

2019 Highlights



Challenge

Educate the employee-owners in the company's ESOP how to think and act like owners when it comes to running their business—including how to pay off the debt accrued from buying out the founder.



Solution

Implement weekly huddles to update scoreboards, and assign ownership of every line item to an employee-owner who is responsible for learning about and tracking that line item for six months. Also conduct company-wide financial literacy training and encourage employee-owners to begin forecasting their numbers and think years ahead through the High-Involvement Planning™ (HIP) process.



Results

The Great Game of Business® (GGOB) became a framework and a process to help the GUY team adapt to changes in their industry, to explore ways to keep revenue high during challenging times, and to seek continuous improvement—while also earning regular bonuses, higher revenue, and lowering their debt. Playing Great Game™ has also helped the company diversify its client base. Before, their primary client was the Oklahoma Dept of Transportation. Now, they have added numerous cities and counties to their roster of clients, as well as tribes and private entities. The GUY team has also leveraged its HIP process to explore new ideas and business opportunities. For example, in 2018 they began offering environmental services. “We actually increased our revenue during a recent industry downturn because we diversified into new revenue streams,” says CEO John Blickensderfer. “GGOB also taught us to look ahead and be proactive, which meant we were not caught by surprise by the industry downturn. We continue to explore new opportunities and look for ways to expand our services and our clients.”



Company 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.

“Thanks to the Great Game, we are now much better at long-range planning. We also do a much better job at connecting the organization together through the flow of our huddles. We now can translate our day-to-day activities into a better forecast and how each of us impacts our critical number.” ~ Aaron Peck, Vice President

MiniGame™ Spotlight

The GUY team strives to hold two to three company-wide MiniGames each year— focusing on such diverse topics as financial literacy, productivity, culture, and personal health. “MiniGames help us focus deeply on a particular issue and are always fun,” says Blickensderfer. The team’s 2018 strategic plan also required each department or team to participate in at least one “microgame”—a department-level MiniGame—each year, with the goal of helping a particular department address issues or problems specific to their area. “Our goal is to keep MiniGames and microgames simple, focused, and fun,” says Blickensderfer.

“I’ve never worked for a business that plays The Great Game of Business. I’ve noticed how alert and aware the employees are—especially financially. They are much more engaged and care about the success of the company.” ~ Michael Twyman, Director of Finance and HR

What’s Next?

One area where the team is focused on for the next year is their succession planning, as Blickensderfer plans to retire within the next five years. To help educate the team and address their questions, he has been sharing teachable moments in their weekly huddles about what the process will look like and how the different potential scenarios might impact all of the associates. Along similar lines, the team plans to continue to evolve their huddles to include more educational components to help associates learn more about their business and industry while also coming up with new ideas of how they can continue to grow and diversify their business. “We are always learning and growing in our Great Game journey and are always excited to implement new ideas and to learn from other companies,” says Blickensderfer.

“Everyone feels the impact when we share the numbers in our huddle. When things don’t look good in our forecast, you can feel the energy flow out. But that doesn’t mean we give up. We all know we can still turn things around in the coming weeks. We all have the confidence that we can do better. We immediately make adjustments to upcoming work schedules and plans to bring the numbers up.” ~ Stacey Schifferdecker, Business Development/Marketing Coordinator
