

## CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

### CORNERSTONE

Industry: Construction • Bothell, WA • <https://cornerstonegci.com/>

Cornerstone General Contractors offers pre-construction and construction services to build impactful community spaces for local communities. They aim to be trusted partners in the areas in which they live and work.

Cornerstone General Contractors has been meeting customers' needs since 2003. Their mission is to "elevate communities through exceptional preconstruction and construction services." But it goes well beyond, building structures—Cornerstone aims to build community and interpersonal relationships.

"Our core purpose is focusing on community spaces that impact where we are also living," says Melissa Castor, director of field operations. In order to make this kind of impact, Cornerstone knew they needed to build the leaders they wanted for their company. But Melissa and the Cornerstone team were fighting against an industry with a sink-or-swim mentality. "You're just thrown into it, and your job is to figure it out. And if you can't figure it out, that's on you; it's a direct reflection of you. That's pretty much how the industry has operated."

But Cornerstone believes that employees are the most valuable tool of any company. In the field, a disengaged employee may be a safety risk. In the office, employees without proper training could make costly mistakes. "Making sure that people are excited, focused on the task at hand, and take pride in what they're doing is extremely important," says Melissa. And that's where Dale Carnegie stepped in.

From laborers to project managers, the construction industry is ripe for young workers and those just exiting college. These people may struggle with workplace communication or interpersonal skills due to their limited job and life experience. Dale Carnegie came in to bridge the gap between the current inexperienced workers and building the company's future leaders.

Cornerstone decided to "be very strategic and intentional with the moves we were making—thinking not 'how do we solve the current problem,' but 'how do we solve a future problem?'" For Cornerstone, this meant starting with communication. "Construction is all about communication and how you can handle difficult conversations and conflict management," says Melissa. "We talk

about risk management a lot, but I think it always comes back to communication."

The Dale Carnegie Course was the perfect solution to Cornerstone's needs, and it continues to drive their positive business results today. Melissa says that it has "fast-tracked some relationships that could have taken years to develop" and that "it can be a launching point for someone's career within the company."

Forming these interpersonal relationships has created opportunities for employees who may never have known one another to come together and create new initiatives, new approaches, and bring new ideas to the table. Not only that, but the Dale Carnegie Course is often responsible for bringing these employees out of their shells. Melissa says, "If they hadn't been in the class and we hadn't brought forth another side of that person and what they're capable of, they may never have done that."

Dale Carnegie worked closely with Cornerstone to ensure each participant was getting everything they could out of the course. Dale Carnegie gave employees and managers the tools to tackle difficult conversations as well as handle stress and worry in a high-pressure industry. "It's pretty impressive," says Melissa. "Everybody takes something different, but you can definitely tell who's gone through it."

In the end, Cornerstone is not driven by dollar signs; they are driven by the goal of positively impacting the lives of their employees, subcontractors, clients, and the people in their communities. Their focus on building the future leaders of their company will ensure their success for decades to come.

**"I think it will always come back to communication."**

**- Melissa Castor,  
Director of Field Operations**

#### Challenge

The construction industry has long held the mindset that if a person is skilled at their trade, then they can also become a skilled leader, but professional leadership development training is largely underutilized or ignored.

#### Solution

The Dale Carnegie Course "makes everybody more effective in how they communicate so that we all get the end result we're looking for."

#### Results

From developing effective communication skills to utilize with clients in the field to managing stress and worry using the Dale Carnegie principles, Cornerstone employees are ready to take command of their roles and lead the company into the future.