**Importance of Continuing Education for Yourself and Your Employees**

If you ask my 13-year-old son, he will tell you that he already knows everything. I've quizzed him thoroughly on random occasions and surprise surprise, he doesn’t. I thought I knew everything as well. I hate to admit it but this train of thought continued a bit too far into my twenties. While my emotionally immature type A man brain still trips me up at times, I do my best to learn something new every day. Eventually one day I had the benefit of a company owner I worked for offer to pay for a continuing ed course in Business Management. My 27-year-old self thought "I'm already further along than most in my field, what do I need to know?". In retrospect I have wanted to smack my younger arrogant self on the side of the head for many reasons, but primarily for thinking this way, that I had nothing left to learn.

So, I took the course, and it wasn’t necessarily the course material that was eye opening but rather the instructor's knowledge, and my fellow students' knowledge. My younger know it all self was learning along people two and three times my senior, CEO's, VP's of major corporations and it was immediately humbling. I learned more from my classmates than anything else. I learned that I don't know everything and most importantly I learned that I never will. I remember listening to my classmates, ACTUAL titans of industry, asking for help, seeking to learn. I thought to myself well hell, if they can keep an open mind to learning every day, then I should as well if I want to be successful personally and professionally.

I started offering estimating training a few years back and I have learned more than I have taught. It's easy to know about something, it can be very difficult to teach what you know to someone else. Since we have offered classes, we have had the benefit of teaching nationwide to a variety of contractors, owners and design professionals and in doing so, it made us better at our job. It has taught us how others think and how that should affect how we think about not only our role in the food chain, but all roles.

The long and short of it is that learning something new every day, even a trivial fact or a seemingly menial task is important for personal growth. For professional growth it is important to keep taking classes to gain required knowledge to stay abreast of how the world is evolving. It helps us in our jobs and I've noticed that the real benefit is that it helps us grow as a human, and this comes more from the interaction with other professionals. As an employer of others, I was able to return the favor recently and send our head of Business Development back to school. She is currently deeply invested in advanced business strategy courses through the University of Virginia. The investment in her financially will have a ten-fold benefit, not only to our company but to her personally. When you learn new things, you gain confidence and this confidence trickles down to all areas of our lives. It's a win-win all around for a minimal investment of time and money.

My point of all this is that continuing education is paramount. As business owner, investing in your employees often leads to benefits for you but on a higher philanthropic level, investing in others benefits humanity as a whole, as sappy as that may sound.

If you are an industry professional, I implore you to teach. We need more teachers. We need the next generation to learn not only professional skills, but life skills from those that have been there and done that. I learn something new every time I teach…a new way of doing something, a better way of thinking about something. I learn something new every time I take a continuing education course, and that is mostly from my fellow students. Continuing education benefits us all for many reasons beyond the syllabus.

*- Josh Huck teaches Construction Estimating classes for Estimatica, Inc. and for Half Moon Seminars*