

Highlights

Rapid Financial Results; Lasting Cultural Change

HB McClure became a 100% employee-owned company in 2010. But it turned to playing the Great Game of Business in 2014 when Bob Whalen, the company's CEO, realized that just giving ownership to employees wasn't enough. "We needed another tool to get us all the way there," says Whalen. "The GGOB became the tool we used to educate our employees to work together on what it really meant to think and act like owners."

That process began with rolling out a financial literacy training program, in combination with holding regular departmental huddles to help get everyone in the company's three locations on the same page. HB McClure even holds an all-company huddle conducted from headquarters in Harrisburg using video technology to tie employee-owners from other locations into the session, thus ensuring company-wide engagement.

The team also rolled out a series of MiniGames and began including employee-owners in the High Involvement Planning (HIP) process, which Whalen says has helped strengthen the company's culture of ownership by getting deeper buy-in throughout the organization.

"Our employee owners have a better understanding of the business than ever before," he says. "The Great Game of Business gives them the tools to make decisions on their own, like they are an owner. As a result, our business is growing its top line while also becoming more profitable on the bottom line."

Those results have also earned the company plenty of awards and recognition, including being named the ESOP Company of the Year for Pennsylvania/Delaware in 2016 and being named to the 2017 Small Giants list published by Forbes.

EMPLOYEE OWNED

HBMcCLURE

TRUST. QUALITY. VALUE... SINCE 1914.

Organizational Background

Since 1914, HB McClure has been helping Central Pennsylvanians stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer by offering a full range of home comfort services. From heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, automatic fuel oil delivery, propane, and 24-hour emergency service, HB McClure is the company that homeowners and businesses trust for responsive, quality service.

"I am most proud of the level of engagement and accountability that the Great Game of Business has helped to create. People seem genuinely interested in the business and doing what they can to increase profit and performance."

~Sara Kann, Corporate
Development Manager

Playing the Game Together

Whalen says that this year's HIP process will include more than 100 employee owners, who will participate in eight hours of learning, presentations, collaboration, SWOT preparation, contingency planning, and preparation of their MiniGame plans for the upcoming year. They will also survey more than 250 employee owners by asking them to vote on their confidence level in the company's strategic plan.

Another major impact that playing the Great Game of Business has had at HB McClure is to take the mystery out of their gainsharing program. While the company had long awarded a broad-base bonus program, there was no formula to it. "We never had that direct tie to the financials like we do today," says Whalen. "Now we have a scoreboard that helps everyone understand exactly what they will get with certain results. It also helps to get people really interested in our performance on a weekly basis."

"The Great Game of Business has shown that everyone is on equal playing ground when it comes to providing valuable decisions and making positive impacts to our end goals as a team – whatever they may be. It has given individuals the feeling of being empowered and truly invested in their futures along with those around them. The idea of family, growth, and grit has only grown since starting the Great Game of Business."

~ Beth Belcher, Fuels Assistant Manager

What's Next?

One area where Whalen would like to see additional focus is using the Great Game of Business to further encourage frontline employees to offer their ideas on how to improve the business. "Some of our employee owners still have that historic hierarchical mindset," he says, "but we are working on breaking that down every day. The big idea that Whalen wants to take hold is not just that employee-owners are allowed to make suggestions, but that it's part of their job to come up with those ideas."

"I feel that our company does an exceptional job of attempting to ensure that every employee-owner is knowledgeable and aware of our financials and the direction the company is taking. Employee-owners are more engaged and knowledgeable of our game sharing results, which I personally feel pushes them to attempt to achieve the next level."

~ Breanne Nguyen, Corporate Training and Development Supervisor