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| **JE Dunn Construction** | | |
| **C**hallenge | **A**ction | **R**esult |
| A few years ago JE Dunn was operating as six different entities. All had their own unique business processes that, while working well, resulted in different experiences for our customers.  These entities did not share resources and employees did not work across their regional boundaries. Because we are a national construction contractor, some of our customers worked with different JE Dunn entities and would therefore experience JE Dunn differently.  We wanted to change this and give our customers a consistent, high quality experience across the board. As a company we decided to work as one company and reorganized from six separate entities into four regions with 20 office locations.  The Learning & Development challenge was to understand the best practices of the newly aligned organization and effectively teach these to our employees so that performance among all regions improved. We began with our newest employees once they were 12 to 18 months out of college with their construction management degrees and created DUNN 101.  DUNN 101 is an immersive project management course and was created with the stated objectives of teaching our project engineers the best practices associated with building a building. We also wanted to help them build relationships with one another across all regions and operations departments. | We began with a needs analysis to understand performance gaps and missed opportunities. We then focused on those best practices that would be used by our stated audience and most impact the performance gaps.  We designed and developed DUNN 101 to be a very experiential, hands-on learning experience. Using a leader-as-teacher model we rely on Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) one to two levels above the participants to deliver the course.  Part of the implementation included training our SME’s to facilitate the course using very little lecture. We employ games, role plays, facilitated questioning, quizzes, daily team projects, and team presentations.  We make sure the participants practice real life scenarios while in class, get live feedback, and practice again.  We have nightly, fun activities so they can get to know one another and build relationships. For example, one of the favorite nights is “Etiquette Night” where we take them to a fine dining restaurant and teach them how to entertain clients.  This module teaches them basic table manners as well as how to talk with customers; something that people new to the work world have rarely experienced. Another piece of the design is that every participant develops a learning plan which they discuss with their supervisor.  We also ask our supervisors to meet with their employees prior and post class to coach their employee about the importance of the class and how to utilize their newly learned skills once back on the job.  Each time DUNN 101 is delivered we ask participants key questions such as whether they learned new skills and whether they believe the new skills they learned will improve their performance.  We also perform Level Three evaluations with the participant’s supervisors to find out the level of performance improvement. | DUNN 101 has taught our employees to use the same processes and how to provide our customers with a consistent, exceptional customer experience.  Our employee’s supervisors say their performance improves when they return from class and that they are coming back from class and teaching others what they learn, often times unsolicited.  Another result is that because they meet and become friends with people from all over the country while in class, they are more willing to move to another region to work on a construction project.  We have learned many lessons along the way. A few years into the program we began including employees from other departments, so they could also learn best practices and get to know what project managers do.  This has resulted in better working relationships between departments. Recently we did another needs analysis with supervisors, employees, and management to hone in on the learning that participants needed right now to immediately improve their performance.  This process not only helped us redesign the class to immediately improve performance, it shortened class time from five days to three. By participating in the needs analysis, our supervisors learned how to isolate the processes our newer employees needed to perform now from the vast array of project management processes they would need later in their careers.  Another lesson learned was that our supervisors needed more tools to adequately coach their employees. As a result of this and other indicators, we have designed and developed new supervisor and manager learning experiences.  DUNN 101 has become a great enhancement to on the job learning by giving our employees the opportunity to practice effective project management techniques in the classroom. It is the first in a series of project management courses that our employees receive throughout their career.  This integrated approach has proven beneficial not only in developing the talent of our project managers but also has broken down the silos between different departments and regions.  We believe that this course combined with manager and leadership courses provides our organization with both the technical and people skills we need to perform at our highest level. |