ways-game-thinking-improves-collaboration/. Visit the website to read more.



Eglise Village at the Turn

By / Robin Brunet

What is 7,218 feet above sea level and requires 101,000 pounds of metal? The answer is the HVAC system for Eglise Village at the Turn, the newest residential complex of the Yellowstone Club ski resort in Big Sky, Montana. It is a logistically challenging project that Local 103 and Montana SMACNA are well-equipped to handle.

“Yellowstone’s residents include people like Bill Gates, so the resort is incredibly security heavy,” says Local 103’s Regional Manager John Carter. “But Montana SMANCA member Norpac and the Local workforce are tackling the challenges as they come.”

Cindy Donaldson, chapter executive of MT SMACNA, agrees. “Norpac is our largest HVAC contractor in Montana and averages 4,500 to 6,200 work hours per month. Its staff, along with our other members, have a true Montana spirit of embracing hard work and pulling together to make things happen.”

Eglise Village, which began construction last July, requires a combination of four dedicated outdoor air system (DOAS) units, 108 fan coil units, 64 humidifiers, and related exhaust systems in the parking garage under the multi-level residential lofts. The DOAS units, which recover more heat than conventional systems, will make the residences compliant with the International Energy Conservation Code. Outside

air will enter through heat exchangers. It is tempered prior to mechanical heating, which minimizes the amount of gas required for the overall system.

As of January, the project was at peak. It is complicated because DOAS units have specific ducts for ventilation and require significantly more ductwork than conventional air handlers. However, installing 101,000 pounds of metal is one thing; accessing the site is another. “We’ve signed confidentiality statements, and every employee had to be on an authorized list and undertake an orientation to be on site,” Norpac Project Manager/Estimator Brooke Logan explains. “All deliveries are pre-scheduled a minimum of a week in advance on a matrix that has to be approved by the Yellowstone Club.”

Work conditions on the site are also a major challenge. A single-lane bridge between the laydown yard and the construction site means that crews leave their cars in the yard, bundle together in a single car, and drive to an onsite parking spot a quarter of a mile away. “If we need parts we have to drive all the way back down to the laydown area and hope the bridge isn’t blocked,” Logan says. Because the laydown area is too small for storage, the team hauls equipment to the site daily. “Everything comes from our fabrication shop 200 miles away,” Logan says. “Depending on the weather, it can be a five-hour round trip.”



The snow began falling last August, and the team worked hard to get the HVAC structure up and enclosed before the arrival of severe weather. “We’ve actually had to recruit sheet metal workers from as far away as Idaho to help us, and as of January about 90% of the metal is on site,” Logan says. “We anticipate the job will be finished sometime in the spring.”

Carter says the contractor and the Local 103 workforce have come together to foster a “can-do spirit” that has contributed to a productive labor-management relationship over the years. “I typically address Norpac as our signatory partner in a union whose membership is just under 600 and spread across Montana, Wyoming, West Nebraska, and southeastern Idaho,” he says. “It’s a symbiotic relationship. We provide training and qualified people, and if they didn’t exist, we wouldn’t be around.”



Norpac has provided the Billings area with commercial HVAC, custom fabrication, and building information modeling services since 1988. Its highly-skilled custom fabrication crew creates a wide range of shapes and parts, and its Billings headquarters is outfitted with an advanced sheet metal burn table, spiral duct machine, and a full coil line utilizing digital images from AutoCAD and Revit to produce completed sheet metal creations.

“I worked with Norpac when it was Northern Pacific Sheet Metal and a lot smaller in size,” Carter says. “Even back then, apprentices such as Jeff Link and Kris O’Bleness, now Norpac’s CEO and president, respectively, were methodical in addressing and solving problems, and this over time enabled them to tackle bigger projects.”

Carter adds that the contractor and Local frequently work together on legislative issues, demonstrating overarching care and consideration for each other’s stake in the game. “Due to the recent election, we’re now facing right to work issues, which has never happened before in this state,” he says. “We’re also working together on prevailing wage issues, among other things.”

Donaldson says that last fall she recommended Jeff Link become a member of the National SMACNA Board of Directors because the CEO had served many years as a Montana SMACNA board member, a committee member, and has held every office more than once.

The recommendation was approved. “Jeff excels as a negotiator and problem solver and is an integral part of the Montana SMACNA organization,” Donaldson says. “That also applies to Norpac management overall.”

Logan credits Montana SMACNA and Local 103 for turning “raw talent into skilled journeypersons, which is critical for projects such as Eglise Village.”

“We’ve benefitted enormously from their training and safety programs, among many other things,” she says.

As Norpac continues its work 7,218 feet above sea level, Carter contemplates what lies ahead for his membership this year. “Shops are currently busy and will be even busier in coming months,” he says. “Members who were laid off during the lockdowns are returning to work, and we’re signing on new people. As the COVID vaccine puts an end to the pandemic, indoor air quality and purification will remain big considerations in the building trade, and this will open up many opportunities for our contractors.

“I think 2021 will be a great year for us, and with companies like Norpac in our membership, we’ll continue to grow stronger,” Carter says. ■

Robin Brunet’s journalism has been published in over 150 magazines, newspapers, websites, and other media across Canada and the U.S. since 1982. He is also the best-selling author of two books: Red Robinson: The Last DeeJay and Let’s Get Frank, as well as the upcoming The Last Broadcast.

Enabling Teams:

By / Stephane McShane

Using Partnerships to Define Great Practices

How do you define best practices and create synergy between work groups at the same time? Change the way you view improvement initiatives within your organization.

For those who spend their lives making lasting change truly happen, their success isn't defined by luck. It is facilitated by their ability to take disparate groups of people who all play a role in a workflow, leverage their skill sets and viewpoints, and define how work should be done, in contrast to how work is currently done.

Take, for instance, the change order management process. If you look at the level of risk associated with this process, and the extreme amount of detailed, factual information needed to successfully substantiate impacts, this becomes a prime example of a workflow that needs to have standardized work steps. It takes a strong partnership between field operations and project operations to be highly successful and effective in this area.

If improvement is desired in any given functional area, following the work steps below may assist in creating pathways that make sense to the very people in your organization who could make it successful.

Step 1 – Define the Team

Identifying the different job titles involved in the change order process provides a roadmap of potential team members.

The team should represent a cross-section of staff who all play a role in the success of the change order management process, including employees from estimating, project management, project administration, field leadership, and accounting. Others who could be included, depending on the specific organizational challenges, include purchasing, manufacturing, and design. Be cognizant to pick respected personnel who would be engaged in helping to define a new—and improved—process.

Step 2 – Map Current Processes

Have the group create a definition of the starting and ending points of this process. Using a value stream mapping process or other structured workstep identification method allows team members to identify each step in the full process. Have them work collaboratively to list each activity chronologically from start to finish, eliminating any duplications listed by multiple team members.

Step 3 – Identify and Solve Needed Areas of Improvement

Once the current processes have been mapped out, open discussion should be held to identify the areas of improvement needed to ensure that standards are being used. For the change order process, those standards could encompass notification, documentation, pricing, proposals, terms and



conditions, and more. These are critical steps in ensuring that risk is being mitigated effectively. Prioritize and complete the improvements necessary to move the process forward by dividing and conquering the challenges. Leverage the skillsets of the diverse team to ensure that the most logical solutions for the organization are being defined.

Step 4 – Document New Workflow

Once the areas of improvement have been accomplished, document the new workflow using process flow charts or process maps. These will serve as a reference for the process and can be effectively used during training. The workflow documents should contain relevant examples of documents, timing, videos, or other needed materials to ensure that someone new to the process can easily follow it. It should also outline the job title that should perform each workstep, ensuring that the right person at the right level in the organization is performing the work. Once this workflow is defined, it should be presented to the executive team to ensure their understanding and agreement with the contents. At this point, any revisions necessary can be made prior to roll out of the material.

Step 5 – Define Training Materials and Identify Subject Matter Experts

Using a cross-section of staff from the field to the office to define the new process allows these same individuals to be identified as internal subject matter experts for the initiative. This group should discuss the best methods of delivering training to the different groups within the organization. Define timing, length of training, and small or large groups, and identify the right trainer to present the material. These people become the peer experts so people can come to a peer

for additional training or questions, negating the discomfort of having to go to a superior for assistance.

Step 6 – Roll out Initiative and Train

The roll out and training of the initiative should always discuss the topic in the following order:

1. Why this initiative is so important;
2. What's in it for the attendees—how do they benefit;
3. Show the new initiative;
4. Define expectations;
5. Discuss availability of subject matter experts and their role;
6. How the initiative's impacts will be measured; and
7. Re-state importance and benefits.

Step 7 – Identify and Track Metrics

The team should define how success is measured in the initiative. How will the organization measure whether the process is being followed? Who will be responsible for verifying? How can we assign done/not done, percentage of implementation, or ROI? Improvements cannot be measured unless there is an understanding of where we started and where we are today, compared to the standard defined by the team. It is also important to know what the end game is, whether it is a targeted financial goal, percentage of improvement, or other measurement.

Step 8 – Celebrate Success

This is a step that is far too often skipped. When benchmarks are reached or specific project teams find success using the new initiative, take the opportunity to celebrate. It is critical to point out how the new process helped the project team and to discuss the financial or operational impact it had. Leveraging one group's success to fuel others who may still be struggling or undecided is an outstanding practice, though not done nearly often enough.

Using cross-functional teams not only solidifies the roles and processes needed to be successful but allows those groups to work together as partners to define the path. These opportunities should be identified and leveraged to drive not only operational excellence, but an organizational culture that people want to be a part of. ■

Stephane McShane is a director at Maxim Consulting Group responsible for the evaluation and implementation processes with clients. She works with construction related firms of all sizes to evaluate business practices and assist with management challenges. McShane is an internationally recognized speaker, mentor, author, and teacher. Her ability to motivate, inspire, and create confidence among work groups is extremely rare and very effective. For more information on how McShane can help your organization achieve operational excellence, please contact Maxim at 303-688-0503.

Hiding in Plain Sight

By Joel Garfinkle



Uncovering the hidden talent in your organization is the competitive advantage you can't afford to lose. Winning the talent war isn't about perfecting your recruitment game—you already have the right people. You need to learn how to identify them and how to turn your eyes toward the places you haven't thought to look.

In my corporate training, “Career Advancement: Release the Untapped Potential of Your Underutilized Leaders,” I explain how to shift your perception and change your senior management's ideas of what a leader can look like.

Are introverts in your organization being overlooked? Often, great leaders are missing out simply because of what they're not doing to get the attention they deserve. Your organization is missing out on truly leveraging the talents they're regularly exercising, unnoticed. If you want to move forward with the great leaders you already have, read on.

They're not speaking up

Introverts are not big on being the first to speak up in meetings, and they're almost never going to be the ones to butt in and interrupt someone's else's soliloquy just so they can make a point. Unfortunately, this means that even when they have a better idea, you're less likely to hear it, especially in a crowded or noisy room.

They are watching the situation unfold

However, introverts are often watching and weighing out each idea, noting the politics and passions of other players, and evaluating the best way to move forward. If you want to harness that shrewd analytical thinking, look for your introverts and encourage them to share their thoughts, even if it's just one-on-one with you, in a smaller group or in a less chaotic environment.

They're not offering their opinions

When asked by superiors, one of the top reasons introverts give for not weighing in on a problem is that they weren't sure in the moment that their thoughts were useful. Anyone who has ever been in a meeting room knows that this hardly stops many people from giving their opinion, but introverts often struggle with stepping out of their comfort zones, hesitant about whether they're actually adding to the conversation. While they wrestle with themselves, the moment passes, and the discussion moves on.

They are noting the attitudes and feelings of others

While they're trying to decide whether to share their view

on a problem, they are taking stock of how others think and feel and the general emotion in the room. Even the most analytical introvert often factors in the prevailing sentiment of others when opting to share, so their observations and ability to “read the room” can be an invaluable leadership tool in finding balance and compromise around the table.

Figure out how you can draw out these hidden leaders and redirect their energies to optimizing that intersection of practicality and emotion, in addition to revealing that opinion they're holding out on sharing.

They're not self-promoting

Introverts are unlikely to engage in one of the most critical components in career advancement: self-advocacy. Whether they are uncomfortable with putting the spotlight on themselves or just afraid of being seen as a self-involved blowhard, introverts usually pass up opportunities to inform others of their successes and achievements. As a result, others often know little of their work unless people have tried to advocate for them.

They are genuinely contributing to success

The same tendencies that keep introverts from tooting their own horn often make them very concerned about pulling their weight with the team. As such, they are often excellent collaborators and dedicated workers, taking on more than their share of tasks. Obviously, someone who is more concerned about the well-being of the group and making sure they're not holding anyone up can make a great leader when tasked with shepherding a group through a difficult task or project.

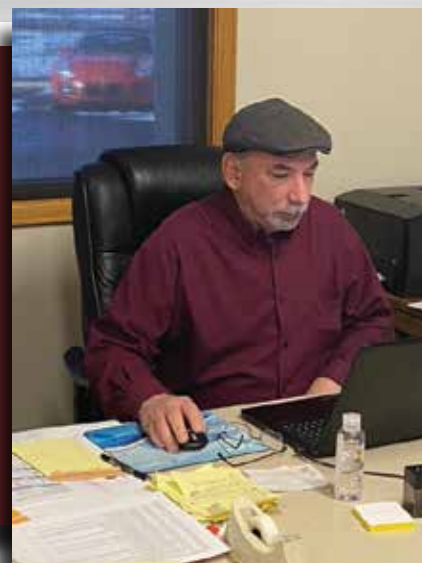
If you see traits here that appeal to your sense of great leadership, begin looking for the introverts in the group, and start coaching to raise their visibility with others. All the building blocks of truly great talent can easily be obscured by an understated or unassuming demeanor; you have to be ready to look for the introverted leaders who are hiding in plain sight. ■

Joel Garfinkle is recognized as one of the top 50 executive coaches in America. He has 20 years of first-hand experience working closely with many of the world's leading companies, including Oracle, Google, Amazon, Deloitte, The Ritz-Carlton, and Starbucks. Garfinkle recently conducted an online webinar training to all employees in a Fortune 500 company on how introverts make great leaders. Subscribe to his Fulfillment at Work Newsletter and receive the free e-book “41 Ways to Get Promoted Now!” You can also view 75 of his two-minute motivational videos on his YouTube channel.

TIM MORAN: MY JOURNEY

Organizer, Local 9

I started my career as a third-generation sheet metal worker in October 1979. My dad, grandfather, cousin, nephew, and three brothers are all sheet metal workers. I tried to break the mold and become an electrician, but nepotism was alive and well then. I started out as a sheet metal worker in St. Joseph Missouri, Local 81, and became a journeyman in 1983. That was the last day of old Local 81, which was merged into Local 2 in Kansas City.



When I was working with my tools, I loved that everything we installed, we usually made in the shop. I liked the creativity of being a sheet metal worker and the camaraderie of the people you work with. I miss that, at times, being an organizer.

My career as an organizer started in 1991 when I was elected as a Business Representative out of Local 2. I served three years as an agent. Our group was voted out, but I remained close to the new Business Manager and was soon appointed as Local 2's organizer. I had a lot of success organizing sheet metal companies in Kansas City. In 2004, the Sheet Metal International Director of Organizing asked me to take the job as Director of Organizing for the Building and Construction Trades Department in Washington, DC. So, in May of 2004 my wife Margaret and I moved to Fredericksburg, Virginia, to assume my new role as head of Education, Organizing, and Research in the Building and Trades Department. I taught organizing from an active ground organizer to fellow organizers of all 15 trades. I did this for four years, until the carpenters, laborers, and the operating engineers withdrew from the National Building Trades, leaving us short on funding. I came back to Kansas City and stayed for about two years working with my tools. I still had the desire and passion to organize the unorganized. Local 2 had their organizer, and there wasn't room for two of us.

I heard that several other Locals were needing a seasoned organizer. My stepson lived in Colorado, so I talked to my wife about moving out here, and she was all for it. I submitted my resume to the current Business Manager, Dwayne Stephens, and in December of 2011, I started the job as the Head Organizer in Local 9 Colorado. I couldn't have asked for a better spot to finish my career—the agents and the manager are all great people to work with.

What I like most about being an organizer is meeting different people and contractors and working within their mindset of becoming a union member or a newly signed contractor. I also love the research that goes into beginning a campaign with a contractor. Every contractor has a different personality, every non-union worker has a different perspective of being union. My job is to find that niche and work their attitude in that way. I consider every contractor I have ever signed my friend and every non-union worker a person I want to get to know. One of the biggest contractors I signed is Grand Mesa Mechanical on the Western Slope. The challenges that I faced were numerous, from the owner having over 45 employees, to being four hours away, to other organizers before me poisoning the owner against becoming a union contractor. I worked with him for over two years to help him understand why it would benefit him and his employees to become union.

I would advise anyone coming into the sheet metal trade: If you like working with your hands, making great money as you work, and retiring with a great pension, this trade is for you. As a sheet metal worker there are so many different facets of the job, from the industrial side, welding, and architectural to air balancing and drafting with AutoCAD. You can also run for a business agent position and help run the Local or become an organizer and help grow the Local.

I believe having strong labor and management relations is imperative for both sides to exist and prosper. After all, without the union contractors there would be no union workers. I talk to the union contractors about different jobs they won or lost bidding against their competition, the non-union contractors. So, it's great having those relationships and helping to cultivate them for both the contractors' and the union's advantage. ■



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