



Building Culture on the Job Site

A success story featuring:



It takes thousands of man hours to build a single-family home. It takes tens of thousands of man hours to build a school. All the places we go on a daily basis—where we live, work, and play—the facilities we use and the roadways we travel are there because of the hard work of others. Altogether, union carpenters work over 400,000,000 hours a year building the structures that make up our communities.

The construction industry hinges on the collaboration and coordination of many different trades, roles, and workers to complete a project. With various crafts coming together, we see different approaches, agendas, and work styles. Many carpenters experience the tug for resources, which leads to a domino effect of different workers being unable to fulfill their tasks. All of these can lead to conflict on the job site. All of these can lead to delays in the construction of our communities. On top of this, soft skills training is not prevalent in this industry, so a lot of the conflict experienced is unresolved—even escalated—due to not having the appropriate tools to deal with the issues at hand.

Put simply? The construction industry is full of communication challenges that derail progress. That's why one organization is determined to make a change.

Reaching a Boiling Point

Conflict is an uncomfortable, yet unavoidable part of today's work environments, and the construction industry is no exception. When the social and emotional challenges surrounding conflict present themselves in the construction industry, they contribute to missed deadlines, strained workplace relationships, and unhappy workers (including some who have earned the title of journeymen). Many of these skilled carpenters have successfully completed an apprenticeship, putting in years of time and hard labor, yet sometimes end up working on job sites where adverse circumstances make it difficult for them to be productive.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC) is determined to change all of this through its progressive member education programs. Since 1881, the union has been hard at work to ensure carpenters receive fair wages, benefits, and safe working conditions. The programs offered by the UBC's Education and Training Department are designed to reach beyond the classroom and have a strong emphasis on improving members' lives, as well as those of their families, by giving them training that translates to success on the job and at home. Randy Eppard, Executive Director of the UBC's Department of Education and Training, has been with the

organization for 15 years. "We change behaviors," Eppard says. "We're not simply sharing knowledge or teaching skills—we're changing all-around behaviors by growing our members' emotional intelligence. It's not just what you can do to help yourself, but also what you can do to help the people that you work with grow and succeed. Because success is contagious all the way around."

The UBC's emphasis on emotional intelligence positioned Everything DiSC® as a perfect complement to their newest training program: 212 Journeymen Leaders. Launched in 2017, 212 Journeymen Leaders focuses on empowering journeymen to take an active role on the job site to coach, mentor, and elevate their peers. Why "212"? According to Eppard, "Water at 211 degrees is really hot, but at 212—one extra degree—it boils. It creates steam. And with steam, you can run a freight train. So that one degree really matters, and that's what we're after with this program—that one extra degree. That's why the UBC has this program come after the Journeymen Leadership program; it's for the cream of the crop." That extra degree is what the UBC is after, because just *one degree* of change or effort on the job site makes a huge impact.

Around that same time, Everything DiSC released its newest application, Everything DiSC® Productive Conflict. One of the UBC's consultants (and Everything DiSC Authorized Partner) understood this organization's needs, along with the needs of its members, and presented Productive Conflict as a valuable component to the newly-developed 212 Journeymen Leaders program. Rather than focus on a step-by-step process for conflict resolution, Productive Conflict offers *personalized* insights that deepen self-understanding to turn destructive behaviors into productive ones, ultimately improving workplace relationships and results. When participants understand the traits and tendencies of their own DiSC® style in conflict, as well as those of the other styles, they can more easily identify how to handle and adjust their reactions to conflict.

Journeymen are used to having tools that enable them to succeed, so solutions with a theoretical approach are typically not successful. Productive Conflict's scalability and tangible nature made it exactly the kind of tool that would enrich the lives of the UBC's members. "I

don't think you can improve your communication skills without understanding your behaviors," commented Bob Jacobson, Senior Program Director of Education and Training. "And working with our Everything DiSC Partner brings views and insights that aren't necessarily a part of this organization, or even this industry."

The UBC now boasts approximately 500,000 members throughout North America, with demographics varying greatly across race, gender, and age groups. Their International Training Center (ITC) in Las Vegas, NV, sits on a beautiful, sprawling campus where thousands of members attend in-depth trainings each year. Odie Parkins and Mark Brown, Instructors at the ITC, are part of a team of instructors who have been working with their Wiley Partner on developing their knowledge and understanding of DiSC so they can facilitate Everything DiSC across the organization.

Parkins champions the importance of the lessons learned in these programs. "They are not *soft* skills—they are hard," he explains. "They make a difference, and they are really hard to wield, especially when your emotions are through the roof or you're under pressure."

Igniting Change through Embracing Conflict

Participants of the 212 Journeymen Leaders program are often shocked by the detail and accuracy of their Productive Conflict profiles. "When we're finished, inevitably someone asks if we've been following them for the last month," Brown shared. "Because they feel like we've looked into who they are so intimately that somebody had to do more than give them a simple assessment."

Since 2017, the UBC has introduced Productive Conflict to over 1,200 members, with approximately 2,500+ members scheduled to experience and use the solution in 2019.

The 212 Journeymen Leaders program, together with Productive Conflict, help participants become more self-aware and better equipped to handle the inevitable challenges of conflict on the job site. The way the program lends itself to their members' success is two-fold: firstly, participants are able to identify emotional trigger points of themselves and others. Secondly (and perhaps more importantly), this solution allows participants to understand the connections between their thoughts, emotions, and actions, allowing them to reframe their responses from destructive to productive. This program ultimately develops the interpersonal skills required to productively navigate conflict and transform the job site

culture into a more engaged and collaborative one. The UBC's members have expressed that Everything DiSC has made them better listeners, stronger communicators, and more objective mediators—skills that undoubtedly improve their lives both on and off the jobsite.

"We've done it long enough that members are now saying, six months later, that they've applied DiSC on their job site with their crews—and that they should've had it 20 years ago because of the improved dynamics they see on the job," Brown remarked.

A Sincere Camaraderie with Strong Results

The mission at the UBC is heartfelt, with passion and sincerity shining through everyone involved in the organization. "As a young kid, I remember the struggle it is to work in the trades, watching my dad as a business rep. You'd just see that it's tough," said Eppard. "For me, it's more about what can we do to help make our members' lives better; not just professionally but personally as well. It's not just a passion for education, but for our membership."

Other programs offered at the ITC use Everything DiSC solutions to help members "sharpen their saw" when communicating and interacting with others. Everything DiSC® Management is built into their Collaborative Leadership Program for signatory contractors and their leadership team, Everything DiSC® Sales is part of the Marketing Program for business reps, and the UBC staff members explore Everything DiSC Workplace® in their New Staff Orientation Program.

The UBC's education team acknowledges their Everything DiSC Authorized Partner's critical role in helping their members develop the social and emotional skills needed to excel in every area of their lives. The impact that the organization has seen with their 212 Journeymen Leaders program and Everything DiSC Productive Conflict is widespread, and incredibly powerful. Everything DiSC Productive Conflict has created a ripple effect of communication and altruism in the industry. Members everywhere have seen major transformations take place on their job sites, resulting in a better work experience for carpenters everywhere.

Truly, the possibilities are endless for this supportive, committed organization—because they won't be running out of steam any time soon.

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