

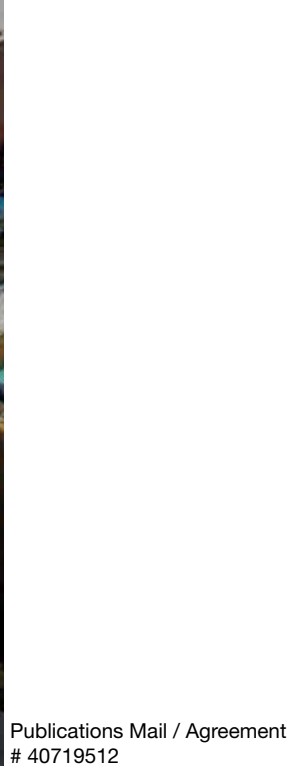
Volume 7, Number 2

Sheet Metal Journal

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Western Washington

MacDonald-Miller's Seattle Convention Center Summit Building



Also in this issue:

Lactation Pods Break Down Barriers

Heavy Metal Summer Experience

Learn to Lead



WESTERN WASHINGTON
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OUR CONTRACTORS SET THE STANDARDS FOR THE INDUSTRY

WHO WE ARE

SMACNA-Western Washington is a local chapter of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA).

SMACNA Contractors are heating, ventilating, air conditioning (HVAC) and sheet metal experts. They are your assurance of quality in the fabrication and installation of ductwork and air handling systems.

SMACNA contractors are also skilled professionals in:

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The ultimate goal of SMACNA-Western Washington, Inc. is to achieve and maintain the following principles and programs for the sheet metal industry:

1. To establish advertising, publicity, and promotional activities that advise the public of the nature, extent, and availability of services performed by the industry.
2. To promote educational programs to formulate high quality standards of sheet metal construction.
3. To aid in the formulation of uniform sheet metal specifications and improvement of state and municipal codes.
4. To expose fraudulent or misleading advertising or representations intended to deceive the public.
5. To encourage and promote trade practices that will eliminate unfair competition or exploitation of the sheet metal industry.
6. To encourage and promote the establishment of a uniform pattern of payments by customers during the progress of jobs to avoid inequitable payment delays and economic penalties.
7. To provide a forum for the discussion of the common interests and problems of labor and industry, and to encourage and promote harmonious relations between labor and industry.
8. To encourage any proper activity that will increase the efficiency of the industry and its ability to serve the public.

**SMACNA Contractors:
Quality work and professional services**

Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association - Western Washington Chapter
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LEADERSHIP FOR THE MASSES

Leadership used to mean one thing: the boss speaks and everyone else follows directions. The hierarchy was a steep triangle or a straight line and everyone knew their place within that shape. Of course, that is no longer the case, and group work, collaboration, and mentor/mentee relationships are all the rage. The way our leaders operate has changed, too. They connect, consult, do the heavy lifting, share experiences, accept feedback, and admit mistakes. They are decisive, assertive, and strong-willed, and they are also cautious, analytical, soft spoken, and observant. They have different responsibilities. Sure, leaders still run companies, manage teams, and head up departments, but they also work on the tools, answer the phones, deliver the materials, and fabricate products. Leadership is everywhere, because leadership is a state of being. In fact, there are strong theories that everyone has the capacity to lead—they just need to find their style, their flow, and the cause that inspires them.

This issue showcases many examples of excellent leadership, starting with our cover story on MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions’ epic project: the Summit Building at Seattle Convention Center. This was the company’s largest single-building project and one of the most complex it has completed. When a company breaks new ground, pushing its limits and expanding to new areas and expertise, it requires leadership—not just in the management arena, but also in the ability to accept new challenges, assist others in pushing the boundaries of what is possible, and in being forthcoming in one’s ideas and solutions. Check out how MacDonald-Miller mastered leadership on this flagship project on page 12.

When SMACNA-Western Washington Executive Vice President Julie Muller saw the limitations women face when returning to the construction site as nursing mothers, she knew she had to help. She recognized the inequality that exists when a tradeswoman has to go to her car and put sheets over the windows to pump breast milk, compared with women in office jobs who can take care of business in private, specially designated areas. She acted. Seeing lactation pods in an airport, she envisioned outdoor-suitable, mobile units that



By Jessica Kirby, Editor

would work on construction sites, found a manufacturer, and partnered with the SMACNA-Western Washington and Local 66 Women’s Committees to get the pods approved and out for use. If that isn’t leadership, we don’t know what is. Learn more on page 8.

Speaking of filling a need, it is no secret that the labor shortage is a big issue across North America. As the skilled labor pool shrinks, retirement grows, and the next generation has more options, the trades struggle to fill seats. The Bay Area and Western Washington SMACNA chapters decided the only way to make a tangible impact was to create a program that checked all the boxes: high quality, creative, run by professionals, targeting students not quite out of high school or recently graduated, and oh so much fun. The result? Heavy Metal Summer Experience, an eight-week, hands-on trade sampler for 15-19-year-olds that has doubled in capacity year over year since it started. Wondering how you can host a workshop or why you should? Find out on page 10.

Stephane McShane is no stranger to the sheet metal industry. On page 16 she shares her wisdom and expertise on what it takes to be a good leader at work and in life. She also tackles some misconceptions we have about leadership and what we can do to develop our own, unique skillsets, whether at the helm or in the rank and file of our activities and organizations.

What does leadership mean at your organization? Is the hierarchy a triangle? A straightline? A circle? How do you develop leadership in your teams and in your own life? Tell me about it at jessica.kirby@pointonemedia.com ■

SMACNA-WESTERN WASHINGTON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer Membership Mixer • September 14

Bowlero, Tukwila

SMACNA National Convention • October 15–18

JW Marriott, Phoenix, AZ

Membership Meeting • November 14

From Transactional to Transformational with Mark Breslin | Seatac Marriott

SMACNA-WW Holiday Gala • December 1

TBA

TURN OFF TO TURN UP YOUR VACATION MOJO

Smartphones have changed the business world for the better. We can find, access, analyze, and share real-time information in seconds flat, and that is only the beginning. Besides automating tasks, smartphones deliver constant connection, virtual meeting space, instant payless payment, and flexible working hours. This last point is something most people champion as a main selling feature, and for good reason—working on a plane or in the line-up at the movies can be the perfect bridge to work-life balance—until it isn't.

The downside of all this convenience and productivity is the inherent inability to disconnect—partially because it becomes our new normal and partially because of the addictive nature of the apps that make our lives so much more convenient. While many of us have fallen victim to the allure of constant connection, there are plenty of ways to strike a balance, especially while on vacation or during any time set aside to unplug.

First, let's look at the numbers. In 2018, Asurion, a smart device insurance provider, found that while on vacation, Americans check their phones about once every 12 minutes and up to 300 times a day. That's 300 times. A day. On vacation.

To be fair, some of this is gaming, scrolling the news, or checking social media, but we are also tied to our email in a way that can be time-draining and cause unnecessary distractions. The tendency to check “just this one thing” stems from anxiety around coming back to a huge pile of responsibility and a fear that something important will be missed, but the negative effects—lack of focus, missing out on essential family time, less connection with others, and actual changes to our brain chemistry—far outweigh the benefit of answering that email a little sooner than you planned. Here are some tips for managing our time and connections to devices.

Make Time to Unplug

You'll never master unplugging if you don't make time for it. Be mindful of vacation time as unplugged time and carve out time on weekends or after dinner where the phone is off or somewhere it can't be heard. I won't lie: it is going to be rough at first. Our brains are already dependent on the little shots of dopamine we get every time we hear a ping or see a notification pop up. But like we do while overcoming any habit-forming thing, we will quickly adapt to the absence and feel more at ease.

Make it Official

The best way to take back your time and help your employees do the same is to make it a policy that during vacation or otherwise unplugged time, every person must set an away message and designate a follow-up contact for emergencies.



Then, encourage employees to remove or turn off notifications for the email apps on their phones. Making this a policy, speaking openly about, and most importantly, doing it yourself, are the best ways to normalize it.

The Art of Silence

You know that phones also *turn off*, right? Not only can we turn our phone off, but we can also take breaks from social media—all weekend, all week, or for longer—that help give us perspective. What are we really missing? What are we really seeing when we look up? How realistic are the impressions we have of people's lives online versus their real-life lives? There's only one way to find out.

Add it to Your Calendar

For many people, if it is not in the calendar, it won't get done. So, if you absolutely cannot turn off during vacation, set aside a specific 30 minutes each day for checking email and managing urgent tasks. Start forming this habit during work hours by scheduling specific times for checking email and managing communications. That way when vacation starts, you'll be in the habit of checking the phone during specific, scheduled times. The rest of the time is yours to enjoy.

Avoid the Rabbit Hole

If you're going to check occasionally, avoid the rabbit hole of distraction. We've all been there: innocently looking up the time or location of an event online and sidetracked by a sketchy but irresistible headline about a celebrity or politician that leads to more sketchy but irresistible headlines until, before we know it, an hour is passed, our eyes are crossed, and our brains a little worse for wear. Make a habit of following reputable news sources only and stay away from doomscrolling traps that are only there to waste our time and energy.

If you do nothing else, do this

The most important thing you can do for your health around device use and getting the most out of your vacation time is keep the phone out of your bedroom. Studies show that the combination of blue light and content alters your brain activity

continued on page 23

SMAC-YA MARINER'S NIGHT

The SMAC-YA group organized a Mariners Baseball Night at T-Mobile Park on June 16. The annual event welcomes business, construction management, and mechanical engineering students to meet and network with SMACNA members. Approximately 50 students from various four-year universities, such as the University of Washington, Western Washington University, Washington State University, and Gonzaga University, gathered to interact with more than 30 professionals in their respective fields. This was an exceptional chance for students to establish connections with industry experts and expand their professional network. Additionally, attendees enjoyed complimentary refreshments in a relaxed setting. The night was brimming with excitement and enthusiasm, culminating in a thrilling victory for the Mariners. Looking forward, we are eagerly anticipating the next edition of this event and will continue to show our support for our beloved team. GO MARINERS! ▪

PROJECT MANAGERS INSTITUTE

November 12-November 15, 2023 • Seattle, WA

Experienced SMACNA contractors know that the best project managers take ownership of their projects. This concentrated program builds upon existing project management skills and strengthens proficiency. It is recommended for project managers with two to five years project management experience. Participants should have some field experience and/or a college degree.

Learn more and register at smacna.org/learn/events/calendar ▪

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS CONFERENCE

February 27-28, 2024 • Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Lake Buena Vista, FL

The 2024 Partners in Progress Conference is an exceptional opportunity for all SMACNA member contractors, chapter executives, and future leaders to come together. It provides a collaborative environment where labor and management can strengthen existing relationships and discover innovative strategies to shape a more prosperous future.

The 2024 Conference will feature valuable educational sessions where the knowledge you acquire can be transferred back to the staff at your business immediately. The future is now.

Registration opens September 6, 2023.

Learn more and register at pinp.org/conferences/2024pinp ▪

SEATTLE CONSTRUCTION SEES CONTINUED GROWTH

The health of Seattle's construction industry can be measured by the forest of cranes that are towering over the downtown skyline.

According to the Rider Levett Bucknall Crane Index, the 51 cranes in Seattle over the first quarter of 2023 was the most for any city in the United States.

The multitude of cranes stands as a testament to the numerous large-scale projects underway in the city, says Michael Harder VP and general manager of Mortenson.

"We have a very strong economy in Washington state, supported by innovative companies, and we have recently experienced significant job growth," Harder says. "Therefore, I am confident that we are in an excellent position compared to the rest of the country."

This analysis is corroborated by Dodge Data & Analytics' assessment of project starts. Although 2023 total starts for the city are expected to decline to \$14.7 billion, the overall trend has been upward. Between 2020 and 2022, project starts increased by more than 7%, with a projected growth of 9% in 2024 compared with 2022, Dodge reports.

And, according to Washington State Employment Security Dept., the employment in construction is up 8,700 over the past 12 months, led by an increase of 4,500 jobs for specialty trade contractors.

Seattle's performance in certain areas has been particularly robust. Dodge noted that the city ranked among the top 10 markets nationally with \$6.8 billion in commercial and multifamily starts during the first half of 2022.

That performance could be seen in the 2022 Northwest Top Starts list. Two of the top construction starts in the city last year were the \$400-million Civic Square Residential Condominiums and the \$162-million Unison at Elliot Bay.

Another sector that has remained steady after reaching a peak in 2021 is education. However, the region is not immune to the broader economic concerns affecting the construction industry. While pandemic-related challenges such as disrupted supply chains have improved, shortages of staff and materials persist. Costs have cooled off slightly but remain high.

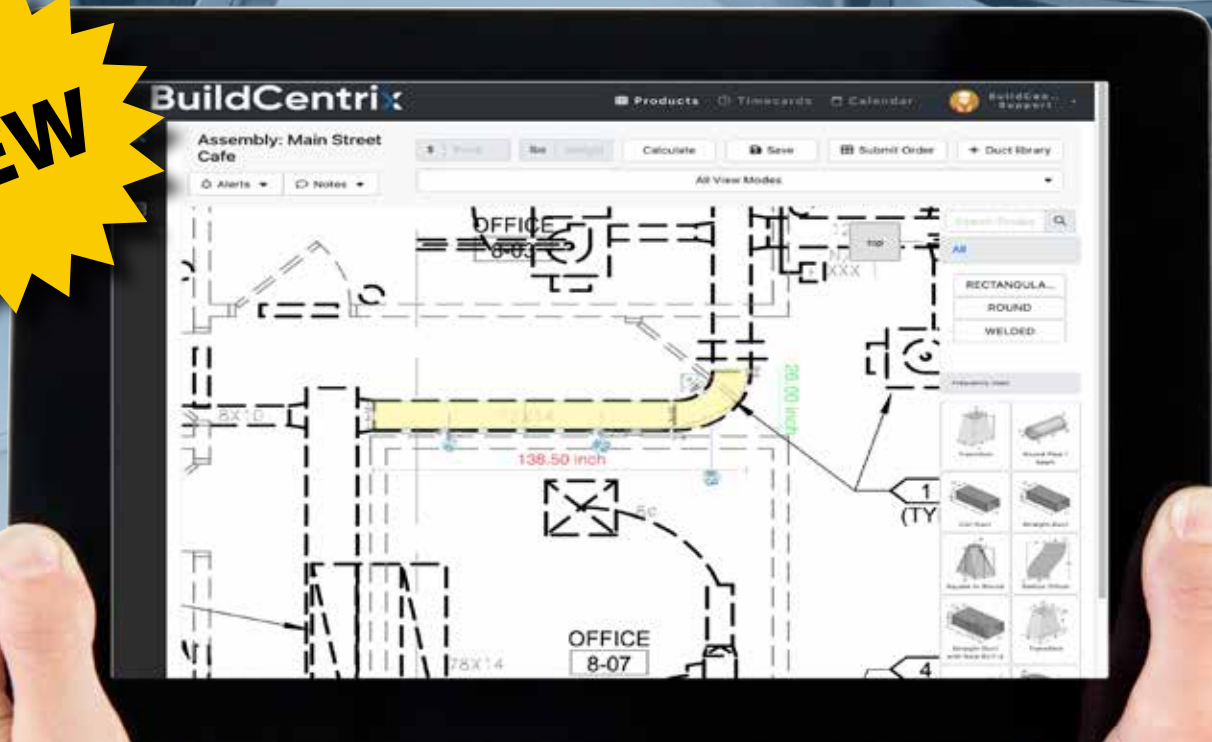
Moreover, if inflation continues and interest rates rise as a consequence, financing for private projects could face difficulties.

See the full text of this article at: enr.com/articles/56615-seattle-construction-continues-steady-growth ▪

INTRODUCING BLUEPRINT ORDERING

BuildCentrix's new Blue Print Ordering feature provides the ability to upload blueprints directly into BCX and order sheet metal and piping parts by simply tracing over the plans. Like any BCX order, Blueprint orders are integrated into CAM and piping equipment, and the platform calculates all of the material, fab time, cost, and price for up-to-the-minute project data at your fingertips.

NEW



KEY FEATURES:

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- Trace over top of the plans the BCX 3D modelling tool
- Change views and orientation to see the 3D model over top of the plans

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Breaking Down Barriers

SMACNA-Western Washington and Local 66 collaborate to bring lactation pods to construction sites.

By Deb Draper

Across the United States and Canada, construction industries are grappling with a shortage of skilled trades workers, and the sheet metal industry is no exception. Today, less than 10% of sheet metal workers are women, making them a virtually untapped resource for the future's workforce.

Attracting more women means first understanding the challenges and gender-specific barriers women face. Industry women's groups, training centers, and labor-management partnerships are helping to share opportunities and address workplace culture issues, but one important obstacle remains: that many women must choose between being a full participant in the construction industry workforce and having a family.

SMACNA-Western Washington and Local 66 have announced a joint initiative that will begin to mitigate this barrier. The organizations have partnered to make lactation pods available to new mothers working in the sheet metal industry—a step they say begins to bridge the work-family gap for women entering the industry.

SMACNA-Western Washington Executive Vice President Julie Muller grew up in a construction family. She has always

understood that women can go far in the industry if their needs are met.

"I was transferred from Southern California to Western Washington with one-year-old twins," she says. "During an industry event, I met a young journeywoman with young children of her own. We exchanged stories about motherhood, and she said the only way she could continue to breastfeed her baby was to go down to her car parked on the jobsite, cover the windows with sheets, and use the cigarette lighter to pump. I instantly realized the inequality and that it was much easier for me to return to work with an office job than it was for her, working on a construction site."

Several years later, while walking through an airport, Muller noticed lactation pods—unobtrusive, attractive tiny "rooms" set up with secure access for the privacy and comfort of breast-feeding moms. "Right away, I thought about how these could be used for women in construction," she says. "Upon further research, I learned the only models available were not suitable for outdoor use, so I went on to find someone who could manufacture pods that could perform outside."



“I instantly realized the inequality and that it was much easier for me to return to work with an office job than it was for her, working on a construction site.”

— Julie Muller, executive vice president, SMACNA-Western Washington

Once she found a manufacturer, Muller asked the Women’s Committees at SMACNA – Western Washington and Local 66 to see if they were interested in joining forces on bringing the pods to construction sites.

“Julie is very supportive of all women in the trades,” says Local 66 Women’s Committee Chairperson, Tammy Meyer. “We can be candid with her because she is so caring toward us. When she came to us to talk about lactation pods for construction and whether we’d support it if she brought it to our union leadership, we said ‘Yes! Absolutely we would.’ As it stands right now, sisters have to use restrooms or their cars, and that’s not sanitary or comfortable.”

Both management and labor got behind the concept, pooling their resources and support. “SMACNA and the Joint Labor Management Committee are going to pay for the pods,” Meyer says. “Local 66 will help store and maintain them and make sure they get to where they’re needed.”

The first two outdoor lactation pods were manufactured in Southern California and delivered to the two Local 66 training facilities in Everett and in Dupont in June.

“They look similar to a porta-potty with that familiar shape but a bit larger, completely weatherproof, and accessed by



Left: Julie Muller, executive vice president, SMACNA-Western Washington. Right: Tammy Meyer, Local 66 Women’s Committee Chairperson.

remote entry and eventually an app,” Meyer says. “They will have solar plug-ins for equipment, a refrigerator to store the milk, air conditioning, and Wi-Fi.”

The pods also contain a seating area, a sink with water, and cleaning supplies. They can be easily loaded onto a trailer and placed on any jobsite in the Puget Sound area or in a big shop, wherever they’re needed.

“We’ll have online access to put in a request for one,” Muller says. “We’re also developing some type of collateral for the contractor or union to be able to approach the general contractor and request permission to place a pod on the jobsite.”

Meyer noted that having this product available and discreetly in place takes away the awkward conversation on the jobsite about ‘What do we do with her?’ “It’s all set up and ready to go,” she says. “And our sisters will know that they’re cared for and valuable members of the team.” ■



Heavy Metal Summer Experience IS BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

As the number of camps and students more than doubles year to year, Heavy Metal Summer Experience cofounder Angie Simon sees real progress in recruitment

By / Jessica Kirby

Photos courtesy of SMACNA Bay Area

It started out as an idea. Deliver hands-on, project-driven training to high school students in a fun, supportive atmosphere, led by professionals. In the first summer that Western Allied Mechanical and Hermanson put that idea to the test, piloting six-week Heavy Metal Summer Experience camps in California and Washington, respectively, they drew an impressive 28 participants. Last year (year two), 11 HMSE camps serving 170 kids popped up around America. And this summer, 22 camps, including Canada's first, in Lancaster, Ontario, will bring the trades to nearly 400 kids.

Why is the HMSE so successful? Angie Simon, former SMACNA president and CEO of Western Allied, and cofounder of HMSE, says the reason is simple: "It is so needed," she says. "We are reaching out to kids who are about to graduate, and they know college isn't for them. Not only that, but parents are starting to reimagine what their kids' future might look like. We've had so many interested parties over the last three years, I am anticipating close to 50 camps with at least five or six in Canada for the summer of 2024."

Over the next five years, 40% of the construction workforce will retire. This, on the heels of a record-breaking labor shortage, has contractors in all areas of construction wondering how they are going to get their jobs done. HMSE is one answer.

From the beginning, its focus has been career exploration within the mechanical trades for high school students and recent graduates between 15 and 19 years old. Participants complete projects, work alongside professionals, and learn about local apprenticeship training opportunities. With the intention of expanding and replicating the program across North America, the program organizers have created and continuously update the *HMSE Playbook*, a how-to manual complete with sample schedules, projects, and pro tips for hosting a camp.

"My challenge to contractors has been to stop talking and start doing something about the labor shortage and looming retirements," Simon says. "And the results have



been remarkable. In each camp you will always get a few who realize the trades aren't for them, and another few will eventually move on. But even if you get three or four from each camp who start their apprenticeship, that would mean 66 or 88 this summer alone. That is how we make progress."

The program is spreading like wildfire through word of mouth, especially in underserved communities. It isn't unusual for kids who show up to write the apprenticeship exam to bring along a friend or relative.

"Getting the kids is always the big challenge for a new area's first camp," Simon says. "But if you can deliver the camp when they are 16 or 17 and just about ready to join the workforce, they will tell a friend and it gets bigger every year. The second and third camps are much easier."

New for 2023, Hermanson in Western Washington, Western Allied in the Bay Area, and Silicone Valley Mechanical in San Jose will be offering an electrical section for the first time. HMSE has been offered a free booth at the National Electrical Contractors' Association (NECA) Convention in Philadelphia this September, and Simon is hoping that will be a chance to pull in more electrical contractors from different areas.

"Offering electrical means the students get to learn sheet metal, plumbing, and electrical—the full scope," she says. "We are also revising the *HMSE Playbook* to include electrical projects, and Western Allied and Hermanson are adding new sheet metal projects."

So far, the feedback has been great. Contractors usually offer up the camp as a team building exercise for staff, who come out to volunteer their time running the activities. "Once contractors see how exciting and rewarding it is, they love doing it and their staff love the feeling of doing good in their communities," Simon says. "And it is always amazing how many of the kids graduate interested and eager to consider the trades for a career."

Moving forward, the HMSE committee will continue looking for partners, without whom the camps would not be possible. Milwaukee Tool and Dewalt, for example, each donated 225 tool bags for this summer's camps, and Trane, Procore, and Mestek Machinery came forward with large donations.

"NECA, the Mechanical Contractors' Association of America (MCAA), and SMACNA also continue to be big supporters," Simon says. "I appreciate the contractors and training centers that have stepped up to run the camps."

The team's plan is to keep spreading the word and writing grants, and Simon is looking forward to branching into other areas in the United States and Canada, including Vancouver, BC.

"It has been such a success and a great team effort," Simon says. "I encourage contractors and training centers to reach out to find out how they can host a camp in their areas. It's just so rewarding."

Learn more at hmse.org





Seattle Convention Center's Summit Building

MacDonald-Miller completes its largest and most complex single-building project

By: Nicole Martin

Photo ©Adam Hunter/LMN Architects Summit - Largest single-building contract in MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions' history

The Summit building at the Seattle Convention Center, the largest single building MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions has ever worked on, is now open. With a contract value over \$100 million and several years of preconstruction work, the Conference Center addition had MacDonald-Miller starting onsite work in September 2019, setting the first four of 35 air handling units. After more than three years of construction, the building opened to the public on January 25, 2023.

Construction

MacDonald-Miller was selected for this complex project based on its project team experience and prefabrication expertise. That experience allowed the team to take an integrated approach to the design and building information modeling of the project. MacDonald-Miller was involved in preconstruction efforts starting in 2016, when the scope included

providing and installing all the HVAC systems, including mechanical piping, sheet metal, and controls. The size and scope of these systems is incredible, with many duct sections bigger than a full-size train car. The project includes more than 1.6 million pounds of ductwork, with many long runs to accommodate the exhibition halls and gathering spaces. Some of the ductwork is more than 20 feet wide. The most unique aspects of this project included prefabricating a 4,000-ton central plant, creating complex life safety systems, and using a unique construction method due to the large building footprint, which required the steel structure to be installed in phases and presented several sequencing challenges.

Teamwork

Due to the sheer size, the project was a challenge from the start. "With 1.5 million square feet of single rooms spanning



Some of the 1.6 million pounds of ductwork staged in MacDonald-Miller's warehouse awaiting delivery to site.



Sheet metal work for the Summit Building at MacDonald-Miller prefabrication shop in Seattle • Photo by Rylan MacCay



Material handlers ready sheet metal ductwork for delivery. • Photo by Rylan MacCay

multiple city blocks, the construction sequence and logistics of this project are like nothing else in the country,” said Ryan Hunter, project manager at MacDonald-Miller.

“Adding the hurdles of the pandemic hitting during our peak crew size, a concrete strike, and challenging labor and procurement markets, the level of difficulty only increased. These challenges were met head-on by the project team, and we executed solutions to those challenges with distinction.”

Logistics

Most construction projects start on the ground and move up, so one of the biggest challenges of this site was that it was built in a billboard sequence. This unique plan organized the construction into five towers or “billboards” lined up in a row to brace one another and support the load. Area one went up first, then area two, and so forth, until all 14 levels were completed.

Another aspect unique to the project was that the scaffolding was not as permanent as it may have been on other sites. It sat in place for a day or two to load materials and then moved to a different location for walls to proceed.

During preconstruction, detailers from MacDonald-Miller co-located at the Arup Engineering office to model the systems in 3D to speed up the design and coordination process.

Collaboration was vital with engineers, detailers, and project managers all together in a room to resolve constructability issues early, which allowed MacDonald-Miller to prevent problems that would have been very costly to fix later. “Problems could have become serious later in the game had we not talked about them,” said Principal in Charge, Reagan Perry. “For instance, the early design had single coil air

handlers that would have required very large headers. Our detailers saw that we could reduce costs and field piping by using dual coil air handlers and maximizing prefabricated headers.”

Rigorous constructability reviews allowed MacDonald-Miller to manage adjustments before the air handling units had been procured or installed.

The detailing department paved the way for success, creating thousands of work package deliverables. Due to the size of the floor plate, each level had to be broken into 15 separate drawings and included about 250 separate install drawings per trade.

“Our fabrication, logistics, and field teams performed phenomenally for this project,” said operations manager Rylan MacCay. “Ensuring the fabrication was accurate and that it arrived on site when the crews needed it was an enormous undertaking. Our team made over 2,800 deliveries to the site with fabrication, equipment, and other materials.”

The sheet metal shop and crews from Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 66 fabricated, delivered, and installed more than 1.6 million pounds of ductwork.

MacDonald-Miller’s pipe-fitting crew from U.A. Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 32 installed, tested, and flushed more than 15 miles of hydronic piping and 100 miles of polyethylene tubing for radiant floors.

The building automation system was another giant undertaking for this massive building. MacDonald-Miller started this scope of work in 2018 with engineering and completed programming checkout and commissioning in April 2023, making this portion of work a four-and-a-half-year-long project. The building

“Our fabrication, logistics, and field teams performed phenomenally for this project,” said operations manager Rylan MacCay. “Ensuring the fabrication was accurate and that it arrived on site when the crews needed it was an enormous undertaking.”

automation system, especially for a building of this size, allows the building engineer to quickly assess the condition of the building. Building engineers can see the hot or cold zones and adjust temperatures with a “click of a button” if there is a problem. The controls system also archives trending data that can be pulled to help troubleshoot equipment or comfort issues. In all, the MacDonald-Miller Honeywell BAS system controls and monitors HVAC, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems for the 1.5 million square foot facility serving as the “eyes” and “ears” watching over the HVAC system and will alert the maintenance team when issues arise.

Safety

Most importantly, this work consisted of more than 797,000 hours and was executed safely, with a recordable incident rate of 0.5. To put this into perspective, the national average recordable incident rate in the construction industry is 3.9.

“We did a fantastic job out here on safety,” Hunter said. “It is unheard of. It would be like if four people worked a full 40-year career and only one of them had a recordable incident.”

MacDonald-Miller would not have been as successful on this project without the immense preplanning and collaboration of all team members who were focused and committed to delivering this new space for both the local community in Seattle, as well as the many visitors who will enjoy what the Summit has to offer for years to come. ■

[Nicole Martin is Brand and Communications Manager at MacDonald-Miller.]



Prefabricated condenser water pump skids hoisted into position on level 12.



Installation in-progress of 1 of 35 air handing units. • Photo by Gus Simonds



Vehicles lining up for ductwork delivery to the construction site. • Photo by Rylan MacCay

A portrait of Stephanie McShane, a woman with long brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a colorful patterned top and a necklace with gold and silver beads. The background is a soft-focus portrait of her, overlaid on a geometric pattern of overlapping pink and purple triangles.

Learn to *Lead*

by Natalie Bruckner

“What’s the number one trait of a great leader?” Stephanie McShane, director of Maxim Consulting Group, asks. “They will end a sentence with a question mark, rather than a period. I’m not saying every sentence is a question, because as a leader you do have to solve issues, but you have to consider whether you have asked enough questions to understand the concern from the person sitting across the table from you. Are you listening just to respond, or are you actively listening?”

In today’s fast-paced and ever-changing business landscape, great leadership has become more crucial than ever before. A business’s success, as well as the success of its labor/management partnership, can largely depend on its leaders’ effectiveness. They must be able to resolve conflicts, attract and

retain talented employees, and drive business growth through scaling up. And yet, McShane, who has worked with hundreds of construction-related firms, says leadership is a trait that doesn’t come naturally to the more seasoned generation in the sheet metal industry.

“For those of us who have been in the industry for decades, we were brought up with a dictatorship model,” she says. “You were told what to do and you did it. Collaboration was not a thing. It was a case of, ‘Do it because I said so’. Let’s be honest, the dictatorship model never worked, but it was all we knew. We have had to relearn what leadership looks like, and I think the younger leaders stepping up are helping us swing that pendulum back the other way,” McShane explains.

Effective leadership might be a critical component of success in any organization, but not everyone is born with natural leadership skills. According to McShane, the good news is that anyone can learn to be an effective leader with the right mindset and approach. However, there is one condition: the person must be willing to put in the effort and commit to ongoing self-improvement. “While some personality types tend to have an easier time stepping into that leadership role, anyone can learn ... as long as they are willing.”

McShane explains that while some personality types may find it easier to step into a leadership role, it’s what motivates people that can determine their success in this area. A servant leader, who is motivated by helping others succeed, is more likely to develop into a great leader. An egocentric leader may need to leave their ego at the door in order to develop their leadership skills. The key is for the person to be self-aware and willing to listen to feedback and guidance.

While some can develop great leadership skills with the right training and guidance, others may struggle to acquire these skills, even with coaching and practice. “I had a young man who wanted a promotion,” McShane says. “Technically, he was extremely solid, but his people skills were horrible. He wanted a promotion that would put him in charge of people. We gave him some coaching and had three newer employees report to him over an 18-month period. After six months, two of the trainees quit and one didn’t progress much at all. So, what does that say? If you can’t be effective with three people, you can’t be put in charge of more. That was a very difficult lesson for this individual, but he needed that ego check to understand where the issues lie.”

This example underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing skill gaps in a timely manner. While it’s possible for people to develop their leadership skills over time, it’s important to acknowledge that not everyone may be suited for an advanced leadership position.

It is a misconception that leadership skills are only beneficial to those in managerial positions; however, learning how to lead well is important at every level of an organization—whether a foreperson, apprentice, or rank and file Local member or employee.

“Everyone benefits from leadership training,” McShane says. “It can help individuals develop key skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution, which are essential for success both in and out of the workplace.

“The problem is training on the soft skills part of the construction industry was laughed at years ago,” she adds. “The idea of playing nicely in the sandbox was just a big joke. In the sheet metal industry, we still spend the lion’s share of our training

“It is a misconception that leadership skills are only beneficial to those in managerial positions; however, learning how to lead well is important at every level of an organization.”



time on hard skills, but by doing this we are missing part of the picture. Leadership training is something that you can easily adapt into your everyday life. It’s a powerful skill and essential when you are in the business of people, and that’s what the sheet metal industry is.”

Effective communication and leadership skills can also be critical in repairing strained labor-management relationships and achieving overall industry success. Experience shows even the most contentious negotiations can turn around when both sides feel heard and are willing to work together.

McShane describes an example involving a contractor who experienced a particularly difficult negotiation with their Local. “That person reached out for advice on how to communicate better and align themselves with their Local,” she says. “We organized a joint strategic planning session with labor and management and asked both groups to come up with 10 points that they needed to accomplish in that negotiation. When they went into that negotiation, they had a foundational understanding of where the industry was going and what needed to change. By communicating they had established trust and the negotiation was a success.”

While leadership training can be powerful, McShane cautions that it’s not a quick fix for addressing all leadership issues within an organization. It’s important to consider the person delivering the training, as employees are more likely to respond well to someone they respect.

“Otherwise, you are setting up for failure,” McShane says. “I’m a really big fan of creating subject matter experts within companies. We need to have leadership people in place at all different levels of an organization who can help develop people, who can continually live that, show it, and mentor it. That is what will have a bigger impact in the long run.” ■

Through Maxim Consulting, Stephane McShane provides industry-specific leadership training for labor and management organizations. Reach out to Stephane at stephane.mcshane@maximconsulting.com to take advantage of offerings in supervisory training.

This article was reprinted with permission from the March/April issue of Partners in Progress. Read full issues at pinp.org

2023 SESSION YIELDS NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS

The 2023 session concluded on April 23 having passed 475 bills. This was a long session—105 days—that included preparation and passage of the operating, capital, and transportation biennial budgets. The Legislature returned for a special session on May 16 to pass a bill clarifying the drug possession law. Most of the new laws went into effect on July 23, 2023.

Housing bills

Increasing housing options was a major focus of the 2023 session. The Legislature dedicated significant funds for housing projects and passed bills to ease construction requirements. **SB 5290** sets time limits for approving building permits. **SB 5058** exempts one- and two-story buildings with 12 or fewer units from the definition of multi-unit residential buildings. **SB 5258** provides more recourse for builders dealing with condominium construction defect claims. And **HB 1110**, the middle housing bill, will allow multi-unit housing to be constructed in residential areas and along transit routes.

Construction bills

There are three new construction laws of interest to SMACNA contractors.

SB 5528 will require a five percent requirement on private sector projects. The retainage is required for both general contractors and subcontractors. General and subcontractors can use a bond instead of cash. A subcontractor who completes work before the entire project is complete can have the retainage released unless there is a dispute about whether the work is complete. The law was effective as of July 23 and should not impact existing contracts.

HB 1050 expands the public works apprenticeship requirement to all municipal governments, except housing authorities. Starting July 1, 2024, municipal public work contracts that are \$2 million or more must have at least 15% of the labor hours performed by apprentices. The dollar threshold reduces to \$1 million by July 2028.

SB 5268 will allow public agencies to use a statewide small works roster to hire contractors. The roster will be developed by the state and will be categorized by type of specialty. Any contractor wanting to be on the state-wide roster will have to designate if they are women and/or minority owned, veteran-owned, or a small business. The new law also defines how public owners will use the roster to solicit bids for different dollar levels of project work.

Energy efficiency

Two new laws on energy efficiency upgrades for the public sector will be of interest to SMACNA contractors.



By Kathleen Collins,
Government Relations Consultant

HB 1777 creates a new type of performance-based contracting as an alternative for public entities to finance energy efficiency equipment and energy service work. The new law applies to all state agencies, school districts, public universities, and municipalities. The new “energy as a service” contract allows the public entity to contract for energy efficient equipment and services that will be held and provided by the contractor with the option to use on-going service payments or other financial arrangements. At the end of the financing term of the contract, equipment ownership may be transferred back to the public entity. A public entity using an “energy as a service” contract must ensure that using this type of contract does not directly result in the loss of positions for their current employees and must offer training in preventative maintenance of the energy equipment and services. SMACNA contractors interested in using “energy as a service” contracts should review all the details of the new law.

HB 1390 deals with district energy systems. The 2019 Clean Building law applies to the buildings served by district heat, including the state capital campus, some universities, and privately owned complexes. **HB 1390** will require owners of state-owned district energy systems to develop a decarbonization plan to replace their fossil fuel sources but will provide more time to comply with the Clean Building mandate. The new law also allows owners of private district heating systems to use the alternative compliance pathway defined in the law. SMACNA contractors interested in district heat system work should review the new law.

In addition to these bills, the state capital budget will leverage federal infrastructure funding to provide several million dollars for weatherization, energy retrofits in public buildings, and transition to high efficiency electric equipment.

Human resources

Below are three new human resource laws of interest to SMACNA contractors.

SB 5111 provides that both union and non-union construction employees who work less than 90 days on a job will be paid for unused accrued sick leave. Payment for the unused sick

leave will be issued at the next scheduled pay period after their departure. SMACNA and NECA oppose the bill, but nearly all other construction contractor groups were neutral.

SB 5217 overturns a 20-year-old referendum that disallowed the imposition of state ergonomic regulations. The new law will allow Labor and Industries to develop an ergonomic regulation for one occupation group a year starting with those occupations with the highest incidence of musculoskeletal injuries.

SB 5123 prohibits screening for cannabis in preemployment drug testing unless the test is required by federal law, such as a CDL driver license, or the applicant will work in a safety-sensitive position where impairment while working presents a substantial risk of death. The employer must identify safety-sensitive positions prior to the applicant's application for employment. The bill does not prevent drug testing for cannabis once the employee is on the job.

Natural gas

A bill that did not pass during session was HB 1589, Puget Sound Energy's (PSE) decarbonization bill. The utility was proposing several regulatory changes to allow it to dramatically reduce their use of natural gas in the coming years. A key feature of the bill was to stop all new gas connections for residential and commercial connections effective June 30, 2023. Several interest groups including builders and restaurants strongly opposed this

provision of the bill and the bill failed to move out of the Senate.

PSE defended the ban provision in their bill, arguing that the 2021 Energy Code changes effectively preempted continued use of natural gas heating and other appliances in both residential and commercial structures. The new 2021 Code, which went into effect July 1, instead requires the use of electric powered heating and appliance equipment with few exceptions. The groups that opposed HB 1589 filed a lawsuit against the Energy Code changes after session. A recent decision in a federal lawsuit may provide impetus to their legal claims.

In 2019, the City of Berkeley in California imposed the same ban on new natural gas connections as was in the PSE bill. The City was sued by the California restaurants and others alleging the ban violated the federal *Energy Policy and Conservation Act*, a federal law that expressly preempts state and local regulations concerning energy use of many natural gas appliances including those used in households and restaurants. The case has been working its way through the courts and on April 17 the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the plaintiffs and struck down the City of Berkeley's ban.

On May 25, the State Building Code Council held an emergency meeting where they voted to delay the implementation of the 2021 codes until October 29 to allow them time to assess the

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The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) is an international trade association representing contracting firms throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and Brazil. The mission of SMACNA is to create a competitive advantage for SMACNA members through industry education, labor relations, standards development, industry representation, and business studies. SMACNA members are innovative and forward-thinking sheet metal contractors who specialize in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning, Architectural & Industrial sheet metal, Manufacturing, Testing & Balancing, and Energy management.

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HVAC VENTING: THE RIGHT CHOICES

Gas-fired equipment is changing and so are the related codes. As efficiencies and energy factors creep up, the installation processes and venting technologies evolve. New materials have recently presented the installers with a learning curve. As a gas appliance is only as good as the venting system, poor venting can cause improper combustion and possible gas spillage into the occupied space. As efficiencies are changing so are the various types of venting materials available, each for a specific application. There is polyvinyl chloride (PVC), chlorinated polyvinyl chloride (CPVC), and polypropylene venting, as well as a more traditional metal venting systems.

Unit heaters

Unit heaters are most often found in warehouses and semi-finished areas. Relatively recent code changes and energy efficiency concerns have seen some of the most significant shifts in venting for unit heaters.

Recently, Canadian Standards Association (CSA) requirements 10.96 and CR96-005 were combined with American Standards Institute (ANSI) Z83.8 CSA2.6 to create one overreaching standard for all unit heaters installed in North America. Going forward, all new horizontally vented unit heaters will require a minimum Category III venting.

This means that all power-vented unit heaters installed in commercial applications that require horizontal venting must now be gas-tight and meet criteria defined in UL1738, Venting Systems for Gas Burning Appliances, Categories II, III, IV. Venting systems approved to meet UL1738 will be clearly identified on each piece with ULC approval.

Power-vented units installed in commercial applications must use a listed vent system. This applies to separated combustion units, as well. High-efficiency, separated combustion units are condensing appliances, meaning the vents must be gas and water tight and must include a means to drain condensate from the vent system.

Venting

There are a variety of simple rules to follow to ensure proper venting. Perhaps the most important is the need to keep vent runs as straight as possible, limiting the number of turns or elbows. And never use a vent size smaller than the size recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

Vertical vent systems must terminate vertically, must not have a horizontal run that is more than 75% of the vertical rise in Category I installations, and it must terminate a reasonable distance above the roof line to prevent snow buildup. Vertical venting systems are preferred as they interfere less with adjacent building occupants.



By Norm Grusnick, PEng
Sales Engineer, ECCO Supply

Horizontal vent systems, if needed, must terminate horizontally, must be pitched no less than a ¼ inch per foot, and must not terminate near inlet openings. They must also terminate at a height sufficient to prevent accidental contact by neighbors.

A drip leg is recommended with the cleanout cover located appropriately based on the installation to prevent condensate in the vent pipe from entering the heating equipment. Special attention must be paid to the maximum length of the vent system from the manufacturer's installation instructions.

Boilers

Most gas-fired boilers are now Category IV and require positive pressure venting systems.

Category I appliances feature less than 84% efficiency and operate with a neutral or negative pressure. The higher stack temperature—though less than 550 degrees F—means flue gas condensate is not an issue.

Category II appliances often use a small fan to move gases through a secondary heat exchanger, and the force is not enough to pressurize the flue, thus operating at neutral or negative vent static pressure. With vent gas temperatures below 140 degrees F, over dew point Category II appliances can cause excessive condensation in the vent.

Category III appliances operate with a positive pressure but are noncondensing as vent gases are above 140 degrees F.

Category IV applies to high efficiency condensing appliances producing condensate that must be removed.

Polypropylene venting

Recently, there has been a big move toward polypropylene vent systems instead of PVC and CPVC. Component availability for polypropylene venting systems has greatly improved in the last few years and costs have come down. Polypropylene may be a better option for condensing boilers where flue temperatures tend to fluctuate. Polypropylene can operate up to 230 degrees F.

As efficiency standards increase the industry is providing more installer training to ensure appliances are vented correctly. ■

THE MYTH OF POTENTIAL: 5 WAYS TO DEVELOP TALENT

In high school, I wasn't an amazing athlete, but one of my closest friends sure was. Most people didn't know it, though. He was quiet, even shy, and spent most of his time either practicing or studying. Nothing he did off the court—not the way he acted, how he dressed, or who he talked to—shouted “jock!” But he handled a basketball as if he'd been born with one in each hand. According to our school's coach, one of the best in the region, my friend had “real potential.” He even talked about him going pro.

But what is potential? When most people say “potential,” what they really mean is “proven success.” After all, no one mentioned my friend's potential when he was an awkward third grader learning how to dribble. It wasn't until he already established himself as a local superstar that people started talking about his potential.

The truth is everyone has potential, and nearly every employee has some talent of great potential value. But developing that talent takes serious work, both from employees and their managers—just like the thousands of hours my friend put in every day after school, along with the encouragement and instruction from his dad and his coach.

Developing talent—that is, helping every employee reach their potential—should be a goal of every leader. In fact, at GE top executives spend as much as 40% of their time identifying and mentoring their replacements. Leaders at other companies would be wise to follow suit. Here's how to start:

1. Give employees time to focus. With the frenetic pace of business, it's easy to get lost in a sea of deadlines and shifting priorities. The best leaders encourage employees to spend time absorbed in a single project or area of focus—especially when it's a stretch assignment that will challenge



By Joel Garfinkle, Executive Coach

their abilities. Some of the most innovative companies in the country put a priority on free or flexible time. For example, Google developers and engineers receive “20 percent time”—eight hours a week they can devote solely to projects of their choice. Likewise, Bell Labs—one of the biggest American innovators of all time—gave scientists and engineers the opportunity to spend years researching a single product.

2. Promote the value of learning. Leaders should be on a constant lookout for professional development opportunities. Taking time to focus on learning helps employees crystallize their goals and determine what skills and areas of growth are most important to them. As I mentioned, General Electric is one example of a company that places a premium on promoting the value of professional development and learning. The company has a Chief Learning Officer and spends \$1 billion a year in training its employees through the GE Global Learning initiative. That's about \$3,500 per year for each of their 290,000 employees.
3. Ask lots of questions. It's no secret that leadership requires clear and effective communication. When it comes to developing talent, leaders should focus on the listening side of the communication equation. Find out what's important

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CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS



SMJ-WW is on the lookout for interesting HVAC, architectural sheet metal, testing & balancing, and industrial/specialty projects and feature topics. If you have a great idea, notice an industry issue that needs addressing, or want to weigh in on a technical subject, we would love to hear from you.

We also need great pictures—current and historical—of people working in all aspects of the sheet metal industry. If you have something to share, please email it to our editor, Jessica Kirby, with a caption about what is going on in the photo.

Questions about how else to get involved in a future issue of *Sheet Metal Journal*? Reach out to jessica.kirby@pointonemedia.com or 250.816.3671 to get the scoop.

THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN SAFETY

There's a fundamental shift that occurs the moment a front-facing employee becomes the crew's supervisor, and the quicker you understand the shift, the faster you will get the buy-in of your team.

If you're a supervisor, there's a very good chance that you were the rock star employee before you became a supervisor. You were probably a top performer with some pretty decent experience and even better results.

Your employer saw your talent and decided that you were the kind of person that they wanted other employees to be more like. So, they promoted you to supervisor to help the others.

You were the rock star. The hero.

Then, you became a supervisor, and everything changed.

Here's why it changed for you and how you can harness it to get better results for your team.

If you moved from employee to supervisor, there's a fundamental shift that occurs the moment you become a supervisor.

You really need to understand that fundamental shift in your responsibilities. You are now the coach, not the star player.

As a coach, your team is looking to you for a very specific set of skills in order to help them.

Your team doesn't care how good you used to be at their job. They want to know how good they're going to be with you as their coach. That's what is most important to them.

They want to know how you are going to help them to be better, more trusted, more respected, and how you will ready them for promotion down the road.

Like any good coach, your job is to improve the individual performance of each of the members of your team. Your primary responsibilities are to help them develop better skill sets, to care about their contributions, to recognize their great results, and to care about their safety.

You are the coach.

And as a coach, you need to make their safety your top concern. When they are safe, they work better. When they feel safe, and valued, and cared about, they give a better effort.

Are you wondering what's happening in the Canadian sheet metal industry?

Check out sheetmetajournal.com to read news and articles from our BC edition of *Sheet Metal Journal*



By Kevin Burns

The moment you become a supervisor is the moment you stop being the star player and become the coach of your team.

Your role in safety as a supervisor is to give your people what they want from the job so they can turn around and give you what you want.

But as the coach, you must go first. So, go first because that's what leaders do.

Remember: you don't need more rules and reminders in safety. You need more of your employees to buy-in. And that takes a very different approach.

Most companies don't have faulty safety procedures and they lack buy-in as part of their company culture. There are three steps to improving safety performance and employee buy-in that every supervisor should take. Here they are:

1. **Build your overall leadership skills:** No one has more influence in safety than frontline supervisors. Being a rock star doesn't necessarily preclude leadership skills or the specific type of leadership your team needs. Consider training in leadership and team building to create a team that buys in for the long haul.
2. **Clarify and simplify the safety message:** Build one clear and concise safety message that becomes the foundation of your safety communications. The best course is to involve employees in the development of this message, so it becomes something they can all connect with.
3. **Engage employees with the benefits of safety:** Give employees 52 good reasons to get behind safety and you will engage employees to buy in. Review, discuss, and produce deliverables (where appropriate) on one benefit per week for one year, and watch your safety culture change for the better. ■

Need more tips and tricks, training, or consultation? Visit kevburns.com and learn what Kev Burns Learning has to offer.

GUEST EDITORIAL

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in such a way that disrupts your ability to fall and stay asleep. In fact, social media use in the 30 minutes before bedtime is the strongest indicator of disturbed sleep in the United States. So, get an alarm clock, take up reading, and reconnect your charger somewhere else in the house. Your brain will thank you. ■

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

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impact of the federal Court’s decision on the natural gas related code changes. It is likely the Building Code Council will try to devise another approach to curtailing natural gas use, but given the federal Court decision, it will be hard to approach it by regulating equipment. PSE may also reassess their approach to decarbonizing their system.

SMACNA will send you links or additional information for any of these new laws upon request. You can access the information directly by going to leg.wa.gov Click on Bill Information and type in the bill number. ■

CONTRACTOR ADVICE

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to employees, what experience they have, where they see themselves in the future, and what excites them about the company. Colin Powell nicely sums up the importance of listening and effective communication: “The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them.” His words are just as true in the corporate world as they are in the military one.

- 4. Give frequent, specific feedback. It’s far too easy for managers to only give feedback during performance

reviews or to offer vague platitudes. The best mentors provide quality feedback that’s timely, genuine, and focused on desired behaviors. It’s also important to be positive and forgo any personal judgments. To reinforce how critical providing quality feedback is, try Googling “leaders and the importance of feedback.” The search yields over 18 million results (and lots of good advice).

- 5. Treat failure as an opportunity for improvement. Nobody likes failure, but everybody enjoys saving face. When employees fail, they’re often at their most vulnerable. And that’s a good thing. It means they’re open to receiving feedback, trying new approaches, and improving areas of weakness. Stay positive as you help your team members take advantage of these opportunities.

Some of the most meaningful learning in my life has been in response to failure. A beloved high school teacher of mine often used the mantras, “Failure is a better teacher than success,” and, “The bigger the failure, the bigger the lesson.” Obviously, no one wants to encourage failure, but it’s important to realize that it will happen—and embrace it for what it is: a learning opportunity.

Remember: Everyone has potential, but that potential may remain hidden without skilled mentoring and effective leadership. Take time to help employees discover their talents, learn from failures, and build on their successes. It may just save your company some major recruitment dollars. ■

Joel Garfinkle is recognized as one of the top 50 leadership coaches in the United States. As an executive coach he has worked with many of the world’s leading companies, including Google, Amazon, Deloitte, Oracle, and Ritz-Carlton. He is the author of seven books, including Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level. Learn more about his books and executive coaching services at garfinkleexecutivecoaching.com. You can also subscribe to his Fulfillment@Work receive the free e-book, 41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!

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