

Highlights

Rapid Financial Results; Lasting Cultural Change

GUY Engineering turned to the Great Game of Business after its founder sold 49% of the business to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). While the employees now have a true ownership stake in the business, they had never been truly educated on how to run the business, says John Blickensderfer, GUY's CEO.

Since GUY implemented the Great Game of Business, results are up across the board, including near-record sales and profit figures, a reduction by half in long-term debt in just three years, and a 30% increase in the firm's stock price since 2014. The firm has also diversified the services it offers clients by purchasing a structural engineering firm and starting a right-of-way division, which has moved it closer to becoming a one-stop shop for its customers.

The firm's backlog has also grown, to a record 1.5 years – which is also why 2017 is on track to be the best year ever financially for the business.

This strong growth has only helped cement the culture of camaraderie that now exists inside the company.

"We have such a strong family-friendly culture that is the result of working together as a team," says Blickensderfer. "Playing the Great Game of Business has brought us all closer together. We've evolved from a place where people come to work into a place where friends come together to improve their community by providing safe roads and bridges."



Organizational Background

GUY Engineering is a consulting firm with extensive experience in civil engineering and land surveying. Since 1987, GUY has been providing quality design work on hundreds of projects ranging from roadway and bridge designs to water distribution and sanitary sewer improvements throughout the state of Oklahoma.

"GGOB has really instilled a sense of teamwork amongst our company. From MiniGames to financials, we all feel that we can have a positive effect on the company."
~ Ryan Bellatti, Oklahoma City Metro Branch Manager

Playing the Game Together

The GUY team continues to hold weekly huddles to update their scoreboards. Every line item is “owned” by a different employee, who is responsible for learning about and tracking that line item for six months. “Forecasting has had the biggest impact on everyone’s attitude,” says engineer Pete Ellis. “People are more willing to work extra hours and be more efficient when they know where we are in a certain month and we need to stretch to meet a goal. Everyone takes more ownership of what they are doing and is willing to help us reach our shared goals.”

The company has also rallied to the idea of playing a series of mini-games, including one called “Get Smart About Cash.” The main objective of the game was to encourage quicker invoicing, thereby generating cash more quickly. The game included lunchtime classes to teach employees how cash is generated, how to read profit and loss statements and how projects are set up.

The GUY team also benefits from their high-involvement planning process, which has created more education for people at all levels of the business on where they are headed as a team.

“People can see longer-term now,” says Blickensderfer. “They have an awareness of the bigger picture.”

“Before GGOB became a part of Guy’s operation, I used to do my job to the best of my ability and hope that all the business factors that I impacted were working out well. Now, I’m starting to understand how those factors work and how I impact them. It’s allowed me to make better decisions and ultimately feel more empowered to control my part in our success.”

~ Dustin M. McNally, Vice President – Survey

What’s Next?

As the company’s opportunities have increased, their staff has grown too – by 10% in the past year. Not only does this mean GUY needs to move into a larger building, but they are also creating a peer-to-peer mentor program to help onboard and teach new employees about their ESOP and playing the Great Game of Business. “This way those who have learned can teach, which reinforces their knowledge base while spreading the knowledge throughout the company,” says Blickensderfer.

The company also has plans to diversify further into new markets, such as expanding beyond their state into federal work as a way to create new revenue streams while growing the company.

“When implementing a new game there is always the question, ‘Will everyone else be excited about this like we are?’ I really enjoy seeing my co-workers getting involved in the game and understanding the goal. Whether that is learning invoicing goals, overhead, or utilization, you can see that the game really reinforces what we are trying to teach.”

~ Becky Pitts, Engineering Tech. / Project Admin. Asst.
