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Your Company's Best Asset

Investing in Our People for the Good of Our Industry



“Spending the time to mentor and train employees—who may leave the company—is a tremendous investment, but the rewards of doing so are (as they say) priceless.”

I recently reconnected with a former Giroux Glass employee at an event with my industry peer group. I had not seen him in the 18 years since he and his wife relocated out of state. We got the chance to chat, and he told me how he still remembers his positive work experience and expressed his gratitude for Giroux taking a chance on him.

He was hired and worked for us as a field glazier—but had aspirations of one day becoming a project manager. We brought him into the office and invested in his growth by providing him with that opportunity. Today, he is a successful regional operations manager working for a nationally recognized glazing contractor.

As our company has grown, many have stayed and grown along with us. Some employees left to start their own businesses; others moved to other construction companies. The most unfortunate loss is in those employees who left the industry entirely. With a construction labor shortage estimated at over 650,000 and the aging of our existing workforce, how are we, as an industry, investing in the growth of our people for the good of our industry?

Priceless Rewards

Together we can change the trajectory of glazing's decreasing labor force. Spending the time to mentor and train employees—who may leave the company—is a tremendous investment, but the rewards of doing so are (as they say) priceless.

1. **Improved performance:** When we provide our employees with training and mentoring, they feel supported and are more likely to display higher productivity levels.
2. **Better-qualified employees:** Training and mentoring will make employees qualified to take on higher-level roles. Rising through the ranks gives employees the first-hand experience to know the issues and challenges they may eventually supervise, or in the case of a lateral move, a broader knowledge of company issues.
3. **Positive company reputation:** When a company invests in its employees' development

and success, it improves the company's reputation as a great place to work.

4. **Succession planning:** Continual development and training of employees helps transfer knowledge and skills within the organization. Some employees may move on to other companies, but the ones who stay or return will better prepare the company for a strong future.
5. **Retaining talent:** When we consider or implement the smart suggestions and ideas of trainees and mentees, employees feel appreciated and are likely to continue to engage. Engaged employees remain longer with the company. When it is standard company practice to train and promote from within, employees will see the wisdom in staying with the team they know and like, while understanding that they can achieve higher levels of responsibility without leaving the company or industry.
6. **Attracting top talent:** Top talent demands that companies invest in their development. Even if they plan to stay for only a short time, they will likely stay longer and/or make a significant impact there. Potential new hires will always seek jobs at companies where they can grow and can see proof that qualified employees are rewarded with promotions.
7. **Broadening your network of company alumni:** Both current and former employees can serve as valuable brand ambassadors. Former employees not only add to the alumni network but may also potentially return to the companies that invested in them. Investing in employees' development, is time and money well spent. With the current shortage of new talent entering the industry, it makes sense to invest in the talent already working for us. It may be the best investment we ever make.

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➔ **Natalie Lomedico** is the president and CEO of Giroux Glass, headquartered in Los Angeles. The company has been in business since 1946.