

2019 Highlights



Challenge

When Hildebrandt started his company back in 2010, one of his biggest frustrations was not knowing how to let his team know “the score” of the game: the financials. “I felt like I was asking them to play a game with no score and I didn’t have the ability to share the highs and lows of the game,” he says.



Solution

When he first read *The Great Game of Business*, Hildebrandt felt like he had found the Holy Grail of how to run a business so that everyone could know and understand the score. “Having read many other business books, Jack Stack’s book felt like the first business book I had read that was practical and applicable to the blue-collar worker,” says Hildebrandt. After visiting Springfield, MO, Hildebrandt decided to implement The Great Game of Business® (GGOB) in his business in January 2018 with the help of his coach, Kevin Walter.



Results

In 2017, the company’s EBITDA was 9%. For 2018, their critical number goal was 12% EBITDA. “As a smaller company playing GGOB we felt EBITDA was a number everyone could have line of sight to how they can have an impact,” says Hildebrandt. When the year ended, though, the company had earned an 18% EBITDA—which meant that all the associates earned the equivalent of an 8% bonus. “There is much more transparency at all levels of the company and improved communication,” says Hildebrandt. “Playing GGOB has made each team member understand their individual roles and how they impact The Critical Number clearer to themselves and the other players on the team. There is a substantial commitment of time involved in designing, launching, and playing The Game that at first can seem intimidating. But the results are worth every minute.”



Company Background

A full-service tree care company serving the tree care needs of home owners and businesses. “We do anything that has to do with trees,” says founder and CEO, Casey Hildebrandt.

“Efficiency benefits have been the biggest plus from GGOB. Transparency from top to bottom creates a healthy environment for the psyche. It helped create the feeling of camaraderie and family. Which brings out the best in everyone.”

~ Jose Barcenas, Operations Manager

MiniGame™ Spotlight

The most popular MiniGame the Hildebrandt team has played to date was the first one it played. It was called “Load to Road,” and its goal was to get trucks loaded and ready to leave the shop by 8:15 a.m. or earlier each day. Before playing this MiniGame, the associates might linger around the shop or be forced to return after hitting the road because they forget to load a critical piece of equipment. Now, thanks to the MiniGame, the team shows up at 8 a.m. and is ready to roll to their job sites on time. “It has been very enjoyable to hear the front line production guys talk about ways to improve efficiency in many of the small day to day tasks such as getting out the shop in the mornings more timely, organizing tools and trucks, and helping another crew finish their job if their crew is ahead of schedule for the day,” says Hildebrandt. “These are the small things that the supervisors have ‘preached’ for ages, but now it’s the associate’s game that they helped create.”

I truly believe that GGOB has opened the eyes of ALL those working at Hildebrandt Tree Tech, including myself. It’s easy to feel that your contribution to a business may be very small, but through GGOB, we all now realize what an impact we have on the growth and success of the entire company.” ~ Edie Tunstall, Office Manager

What’s Next?

In the coming year, Hildebrandt would like to double down in getting his team to understand the financials of the business, as well as to start looking at how they might implement a collaborative High-Involvement Planning™ approach to their strategic planning. “We have learned is that GGOB is not a magic formula that makes all your problems go away,” says Hildebrandt. “But GGOB does give you an increased level of trust and teamwork that allows your people to work through those stumbling blocks together. I really think a business is crazy to not include their team in the numbers of the business and give them a chance to play The Game.”

“Personally, transparency and truthfulness has had immeasurable impact on my life. The Great Game of Business takes the level of transparency I desire in my own life and applies it to our business life. We are being rewarded as a company because of doing business the GGOB way!”
~ Kelly Hildebrandt, Head of Operations
