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Client Story

Building a Culture of Mutual Respect and Trust at Lost Coffee

Scott Gaerte, president and founder of Lost Coffee, knew he had an employee retention problem. “I was talking with my partners about how we needed to improve our retention and thought enhancing our leader skills might be the best way to deal with the issue. I was familiar with leadership training from Blanchard but didn’t think our small company could make that investment,” says Gaerte.

Luckily, he had stayed in touch with people at Blanchard and learned about Propel by Blanchard™, an online platform for leadership development that is easily accessible to leaders around the globe.

“When I heard about Propel, I knew immediately that I wanted to become a member myself. After going through the classes, I was just so inspired and reinvigorated,” said Gaerte. “I learned new skills and started using them right away with my staff. And they noticed! They were curious about what I had learned and how my behaviors had changed, so I knew I needed to get them involved, too.”



Scott Gaerte



The membership model offered by Propel proved to be a valuable solution for the small company, which continually manages tight margins. They found they could maintain budgets while providing training for their employees. They also learned that participants are given the flexibility to learn at their own pace and select content that is of special interest to them—and they have unlimited access to a library of on-demand learning and other tools whenever they need them.

Gaerte started memberships for two of his store managers to provide foundational leadership skills for the people in that role. “The store manager has a difficult job—the most difficult in the company. It’s critical to make sure they have the skills they are going to need to be successful. The beauty of the program is that it allows the store manager to select courses that will benefit them the most at this point in their career. They can take the course, learn something new, and put it into practice right away.” Gaerte takes pride in seeing people develop and use the skills they are learning.

“I had one employee who started out bagging coffee for us,” says Gaerte. “I saw real potential in her and eventually she was promoted to store manager. She was coming back to the workforce after being a full-time mom and was eager to learn. By embracing Propel and starting to apply new skills quickly, she was able to take control of her own development. Now she and I are able to have more productive conversations because we can use the same leadership language. We can talk about development level or using curiosity and candor in conversations. Those are things we’ve learned through Propel.”

“I’ve also observed two managers having honest, trusting conversations about delicate personnel issues. They were able to discuss things openly and come to a conclusion that was best for both the company and the individuals involved. In the process, they developed a bond with each other that will serve them in the future. Seeing the skills put into practice is so rewarding. A few months earlier, this conversation couldn’t have taken place. I feel blessed to see this happening.”

Gaerte and his team believe leadership is all about getting results through others. They understand the importance of being able to communicate effectively and productively.



"At the end of the day, how we communicate is as important as what we communicate," says Gaerte. "We find Cloverleaf to be another incredible tool. I hear team members say they prepare for difficult conversations using information from Cloverleaf. They learn a lot about themselves as well as how to collaborate with others."

Ultimately, Gaerte wants to create a workplace that is based on trust and mutual respect while providing people with skills they can use at work or at home, or even take to another job. His mission extends beyond business success to empowering individuals to create healthier work environments wherever they go.

"This is a profound tool for organizations—not only for leadership development, but also as a way to inspire positive workplace change," says Gaerte. "It has had a transformative impact on our company. Propel has helped us foster a values-driven culture focused on trust, growth, and collaboration. It has improved business outcomes and contributed to personal and professional transformation for me and my team."

Enable leaders at every level to become the ultimate agents of progress and transformation for your organization. Visit us at www.blanchard.com to learn more.

Cloverleaf Automated Coaching™ is a popular part of the Propel platform. Cloverleaf uses assessment data to provide personalized daily digital nudges to improve performance, increase managerial effectiveness, strengthen cross-functional collaboration, and inspire personal development. So, Propel members can curate their own development journeys based on individual goals, interests, and preferences, and also receive coaching to provide contextually relevant insights to enhance the learning experience.