

# EVOLVING WORKFORCE GUIDE

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Evolving Workforce Guide



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



## **Gabriel Eckert, FASAE, CAE**

is editor-in-chief of CRE Insight Journal. He also serves as the CEO of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Georgia and the BOMA Georgia Foundation. He is a Certified Association Executive, Fellow of the American Society of Association Executives; and has been named by the Atlanta Business Chronicle as one of the Top 100 Who's Who in Commercial Real Estate, a list of "leaders, dealmakers and legends who are changing Atlanta."

The workforce that we see today is entirely different than the workforce 50 years ago. It looks different than the workforce even just five years ago. The face of commercial real estate is changing, and real estate professionals at all levels have a part to play in nurturing and navigating through that change.

With concerns of a talent gap in building engineering and the search for the next great CRE professional always going, this guide is meant to serve as a resource and a learning tool in the workplace. Achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within an organization is an on-going progress. This publication is not an instruction manual nor a how-to novel. Rather, it is a jumping-off point for conversations within an organization.

This guide covers a multitude of topics under the umbrella of the evolving workforce. It contains resources for diversifying your talent pool and reaching out to new applicants ([page 20](#)) as well as tips for incorporating DEI initiatives in an organization ([page 8](#)). The topics covered are merely the tip of the iceberg in the conversation surrounding DEI and the evolving workforce, but we hope they serve as informational tools for your organization.

Beyond demographic diversity, this guide tackles different challenges faced in the evolution of a single career. From training a new employee ([page 13](#)) to planning for your successor ([page 12](#)), this guide covers all stages of a commercial real estate professional's career. It also offers advice and guidance to those just beginning their commercial real estate journey.

We also wanted to address the challenge the commercial real estate industry is facing with regards to the building engineering field. There have long been discussions about recruiting new professionals into the industries and the dangers of recycling talent. There are multiple articles in this guide that offer solutions to these issues as well as a feature on the career of engineering itself ([page 22](#)). For those in the industry and for those who may be interested, we hope this guide offers insights that may assist you on your career journey.

We understand the evolving nature of these conversations. The CRE Insight Journal made a concerted effort to fill this guide with voices outside of our organization and even outside of our industry to provide new perspectives, critical information, and appropriate insight on the topics covered throughout the guide. From representatives in several BOMA organizations to instructors specializing in workforce conflict, the subject matter experts in this issue go far beyond our circle.

The new virtual workplace that many of us are still operating in has created many opportunities in the education and publication space. Readers of The Evolving Workforce Guide will now be able to hear more from the voices featured in several articles. Throughout this publication, you will find videos of these subject matter experts exploring the topics further and offering their insight. This use of technology allows the CRE Insight Journal to provide even more information beyond the words on the page.

We wanted this guide to be a resource for the commercial real estate industry when tackling the challenges of the evolving workforce. We hope that this is a guide you can refer to at many stages in your career and with different members of your team. We hope it challenges you as well as offering advice and solutions to issues you may be facing in your day-to-day.

I sincerely hope that this guide will serve as both a conversation starter and a resource to lean on. Many organizations in the commercial real estate industry and beyond are facing similar challenges and opportunities, so we hope the guide gives a sense of community and reminds professionals that they are all navigating the same waters.

The commercial real estate industry offers incredible careers and opportunities for growth. We hope that this guide inspires professionals to take the extra step and find ways to pull new faces, new voices, and new people into this growing industry.

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# BUILDING DIVERSITY, EQUITY

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are not to be viewed as boxes to check or numbers to achieve, but rather as strategies to ensure the competitiveness and longevity of an organization. With new vocabulary and concepts emerging about implementing inclusion in the workplace, it has become clear that embracing these principles is an ever-evolving journey that is imperative for organizations to maintain focus on.

## Diversity as a Sustainability Initiative

When sustainability is discussed in commercial real estate, it usually refers to the strategies surrounding environmental sustainability and the considerations for the future of the planet. However, the same strategies surrounding environmental sustainability, such as keeping the organization competitive and overall bettering a property, can be brought to the conversation surrounding demographic and thought diversity in the workplace.

Eleni Reed, head of sustainability, Americas at Lendlease, has made inclusion programs a centerpiece in her goal to increase opportunities in the construction sector. Reed and Lendlease have utilized external partnerships to enrich the lives of people in the communities they have a presence in.

"The goal is to look at how we can remove barriers to employment in the construction industry," Reed said. "We are seeing that in general there is a labor shortage and there is a bit of a skilled workforce gap, at least pre-COVID. We are also seeing that there is an under-representation of minorities and women in the construction trade."

Through partnerships with Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW), Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, HIRE360, and Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT), Reed and her team have thought about sustainability not just for their organization but the communities at large.

Reed said that diversity and its purpose go far beyond demographics.

"One of the imperatives we have is through our work is: how can we drive sustainable economic growth, and

the social piece of that is: how can we create economic opportunity through the work that we do in a community where we have a presence," Reed said.

## Generating Internal Systems

Beginning a DEI initiative in a workplace requires self-awareness and research. Once a plan is in place, the organization needs to consider if it should have an external DEI statement and Internal DEI policy to demonstrate intent and commitment.

Haven Cockerham, the founder of Cockerham & Associates, a strategic consulting and technology business for human resources, said that the first step to creating a cultural shift is to understand the most current definitions of the DEI vocabulary.

"I like to refer to diversity and inclusion as the noun and the verb," Cockerham said. "The noun is what exists. The verb requires some action, it requires you to do something different. It requires you to make it work for everybody in the organization."

Cockerham's business has helped multiple organizations of various sizes with their human resources initiatives. Whether the goal is hiring more veterans or creating a broadened succession strategy, Cockerham and Associates work with a few strategies in mind to achieve the client's goal. One of the main ones is employee resource groups (ERG).

"They emerged as a result of individuals of color in particular not feeling that they were being seen, not feeling that they were being considered for opportunities, and not learning about what's going on in the organization," Cockerham said.

Now, ERG are a common tactic to help different groups of people excel in the workplace. Not only do they provide employees a space to innovate and express concerns, but they also provide more opportunities for individuals to be seen by leadership and considered for different positions. Pipelines like this are essential to creating an overall culture of diversity and inclusion focused on bettering and sustaining the organization.



# AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

## Looking Towards the Future

There are many pitfalls when creating inclusion initiatives or beginning the journey of a cultural shift within your organization: over-generalizing, stereotyping, or lack of education. One of the biggest pitfalls is forgetting the purpose. Cockerham said that most organizations go through a cultural redefinition every few years and that a one size fits all approach will not increase retention or generate results. He said it's about finding what works for your company and approaching change with earnest and intention.

"You can pay people more, you can give people more benefits, but if all the other cylinders are not functioning properly, people are going to leave anyway," Cockerham said.

For Lendlease, they keep their goals and mission in mind when embarking on different initiatives. By taking a comprehensive view of diversity and looking for needs to be met, they can create a lasting impact on an industry and their communities.

Whether it be establishing a fund to offset childcare, transportation, and equipment costs or working with a partner to develop training programs, the mission is always clearly defined.

"Our goal is the bigger question of how to address the labor shortage and how to promote diversity within the construction trade," Reed said.

Developing DEI within an organization is about more than meeting benchmarks. It involves education, training, and willingness to self-examine. Developing specific goals and accepting that it is an ongoing process will increase the longevity of organizations and keep them competitive by having a more diverse pool of talent creating solutions.

One size does not fit all, so organizations need to approach this realm with the same strategic and creative mind they use to approach the rest of their business practices

**FOR A DEI PRIMER AND  
DEFINITIONS  
CLICK HERE**





# GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Managing and Leading Effectively

With five generations in the workplace, managing a multi-generational workplace has become a considerable process that requires a particular competency. However, when a multi-generational workplace is lead well, it can have positive effects and add value to a business. By avoiding common pitfalls and focusing on the strength of the staff, a leader can make their multi-generational workplace thrive.

## Defining “Work”

From the Silent Generation to Generation Z, each group believes in different theories about work, lifestyle choices, and balance. Jonathan Burman, director of talent and organizational development at Cameron Ashley Building Products and instructor for Emory University Professional Development in multi-generational workplaces, said it's important to take stock of the priorities and intentions of different workers on the staff.

“There’s a huge difference in perspective between the Silent Generation down to Gen Z. There is a huge gap in understanding of what is work, why am I working, how do I do my work,” Burman said.

Defining a member of the staff’s expectations and priorities is a great way to benchmark and properly manage them. No matter the generation, the development of talent is key to the survival of any business.

Kinsey Hinkson, general manager with Granite Properties, said that as the bridge between two generations, she has seen the value in learning about each staff member as an individual.

“As a leader, a key component of cultivating a high performing team is leveraging the strengths of each person and appreciating varied perspectives,” Hinkson said.

It can be daunting to set the expectation that high for getting to know individual staff members. Burman said that the generalization of generations and their priorities is what can lead to misunderstandings and frustrations. He said that to unlock the potential of different staff members, regardless of generations, managers need to be willing to put in the extra time.

“Our perspectives on youth have not changed since the beginning of recorded history. We have always disparaged the youth. I think that’s especially pertinent for people to realize nowadays-it’s just a difference in perspective,” Burman said.

## Breaking Down the Boxes

Labels can be a dangerous pitfall when it comes to inclusion and management strategies. Putting people in boxes or giving them generalized labels can work against the efforts to create a productive and diverse workplace. When seeking new talent, Hinkson avoids focusing on generational identifiers/labels and instead gravitates toward learning about the individual's past experiences and skill set to assess if they would be a good cultural fit for the team.

"One way to build confidence for an emerging professional is to provide them with an opportunity to be a project champion, from development to execution. This experience will not only increase their skill set with practical application, but also demonstrate your trust in their abilities," Hinkson said.

This attitude towards acceptance and understanding is not just for older generations looking to the young, it is for all generations. Burman said that giving into the ease of labels is a missed opportunity and a natural occurrence that managers must actively fight against.

**"WE AS LEADERS NEED TO LOOK BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE JOB AND SAY WHAT'S BEST FOR SOCIETY AND WE NEED TO CONNECT EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF AGE TO PURPOSE"**

"There is a flaw in the human psyche, and that is that we feel more comfortable putting people into boxes, and that's of all ages," Burman said.

## Creating Accountability

Accountability is a concept that is experiencing a renaissance as the workplace and who staffs it changes. Both employees and managers are discovering new ways to keep each other accountable from the smallest daily tasks to the larger cultural shifts occurring in the workplace.

Creating an environment where no generation feels under-valued or over-looked means creating a culture of accountability from the top down.

"We as leaders need to look beyond the immediate job and say what's best for society and we need to connect everyone regardless of age to purpose," Burman said.

He also stressed the importance of taking active steps to create a workplace that effectively champions members of every generation. From formalized brainstorming

sessions to developing innovation pipelines, managers must create concrete systems that hold both them and their team accountable for improving the business.

These systems are also important to ensuring everyone involved on a team feel valued. Hinkson said that respect is always the most important aspect of managing a multi-generational workforce. She said when respect is made a top priority, the team will feel the effects of that and respond positively.

"Creating an positive environment in which mutual respect is demonstrated and the team leader highlights the value that each team member contributes is crucial," Hinkson said.

No generation has all the answers. Effective and innovative managers are the ones who will recognize the strengths of different employees and use them to both the person and the company's advantage. Aligning expectations to the person and breaking out the old habits will help the longevity of the team and the real estate industry.

## MORE FROM JONATHAN BURMAN

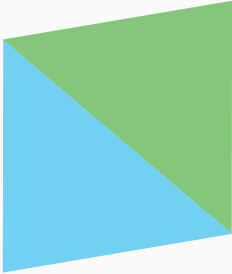






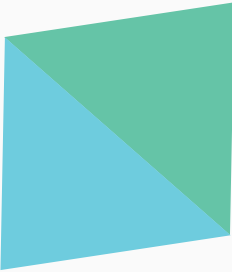
# SUCCESSION PLANNING

## *How to Future-proof Your Business*




Any organization with an eye for longevity and endurance has developed a succession strategy. Succession planning plays an important role in hiring practices, talent development, and ensuring the future success of an organization. Not only does having a thorough succession plan help new professionals succeed in the industry and prepare for the future, but it helps veteran professionals learn new tactics and improve their work lives as well.


### **Setting the Stage**




Succession planning can be as much about hiring as it is about existing employees. Hiring the right pieces to develop and innovate within your company is what is going to lay the right foundation for later succession conversations. Jamal Johnson, general manager with Prologis and vice chair of BOMA Philadelphia, said that the hunt for the right talent is a constant one.



“You should always be looking for the next wave of trendsetters, trailblazers, and people who would like to step to the forefront,” Johnson said.




It is also important for succession planning to acclimate new hires correctly to the organization. Charles Huffstetler, a management consultant, said that even a great hiring process does not mean the hired talent is ready to jump in immediately. Work must be done to bring even the best fit candidate up to speed.



“The culture of an organization is kind of like the flow of a river. Every organization has a flow and your employee has to get in the flow and figure out why things are done and how they are done,” Huffstetler said.

### **Training Up**



Creating the next manager or CEO means investment from the top. Employees that feel appreciated and invested in are more likely to stay and learn and one day rise to leadership. Huffstetler said mentorship and conversation with the next generation is key to improving their professional lives and the lives of their mentor.

“We should be willing to ask employees: is there a better way to do this? Is there a more cost-effective way? We need to gather input from everyone and not be afraid to challenge the status quo a little bit,” Huffstetler said

When training or mentoring, it is important to show all aspects of the job. Too often a new person begins a position and is suddenly met with challenges they were not aware were tied to the position. Johnson said that honesty will make candidates for promotion more prepared and better at their eventual jobs.

“That exposure to the daily ins and outs is vital,” Johnson said. “That exposure to the failures and the things that are difficult is often more valuable than exposure to successes.”

### **Being the Trainee**

As much as succession planning is the responsibility of those in charge, it is the responsibility of the next generation to be receptive and attentive mentees. Mentees should be a sponge and learn from everyone around them regardless of position. Property professionals that learn about all the different aspects of their industry, from engineering to asset management, will make better candidates for promotion.

“Don’t be afraid to take from people. Don’t be afraid to take a management style and say ‘Y’know what? I am going to put my personality into that because that is valuable to me.” Johnson said.

The next generation of property professionals should find mentors in and outside of their industry and company. They should ask questions and take advantage of professional development opportunities. Ultimately, it will be the best students and the best listeners that will learn the most and be the best candidate for promotion.

**CLICK TO HEAR  
MORE FROM JAMAL JOHNSON**





# KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

## *How to Prepare the Next Generation*

With a possible labor shortage on the minds of many chief engineers and senior property managers, the concept of knowledge transfer is becoming increasingly important. How does a new hire become the next great portfolio chief engineer? How does a leader take someone with transferable skills and turn them into a commercial real estate professional? It is all in the planning.

### Opening the Door

Before any knowledge or skills are transferred, the right person needs to be walking through the door. That does not always mean the person with the most commercial experience, rather the person that can learn and absorb in the best way. Tyrone Chilcote, a regional vice president with Able Services, came into commercial real estate as a tradesman and ended up an executive. He said he believes the industry needs to work to show potential candidates that this industry is an option for them.

"People haven't seen being a building engineer or going into the trades as a career path for them and it's almost developed a negative connotation," Chilcote said. "That has been one of our challenges with recruitment, just fewer people are coming in."

Employers should be looking for people with transferable skills. Those are the candidates that will bring new experiences, thought processes, and backgrounds to the job.

A willingness to learn and natural leaning towards the base functions of property management or maintenance can create a great employee. Mark Dukes, vice president of asset management with Physicians Realty Trust, said he looks for people that are kind when interviewing potential property managers.

"You cannot underplay the role that you have in taking care of people. You have to want to do that. Not just getting to know that but figuring out what you can do to make their life great," Dukes said.

### Learning the Trade

Knowledge transfer can take place in a few different ways. Whether through mentorship, formal training, or informal conversations about career paths, there is a responsibility of leadership to teach the next generation the necessary skills. For Chilcote, he said engineers need to learn their building beyond the technical skills.

"Going from an entry-level person up through a chief engineer what they need to learn are how a building lives and breathes.," Chilcote said. "We now have a lot of technology that helps us control the building, but you need to understand the fundamentals of how that equipment works."

Mark Dukes, like many other commercial real estate professionals, did not begin his career in the industry. He said education and mentorship helped him learn the technical skills he needed to do the job. Now, as a leader, he believes the specific knowledge transfer is the experienced professional's responsibility.

"You are hiring people for careers, not just jobs," Dukes said. "You're investing from day one and ensuring that within an amount of time they are ready for new opportunities and that doesn't happen without knowledge transfer,"

### Down to Brass Tacks

While the upper management needs to be developing formal systems of knowledge transfer, new hires need to be a sponge. Mentorship is a two-way street and that means that an environment must be created so that a mentee feels comfortable asking questions.

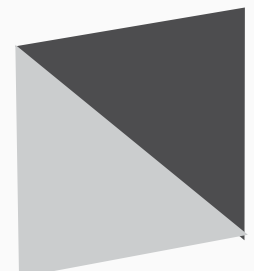
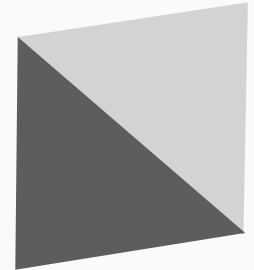
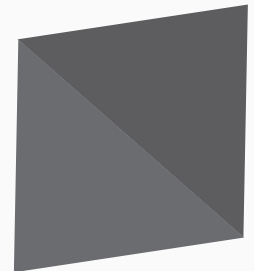
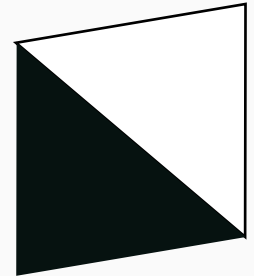
"I think a mentee has more responsibility than the mentor. You can't count on the mentor to know what you feel you need to know more about," Dukes said.

Leaders should also be considerate when creating and executing knowledge transfer systems. There need to be controls in place to prevent the loudest or most visible employee from being the only one trained. New employees need to show interest and make sure their manager is aware of their intended career path and professional desires.

One-on-one check-ins are a great way for managers to ensure all employees are having their professional development needs met.

"You have to find the right people in your organization that want to support and bring in that younger generation," Chilcote said. "You also need to find the people in your organization who want to grow and are willing to do the hard work to grow."

Knowledge transfer is a long process that takes time from both the mentor and the mentee. However, if knowledge transfer is successfully executed it can better the lives of both. Effective knowledge transfer will also protect the industry from future labor shortages and increase the overall diversity of the commercial real estate industry.





# Sustainability Strategy and Competitive Advantage Through Workforce Coaching Investments

By: Cynthia Mills, Founder of The Leaders' Haven

We used to talk about generational chasms, immigration policy, and a qualified workforce as our primary issues in human resources. That migrated to not enough Gen X to fill the vacancies left by Boomers and our need to develop Millennials. Then, we started talking about how different Gen Z and Millennials are and whether we were going to convert all of that open space back to more dedicated offices. All of a sudden, COVID-19, economic faltering, social injustices, political fall-outs, and community safety collided in a perfect storm of unplanned and uncontrolled impacts. Our human resources and leadership feet were figuratively knocked out from underneath us, as we looked up from our laptops in stunned disbelief.

Today, we simply want to be healthy, safe, and have a committed workforce that understands our short-term pivots and our long-term strategy in relationship to these variables, so we can meet the needs of our customers – and have our employees hang in there with us, as things change sometimes hourly. The great futurist, Alvin Toffler was prescient with his insight that “the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” Because of our new circumstances and the destruction of our 2020 strategy playbooks around mid-March, the transitions that were already set to redeploy skill sets this decade and reshape our business environment have arrived early without announcement or invitation - and in some cases are already leaving an indelible mark.

We are now asking our employees to do their “regular work,” pivot (and we’re all coming to despise this word) on a moment’s notice, trust that they are going to continue to have a position when we all know there are no guarantees, and learn how to live in a marathon of stress and uncertainty for an unknown length of time. In addition, we are asking them to produce at high rates, while the neurological research shows that our brains and bodies cannot physiologically function at our pre-COVID levels. As we worry about our personal health, our families, our teams, our tenants, and our businesses, we are also told that we must practice not only self-care but empathy in our leadership – at the very time we are experiencing high stress. In the back of our minds, we are also fully aware that we don’t know what the impact will be on commercial real estate long-term. However, we do know that our tenants have needs now. We do have assets that need maintenance and management. We do know that we have placed people in leadership roles that would already have been a stretch for them before asking them to take on additional responsibilities through downsizing or to accept new roles, as we elevate our response to COVID-19, safety and deal with budgetary implications.

In the midst of all of this, we know intellectually that there is work we should be doing to take care of and develop ourselves, our teams, and those whom we have identified have bright futures that we want to propel forward in their careers. We seek to address diversity, equity and inclusion at our tables and in our hiring practices. We don’t want to miss the learning moments, and we want to keep ourselves in check

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**Alvin Toffler**



and have a safe place to vent, work out problems, and navigate through these uncharted waters. After all, we are human beings called to an extraordinary response in unusual times, and the quality of our work is now life or death for most of us. We are not used to being in these circumstances, with this heavy weight upon us – nor are our teams.

As we continue in uncertain times, we must realize these are economic, public health, political, and societal conditions that neither our education nor our previous business experiences prepared us as leaders to handle. How do we respond to our workforces? We have grown up with train, train, train as the mantra for not only passing knowledge along but also for creating safe work environments. There is most certainly a valid place for this style of learning, and yet, it's not enough anymore. This has become the baseline not the gold standard.

Just a few short years ago, we used to say that there were four generations in the workforce. Now, 71% of our workforce is 40 and under, with many having experienced Boomers delaying their departure after the Great Recession. This lack of migration to the next era of life stunted professional development opportunities and advancement for some, who are now in charge of significant responsibilities without the experiential learning moments provided through a normal career arc. How do we help them develop the ability to assess risks, make sound judgment calls, spend time in self-awareness, and become the leaders and contributors we all rely upon? As they reach out to help each other and continue to look to those who could help in senior positions, we are now finding ourselves in that moment where there is not enough capacity to fully develop our teams – or ourselves.

How do we prepare our companies for sustainability and look beyond just taking care of the work before us today? This is a succession planning question critical to the future of our companies, and one which we ignore to our peril as business leaders. Those of us who are in leadership roles trying to figure this out, currently may use the terms professional development, networking, mentoring, training, and continuing education, as if they are interchangeable and return the same result. We need to fine-tune our understandings of what each of these can mean for our employees and become adept at knowing when to deploy what strategy to develop our workforce. We also must view our investment of time and dollars in our employees' careers as part of our sustainability strategy and not a perk – not so easy to do when budget cuts come our way. It is absolutely true that our team members benefit from these experiences, and they well may expect it from the employer. However, we've all heard the mantra of "when I stop learning, I'm moving on to the company that continues to teach me something," a word to the wise for company owners and leaders.

It is also true that when we fail to have a strategy around our team's professional development and don't understand the various tools at our disposal, we now risk our company's very sustainability. The perspective to take is how well you finesse your understanding of professional development, networking, mentoring, training, continuing education, and now coaching, is a competitive advantage. How you deploy your strategy impacts the ability to develop a diverse workforce, enhance loyalty, reduce your turnover costs, create a workplace environment that your teams want to be a part of every day, and determines how much time you can ultimately focus on your own business responsibilities.

Each of these approaches to maximize your workforce's performance has a return on investment for your business and should not be viewed as a cost. The cost occurs when failing to invest and often has both short-term and long-term implications.

Let's look at quick ways to differentiate between these developmental tools. Professional development is the over-arching term, which encompasses all of the other strategies that you might deploy. Networking is an experiential learning opportunity that can certainly be a part of your business development strategy but is also a way for your employees to have a form of "on-the-job" training. Training is providing access to specific techniques that enhance skills and competency required to perform a job adequately. It may include written materials, exams, and on-site skills assessments. Continuing education may include support for certifications and advanced degrees.

## **HOW DO WE PREPARE OUR COMPANIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND LOOK BEYOND JUST TAKING CARE OF THE WORK BEFORE US TODAY?**

Where there is significant confusion is in the use of the terms mentoring and coaching. Mentoring is a form of experiential learning, regularly engaged in, between someone in your company who creates a formalized professional relationship with someone who usually has aspirations to more senior job responsibilities than their current employment. Mentoring is characterized by the "off-loading" of information and experiences from one person to another. It may involve exposure to company meetings to which they might not ordinarily participate. It may include introductions to key players in the industry and inclusion in golf outings or business lunches. There may be portions of higher level projects or assignments that are entrusted to the mentee to develop their understanding with assessment discussions along the way.

When designing a mentoring program, don't make the mistake of perceiving this as seniority driven and miss the opportunity of "reverse mentoring." What a tremendous chance for your young leaders to be fully engaged and to help your long-termers learn relevant new skills by interacting with the younger generations! These types of relationships can have considerable value in the development of an employee; particularly one who has made commitments to the company with regards to their long-term intentions; not to mention fostering understanding between generations. In addition, the creation of a culture that values all voices at the table, based on the contributions they can make creates a cutting-edge brand reputation for you.

Coaching, on the other hand, is not mentoring. It usually involves hiring a third party from outside the company as an executive coach to an individual or a team. It is important when seeking a coach to identify someone who has received appropriate instruction



and certifications. The most important aspect of coaching is confidentiality in order for the coachee to have a safe space to be fully transparent with the coach. If there is not an expectation of confidentiality, this must be disclosed by the employer to the coachee(s) and the coach at the onset of the relationship.

The primary characteristic of coaching is the use of questioning as the methodology by which the coachee explores topics of professional development, behavioral responses, and personal/professional growth that allows them to become more effective in their work environments. Certainly, there are assessment tools that can be used throughout the process, goals and homework for the coachee to work through, and ongoing discussions of progress. However, to reemphasize, coaching is not mentoring. Coaching involves 80% listening by the coach and 20% determining the appropriate questions and paths to guide the coachee in their development.

The ultimate goal is to alter behaviors that are preventing the maximum performance of the individual and/or the team; all of which impact the bottom line. One of the key aspects of coaching is having someone hold the coachee accountable. When goals and commitments are outlined between sessions and are not kept, that alone is a behavior which must be examined and addressed. Again, coaching relationships do not involve reporting back to the supervisor, company owner, or peers; nor is session content part of the performance evaluation process.

Coaching can also be a skill set that is taught to the leaders of a company in order to facilitate change leadership, reinforce culture and to assist key players in adapting to new behaviors in order to be successful. Creating a coaching environment requires an “all-in” approach. It necessitates support from the top for the financial and time resources required and a belief that people are how the bottom line, performance, development, and effectiveness will be improved.

We are moving faster than ever before in an environment with multiple new demands upon us, the need for sophisticated communication abilities, an imperative to learn techniques to impact dynamics between others that must be carefully crafted for positive effect, and customers who are counting on us to deliver regardless of the circumstances. Everyone is looking for the competitive edge. Once adaptations are made to the latest technology or innovation, there is no longer an edge. Our advantage always comes from our people who improve strategy, problem

**“I ABSOLUTELY BELIEVE  
THAT PEOPLE, UNLESS  
COACHED, NEVER  
REACH THEIR MAXIMUM  
CAPABILITIES.”**

**Bob Nardelli,  
former CEO, Home Depot**

solve, increase productivity and therefore, the bottom line. In today's world, mastery of leading people by understanding dynamics, learning how to influence them, utilizing your voice, being authentic, empathetic, focused, and consistent are essentials for success. Paying attention to yourself and others and not putting the list of tasks first will ultimately bring both short and long-term benefits to your career and your company's ability to thrive. That task list will get done more effectively than you ever could have dreamed.

Whether hiring certified coaches as leadership partners or creating a coaching culture in your company, a coaching investment in our employees is the sustainability strategy and competitive advantage of the 21st century.



**Cynthia Mills, FASAE, CAE, CMC, CPC, CCRC** founded The Leaders' Haven to help leaders & teams go beyond business as usual & continuously transform, so they can fulfill their true calling & exceed the expectations of the people they serve.™ She relishes transformational strategy, governance, & leadership journeys with clients. Some have nicknamed her “The Board Whisperer”™ & others “The Chief Experience Weaver.”™ Cynthia shares her insights through The Leaders' View online show & is a facilitator, coach, speaker & best-selling author.



# WORKING INTERNATIONAL

Tips for making the most of your overseas partnerships

As the world has become more connected globally, many commercial real estate organizations have connected with international partners for development and management projects overseas. Working with any client or partner takes preparation, but there are some different considerations when working with professionals from another culture. It is important to take those extra steps to provide comfort and respect to fellow professionals from across the world.

## DO THE RESEARCH

The role of research in working with international partners or clients is not singular. There is practical research for travel, such as learning more about the offices and hotels one may visit on a business trip. There is also research on the culture and practices of people in another country. Dara Nicholson, director of property management for Jamestown, said that learning a different country's attitude and practices concerning work will prevent misunderstandings and unintentional signs of disrespect.

"I also research best practices in different locals, and when something comes up that is not perfectly clear to me, I follow up and ask additional questions," Nicholson said.

It is also important for professionals to make sure they are familiar with physical locations in the partner country as well. If there is a meeting or business to be done in the other country, professionals should not waste time or risk being late by not knowing the transportation system, the distance between hotels and offices, or different obstacles between locations. Dena Rodrigues, vice president of property services with Daniel, said that putting in the extra effort is important for growing the business relationship.

"Be kind, be resourceful, and like any ownership reporting, go above and beyond the call of duty, to be helpful," Rodrigues said. "Regardless if it is on the asset you work on with the owner or if they are asking you about another investment of theirs that you don't lease or manage."

Working with owners in another country may have unique challenges but the fundamentals are the same. Rodrigues said that it is important to continuously keep the owner's needs in mind and communicate that to the team no matter where they are.

"Like any owner in commercial real estate, understand the owner's goals and objectives. Why did they buy the property? What is their investment strategy?" Rodrigues said. "If you understand the owner's goals and objectives the more likely you are to successfully achieve their goals."

## DON'T GET LOST IN TRANSLATION

While many commercial real estate professionals across the world speak English, this is not always the case, nor should it be assumed. It is not expected that either side is required to learn an entire language to communicate, so if professionals find themselves in this situation, there are a few considerations to be made, especially if they are the guest in an international partner's home country.

"The international owner may not be familiar with conducting business in the United States, or conducting business in a particular market, and may require more information," Rodrigues said. "Be prepared that the owner may ask a lot more questions than the typical property owner."

Ask for a translator if needed. Getting details or phrases missed may lead to misunderstandings or important facts getting lost. A professional translator is key for navigating a business meeting in a country where you do not know the language. Nicholson employs this and other strategies when traveling overseas for work.

"While I knew almost everyone I would work with spoke English, I did spend time preparing for the trip by learning key phrases and commonly used words," Nicholson said. "I also researched all of the transportation options that would be available to me, and was able to get a firm understanding of what their work culture is like on a day-to-day basis."

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The beauty of working with international clients and partners is that knowledge can be shared and gained from both parties. Take advantage of the opportunity. It can be a great way to see how a different system works in action and how different parts may be employed in your organization. Nicholson said her team benefits greatly from their international work.

"Working with international partners and my counterparts in the Netherlands and Germany has been helpful to me and my team as we look for new and creative ways to innovate our approach to property management," Nicholson said.

It is also important to perform self-reflection and rid yourself of stereotypes, racially insensitive notions, or words prior to engaging with an international partner or client. These things can be damaging to a professional relationship and the reputation of an individual.

Show respect to your fellow professionals by researching their culture, asking questions, and actively working towards mutual understanding.





# ENGAGING YOUR VIRTUAL TEAMS

By: Christopher Oronzi, CPTD

As many are now discovering, working “virtual” has its challenges, particularly for those who manage teams. Keeping a virtual team engaged can seem like a big challenge. But according to some experts with years of virtual leadership experience, there are simple, effective, and even fun ways to engage a virtual team.

“Communication is the key to everything,” proclaims Karen Dearing, Training Delivery Manager for BCD Travel. She’s been managing her virtual team for over six years. “If you don’t communicate and collaborate, it’s disastrous.” She recommends taking an individualized approach to communication. “I leave it up to the team member,” she says, “I require them to meet with me once a month, but will do it as often as requested to meet the needs of the individual.” She also has what she calls a “virtual open door policy” described as, “if you need anything come to me,” making herself available to her team as much as possible. This way she feels they can get the support and feedback they need.

“Feedback is important when you’re working virtual,” says Greg Melia, CAE, the CEO of the Customer Experience Professionals Association, who has managed a virtual team for more than three years. “You lose that ability to regularly check in physically, so you need to find a way to substitute for that,” but also suggests being aware of communication preferences when setting a schedule. “Figure out how your team wants to communicate. Let the employees set their own schedules for calls. Some might want a formal weekly call, but others might prefer to just reach out for short, occasional calls”

This is a sentiment echoed by Kinsey Hinkson, RPA, General Manager at Granite Properties, who has more recently started managing her team virtually. “There is a lot of extra communication required. You don’t have that informal aspect you have in an office, so you have to find other efficient ways to communicate,”

but suggests that, “you should offer the opportunity, but understand not everyone is interested in engaging so much.” She also cautions new virtual managers, “don’t overkill with calls. You don’t want them to get in the way of regular work or interfere with projects,” and to try to “maintain the balance between contact and providing time and autonomy to get work done.”

If communication is critical for engaging a virtual workforce, so too is choosing the method, and most experienced virtual managers suggest using video. “It’s a way to connect better and deeper and on a more personal level” says Mike Pennington, CAE, Vice President of the Atlanta Apartment Association and an experienced virtual manager, “as long as it’s collaborative and adds value.”

“Videoconferencing is 100 times superior to audio alone,” according to Melia.

“When people see you, they can make a connection to you. You can reinforce your message subconsciously with images and gestures in a way that you can’t with audio alone. It’s important to see the nodding heads, the raised hands, and all the other visual cues used in conversation.” Hinkson agrees. “You can see facial expressions and engage in what they’re saying better,” suggesting that video also “avoids distractions, provides accountability, and creates a way to engage on a deeper level.”

“It’s funny, because sometimes it feels like we’re on video conferences all day,” says Lori Spear, CAE, the Executive Vice President of the Southern Association of Independent Schools. Spear has managed her virtual team for four years. “You get to see the non-verbal cues just like you would in an office. They’re a way to check in on each other and keep track of progress.”

While there is undeniable value in videoconferencing, experienced virtual managers also acknowledge that it isn’t always comfortable or convenient for everyone. As Hinkson notes, with her

team, “the majority use their cameras, but sometimes the timing isn’t convenient, which is understandable. We want video calls to be a positive and productive experience and encourage video when possible.”

Dearing describes her team as “reluctant” to adopt videoconferencing. She says that, “sometimes I have to put myself out there, to put myself on video as often as possible.” As a leader, she finds that if she’s willing to “put it all out there and don’t worry what I look like, show that it’s ok to not look perfect, sooner or later the team will get that message,” which is exactly what has happened as her team has slowly started to embrace using video. Dearing says is worth it because, “it’s really nice to connect with someone face to face, even if it’s just for a few minutes of the call.”

This is something Melia suggests also. “People are often nervous about using video, that’s why it’s important to model it by using your video whenever possible. People might say ‘I thought this was an audio call’ and you say that it is, but you thought you’d use your video for a while.” Melia will also “try to intentionally make sure there are things behind me of interest, and I always ask about items of interest in the background when I’m in a video meeting with someone else.” He says this is a great way to ease the nervous tension some will feel about being on camera.

While frequent communication, particularly through video chatting is important, there is also a need to maintain informal contact among a virtual team. “The biggest thing you miss working virtual is the collegiality, the camaraderie,” says Spear, so she finds ways to add this element to her team. “Not everything needs to be a ‘meeting,’ it can just be something informal.” Her team has a “smile file” it uses “for sharing fun things like recipes, accomplishments, photos.” She says, “they’re the best virtual replacement for the office water cooler.”



Pennington holds Monday morning “10 at 10” calls. “It’s just a round robin with everyone on the team, giving just one highlight from the weekend before. Not at all work related,” he explained, also emphasizing the importance of informality to a virtual team. “A lot of us need to be around people. That’s taken away in a virtual environment. We need to do whatever we can to mitigate that loss.”

At Granite Properties, Hinkson participates in several virtual engagement activities, including trivia contests, virtual book clubs, and “FaceTime Fridays.” She says the latter is her favorite because it puts her “in a random group from across the country engaging in an open dialog; 5-8 people, cross departmental, even the company president has participated. It’s people you might not normally interact with, so it’s a great way to get to know colleagues outside work parameters.”

At BCD Travel, Dearing hosts virtual parties for all sorts of occasions. “We’ve done virtual holiday parties, virtual onboarding parties, virtual going away parties. We give away gifts, we play games, we get to know each other.” She says that for her team, “we try to do the same sort of things we would do in an office. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries every month. The only thing we’re missing is the cake!”

Pennington, Melia, and Dearing all use the “virtual background” option in video

conferences as a team building tool. This allows participants to customize the background of their video stream. “People really enjoy the virtual backgrounds,” says Pennington. “It’s a way to learn more about each other, to incorporate something that reflects your personality. It’s a creative outlet too.” For Melia, who manages a global team, “it’s become an outreach strategy. We encourage people to use backgrounds that show off who they are and where they’re from and what they’re proud of.”

Virtual engagement can also spill into the physical world. “Send notes in the mail, particularly for kudos or encouragement,” advises Spear, “it makes team members stop to say ‘oh hey I was appreciated, somebody thought of me.’” This is something Dearing also makes a point of doing as often as possible, expanding the scope of her audience. “I like to send notes to their non-work families. I like to be sure to thank their spouses, partners, and kids for letting me take them away sometimes, and for letting our work family be in the their homes.”

It’s also important to understand that a virtual environment isn’t always a fit for every team. Sometimes it’s really not a substitute for working in a physical office. As Hinkson says, “we’ve learned that people can work from home, but there’s still a lot of value in being together. Some things are just better in person.”

**“WHEN PEOPLE SEE YOU, THEY CAN MAKE A CONNECTION TO YOU. YOU CAN REINFORCE YOUR MESSAGE SUBCONSCIOUSLY WITH IMAGES AND GESTURES IN A WAY THAT YOU CAN’T WITH AUDIO ALONE.”**

## VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

- Figure out how your team wants to communicate
- Maintain a balance between frequent contact and autonomy

### USE VIDEO WHENEVER POSSIBLE

- It’s a way to connect on a deeper, more personal level
- You get to see the non-verbal cues, and it helps avoid distractions

### MAINTAIN INFORMAL CONTACT

- Find ways to have fun together
- Try to do the same sorts of things you’d do in an office

### USE THE MAIL FROM TIME TO TIME

- Send notes of encouragement or congratulations to team members
- Include their family whenever possible

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Christopher Oronzi, CPTD**, is a Certified Professional in Talent Development. A corporate trainer with over a decade of experience in virtual facilitation, he is also a corporate communications expert, consultant, and freelance writer residing in Atlanta, GA



For years, the commercial real estate industry has been discussing the labor shortage and talent gap that the industry will be facing in the next few years. The tactic has shifted from trying to recruit the same talent to looking beyond the recycled pool and bringing new thoughts, backgrounds, and types of people into the industry.

Diversifying the talent pool does not just refer to demographics, but also to experience level and background. Organizations looking to increase the sustainability and longevity of their organizations are going to need to establish new pipelines and strategies for attracting new minds into the industry. Not only does this affect recruiting tactics, but it includes cultural shifts at the organizations themselves.

## RECRUITING INTO THE WORKFORCE

### *Diversifying the Candidate Pool*

## SAY GOODBYE TO THE UNICORN

The first step to a new recruitment strategy is saying goodbye to the old one. Angela Covington, a regional managing director with BG Talent, suggests employers to stop their search for the “unicorn” and start expanding their reach.

“We always call it the unicorn,” Covington said. “Our clients want the unicorn. They want that perfect type of candidate. They want that perfect level of experience. They want that perfect college grad. Everyone always wants the exact, perfect candidate.”

Teachability and willingness to learn are prime attributes when it comes to finding and retaining new talent. The commercial real estate industry, like many other industries, has fallen into the pitfall of passing around or recycling current talent and not focusing on the development of new talent. This is the process that creates labor shortages like the one professionals are approaching now.

Ross Dickman, the interim chief executive officer of Hire Heroes USA, said military veterans often battle with breaking into an industry because their resume does not contain industry standard experience. He

said what his organization does is try to help their members show employers how what they learn in the military can transfer to commercial real estate.

“You learn to be an empathetic, caring, detail-oriented, and adaptable leader. You are put in a unique, challenging, dangerous at times situations, and you are expected to keep a level head, calmly assess and use the available data,” Dickman said.

## FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

Traditionally, commercial real estate has been a legacy industry. People have found it because their relative or friend was involved. That circle has remained small for many years which has caused certain cultures and tendencies in the workplace. Natalie Tyler-Martin, vice president and regional asset manager with Duke Realty said that ensuring and creating a diverse candidate pool starts with a lot of work to undo these tendencies.

“I think a lot of people try to fix diversity from their own lens. They come to the table with a preconceived notion of what they want it to look like,” Tyler-Martin said.

Even if a recruiting process for an open position is completed with a diversity and inclusion strategy, retention is another major portion of developing talent. Tyler-Martin said that to attract the best players onto a team, the whole team needs to feel comfortable at their workplace.

Recognizing areas of improvement and instilling an education system within and organization will address issues within the organization and ensure all employees are considered.

“When you have to walk into an organization and you have left a piece of you in your car, that piece that’s left in the car is probably the innovation needed to fix the next great problem,” Tyler-Martin said.

Covington also stressed the importance of breaking away from traditional patterns. She said the organizations that innovate and succeed are the ones with a diverse set of team members from all different backgrounds. She said redundancy in any area is what can prevent and organization from moving forward.



"If you use the same shape and the same size piece over and over again, you're not going to be able to build that big picture puzzle. You're never going to have that big team that fits together so perfectly to form that one big picture," Covington said.

## REACHING OUT

There are several strategies to increasing a talent pool and bringing more diverse resumes across the desk. One is to meet people where they are. Consider posting positions in new places and in new mediums. Try to find job boards that cater to different backgrounds and demographics. Work on your descriptions to make sure they don't include exclusionary language.

One of the major ways to attract and understand applicants from different backgrounds is to work with organizations that cater to them. Dickman said that his organization spends a lot of time helping employers read a military veteran's resume and understand the different transferable skills they bring to the job.

"When evaluating a military veteran's resume, what you'll find is that military members really want to make the team better," Dickman said. "When you hire a veteran, you know you are getting someone you know wants the team to achieve and that's a really powerful advocate within an organization."

Diversifying your talent pool also means accepting that your scope is not the whole scope. Use the people in your organization as well as your individual research to discover new perspectives, ways of thinking, and potential industries that may have candidates with transferable skills. Tyler-Martin believes that broadening perspectives is one step to creating a diverse, inclusive workplace.

"Our world is constantly evolving, if you only look at the world from one lens you are missing the remaining 359 degrees," Tyler-Martin said.

This is not a problem that will be fixed in a quarter. It is an evolving journey that requires responsible succession and planning with a forward-looking lens. Start by reading beyond the resume and ensuring the hiring staff is well-educated and trained to interview and address bias.

## CLICK TO HEAR FROM THE EXPERTS



**Ross Dickman**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Hire Heroes USA



**Natalie Tyler-Martin**  
Vice President- Regional Asset Manager  
Duke Realty



**Angela Covington**  
Regional Managing Director  
BG Talent



# ENGINEERING THE NEXT GENERATION

By Mark Gallman and Trenton Patterson

To remain competitive in a service industry, building owners have many considerations. The “brick and mortar” is an obvious large piece of the commercial property business model. Building looks and the curb appeal are what gets the customers in and keeps revenue up. Keeping customers happy in a healthy, well-maintained and managed building is critical. Let's look into the future of our industry. Engineering services is one of the most critical components of our industry. To see where we are going one must first look back to see where we have been.

OSHA came on the scene in the 70s, and the work place has become safer, albeit, much more litigious. In the 70s and 80s, we had dispatchers and paper work order systems. We had single-building HVAC control systems. We graduated to pneumatic and DDC building control systems and more zone control in the 90s. We had timers that ran the top of the line incandescent and sodium vapor efficient lighting in the 70s and 80s. Water was cheap and plentiful. In the 70s' building, there may have been free asbestos, absent fire sprinkler systems, no addressable fire panels; and yet we had building engineers for the boiler systems, plumbing systems or keying systems. The fact is; we had engineers with specialties and more of them.

The 80s and 90s brought us much more complex systems in commercial buildings. Engineers became responsible for keeping buildings in compliance with ever increasing code changes and efficiency drivers. We had cyclical recessions that had the effect of driving engineers to uncover more efficiency and integrate more technology in the performance of our jobs. Engineers were asked to cover more square footage when staff size had to be reduced, which in turn required the engineer to have a broader skill set.

## Where are we today?

Today the average engineer has to come equipped with many skill sets and is required to be much more professional. Engineers have to be constantly aware of the changing CRE environment. They require constant access to education, with code changes, environmental requirement changes and technology changes.

Deploying new technology or programs almost always requires engineers' full knowledge of these systems and tech; Why? Because of the long-term cost of ownership and maintenance. Engineers today have high-level building automation systems, instant smart phone communication and connectivity, and automated work order systems. Over the last 10 years, we have seen major advancements in lighting and control technology, along with other technologies that mean less ladder and wrench time. Less ladder and wrench time means more face time with customers. Additionally, we have seen increased regulation from multiple directions driving compliance expectations to new, higher levels. Engineers are expected to maintain the assets, all while maintaining the safe,

comfortable and productive work environment with concierge-level customer experiences. Engineers wear the company name on their shirts; they are the marketing army for the company. In support of business leasing; Engineers may have to have full knowledge of new building standards, like LEED, ENERGY STAR, Fitwell, or WELL Buildings programs. Complimentary to these programs, engineering staff may be certified as LEED or Well accredited professionals or Fitwell Ambassadors.

There is a lot more on an engineer's plate than there used to be. As part of one of the BOMA Georgia BTO educational programs, veteran engineer Jack Kennedy with Jackson Health Care, illustrated quite a few of the challenges that today's engineers have.

“Engineers have to attack the day, anticipate situations and prepare,” Kennedy explained. “They have to own a project, look the look and walk the walk. They should think as if their name is part of the company and the name on the building. A next generation engineer must see a problem, have a solution, create need, and add value. Tomorrow's engineer will have to understand what management expects of them, and they have to want more and get more to have professional growth.”

Trent Patterson provided input from a different perspective. Patterson has a degree in business and began his career in property management as an entry-level engineer. Patterson represents the second generation in his family after following his father into commercial real estate and property management. Patterson is now a Corporate Facilities Manager for over 130 locations in 16 states and understands the importance that engineers have on the daily operations and strategic planning for assets.

In his view, an engineer's function and activities will become much more cerebral as opposed to physical. Patterson explained that technology and liability are merging, and from the property manager's view, they are charged by building owners to increase asset value and limit liability. In his experiences as an engineer, he knows first-hand how many skill sets, both technical and professional, engineers must possess in commercial real estate to remain viable. The next generation engineer will have to be the most dependable and knowledgeable professional that the building owner and property manager have as a resource. Patterson listed five categories that will define the next generation engineer.

## CEREBRAL

The engineering role in CRE is changing vastly. An engineer must sharpen and enhance his mental abilities as much as his mechanical abilities. In the age of increased reporting and liability, the engineer must be able to improve building efficiency and limit liability while increasing building profitability. The routine maintenance performed in machine rooms and tenant spaces have become just one of



the many responsibilities an engineer must fit into his daily routine. Engineers must demonstrate an understanding for sustainability, efficiency and fiscal responsibility to a property manager and provide a solution that addresses all of these requirements. Analytics have become the focal point for commercial real estate and engineers must learn to incorporate long-term, strategic goals into their planning. The demands of commercial real estate are beginning to increase for engineers, and in order for them to succeed in this industry, they must accept the evolution of our industry and embrace the change.

### OWNERSHIP

An engineer is no longer just a “maintenance tech” working on equipment and logging chiller readings. They are now the face of the company, the first line of defense and the lasting impression on tenants and customers. Engineers have a unique role in CRE and are expected to wear many hats. An engineer must have the mindset to take ownership of each property and view every decision and action through the scope of personal ownership. Instead of making the quick fix that addresses an immediate need, an engineer must incorporate long-term thinking and how their decision will affect the asset over the next one, three, five and 10 years. Always ask the question, “If this asset were mine, what decision would be best for my tenants, customers or team members?”

### COMMUNICATION

An engineer has always been required to “walk the walk,” but what about “talk the talk?” At a time when reporting, owner meetings, strategic planning and ROI demands have increased, an engineer will be required to explain and provide as much detail as possible for all the decisions at the property. An engineer must be able to turn a wrench and communicate with the same level of proficiency. They must be able to read schematics and develop operation and capital budgets to improve the property. It is just as important for an engineer to understand and contribute to the long-term goals of a property and communicate the impact those decisions will have for the tenants, staff and owners.

### MOTIVATION

You can teach someone everything they need to know about a job, but you cannot teach them how to be motivated. Growing up with a father, who also happened to be a chief engineer, preaching that no matter what job you were doing, be the best at it, still remains a driving force in my life. There is no substitute for hard work in this industry and an engineer must be motivated to do his or her best regardless of the situation. There is something simple yet so pure about doing something right the first time. For me, this all begins

with motivation. Are you motivated to take on more responsibility and increase your value professionally? Are you motivated to learn, develop and grow as an engineer? Are you satisfied with your current position or are you looking up the ladder chasing down your dreams? It all begins with motivation. An engineer must have that internal motor that keeps the wheels turning and pushes through to the next opportunity.

### PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Engineers are responsible for managing million-dollar assets and equipment, so obviously they show the same amount of responsibility for themselves, right? Engineers should be putting just as much time and energy into their personal development as they do into the success of their building. Ask questions, find answers and be a sponge so you can absorb everything. If you’re the smartest person in the room, then find another room. Make sure you take pride in your appearance as much as your abilities. Research new technology, educate yourself and foster growth. If you want to excel as an engineer, then it is your responsibility to invest in your growth and success. Don’t wait for things to happen, go out and make it happen!

Looking back at the early examples from the 70s and to the engineers of today, you catch a glimpse into the future for building engineers. When you look in the mirror, do you ever wonder if you or your engineers will walk the walk and talk the talk of the next generation engineer?

If you are an owner or property manager, have you ever wondered, “what if I invest in education for my engineers and they leave me for another company?” I submit; what if you don’t invest in education for engineers and they stay?

Will you have the next generation engineers?



**About the Author** Trenton Patterson is the corporate facilities manager at Haverty's Furniture. Patterson currently serves on the board for the Building Owners and Managers Association of Georgia. He has been recognized by BOMA Georgia with the Young Professional of the Year Award, and most recently, the Property Manager of the Year Award.



**About the Author** Mark has twenty years in Property Management and Engineering services. He has been a member of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Georgia during that time. Mark has served on the BOMA Board of Directors in 2011-2013, as Chairman of the BOMA Technical Organization and Chairman of the BOMA Georgia Editorial Board.