

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Speaker 1 00:00:19 And I didn't know that that's how you spelled Sayonara, S A Y O N A R A. Indeed. I had no idea. It's on the cover of the book. I learned something today. There ya go! Lookie there! Who needs to know what? As a dealer, your experience and knowledge is what gives you a competitive advantage. Today on the Clear Impact Podcast, we are staying close to home as we chat with Jim Shank, our Senior Manager of Sales Education, and Innovation. Jim shares, why it's important to invest in training, not just for today, but for tomorrow.

Good morning. We are here on the Clear Impact Podcast today, and we are going to be speaking with Jim Shank. Good morning. Good morning, Jim. I'm so glad that you could be here this morning. Jim is our customer education....I always mess up your title. What is it?

Speaker 2 00:01:10 I am Manager of Customer Education and Innovation.

Speaker 1 00:01:14 Okay. Fun stuff. And so you know all about learning and development and training.

Speaker 2 00:01:19 That's part of what my responsibility is. Yes.

Speaker 1 00:01:21 Okay. We're going to talk about the importance of investing in learning, the investing of the time it takes to participate in a class, learn a new skill, maybe even brush up an existing skill. I know that training, especially when it's free, like ours is, that it can sometimes seem like it's an option; when things slowed down or if it's a rainy day, then I can take that class. But otherwise, it can sometimes seem like it's not really a priority. What would you say to somebody regarding the ROI of training in the greater scheme of running a successful business?

Speaker 2 00:01:58 That's a great topic. I suppose if I were to break it down into three areas, I would say it's an issue of timing, because you have to remember that training is not about what's now, training is about what's next. Where are we trying to go? What are we trying to do? If I'm learning new skills, where am I going with that? So it's about timing. It's also about purpose, you know, growth, no matter whether it's personal growth, business growth, or even knowledge growth, it doesn't happen in a vacuum. So it takes effort and should be strategic. And I think that's a key word. We have to serve a strategic purpose with our training. And that speaks to the timing as well, where we're going, what we're trying to do. And then specifically, to the issue of ROI, it's why train? What are we trying to accomplish?

Speaker 2 00:02:45 And when you can answer the question of why, why are we doing this? Or why do I want to do this? Or why do I want to send my employee and spend time and effort to do training? That's a tactical question. It's not strategic. It's tactical. How are we going to do it? How we're going to accomplish it. So you've already defined as a business leader, you've already defined what our purpose is, what we're trying to do, that's strategic. Now we're talking about how we do that. And the first step of that many times is training. We have to skill up.

Speaker 1 00:03:12 So in a workforce that's already stretched thin, you know, that's, that's a big deal because you know, a lot of people right now are just looking for somebody with a pulse. Can you

breathe? Can you drive? Can you ...? Can you show up? Can you do a job? Um, because there is, it's a pretty tight labor market. And, um,

Speaker 2 00:03:33 It's not about day one. It's about day two and day 75, day 91.

Speaker 1 00:03:35 Trends, you know, trends come and go. And there's a lot of, you know, obviously COVID brought a lot of changes to the training environment. Everybody discovered that we could learn things online, even if we had traditionally learned it in the classroom. But what are some principles that are outside of the trends? What are some principles that apply for a dealer regarding training practices? What are some, just some key things that they can implement?

Speaker 2 00:04:05 That's a great question. And I think to start, we need to realize that there are four areas of learning within our fenestration industry. There's product knowledge, there's service, knowledge, industry knowledge in general, and then also business practice knowledge, and really those four areas of learning or of skilling up, if you will, is vendor agnostic. That's true across our industry, the fenestration industry. So that's the first thing is realize that, there are more than just it's, it's more than just learning about product. This is what do we do with it? It's how do we do things to it? What's that going to do strategically to my dealership or my environment, my organization, and then how can I leverage that to achieve the ultimate goal, which is additional success. So that's the first thing. The second thing that comes to mind is balancing training efforts for all personnel.

Speaker 2 00:04:53 And again, it leans back on the first thing I mentioned. So all personnel need industry knowledge. That's something everyone within my organization, as a dealer, should know what the industry is about, should know about codes or at least know of codes and things like that. Sales personnel, product knowledge is ultimately important there, because they're selling products. They have to know what the features and benefits and why this product versus that product. And then an organization like PGT Innovations, where we have multiple brands, why this brand versus that brand and things such as that. So that's all product knowledge. Installation personnel? Obviously, services, knowledge. What do we do with those products? How do we install? How do we retrofit? How do we adjust, things like that? That's all services knowledge. Administrative personnel? Well they need to know the business practice, right? They need to know how do we interface as a dealer? How do we interface with the manufacturer? What about quoting? How do we build quotes and things like that? That's business practice information or knowledge. And that's all crucial to a successful business strategy from a dealer perspective. So all four of those areas.

Speaker 1 00:05:58 And we cover all of those through the LMS and many ways through instructor led training and through our YouTube channel. And now the podcast.

Speaker 2 00:06:08 Yeah, indeed. And that's, you know, that's specific to PGTI dealers, you know, they can take advantage of all forms of our training. You're mentioning them, the University itself, whether it be instructor led training at one of our locations that we have classes where they come on site. We also do remote instructor-led training where we go there or at some location in territory. We also have our webinar style training classes or LMS e-learning courses you mentioned, and it continues. We have our YouTube channel, PGTI University, current information that's on our PGTI University.com website. We keep that updated and our weekly updated podcast series, Clear Impact, that we're involved in right now.

Speaker 1 00:06:45 And we've kind of dabbled into some other areas too, where we're leveraging some of the expertise within the enterprise, probably for that fourth component. You know, some good solid leadership principles, and HR strategies and finance, and that's part of what this actual series is about. So yeah, we couldn't do it without focusing on training. I mean, that's what we do...

Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at pgtiuniversity.com. You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

So one of the things in leveraging our expertise is giving credit to sources that have influenced us and have given us great pieces of advice. And so what is a great piece of advice maybe that has been handed to you or that you would have to hand out regarding training?

Speaker 2 00:07:39 Well, I think the best way that I can answer that question is sharing one of my favorite quotes that I read in a book, a business book, Strategic Choices, Supremacy, Survival, or Sayonara, as written by Kenneth and Edward Primozic, and Joe Leben. And it states, and I'm quoting, "Organizational effectiveness depends on three factors. One, exploiting time to achieve strategic advantage; Two, making the right investments, which I'll leverage has training, since that's our topic of conversation. And then three, setting appropriate business goals." And that's the end of the quote. I try to always remember the tenants of this quote, as I consider decisions concerning my team here at PGTI. Uh, but I think in general, the tenants of that, they're, they're great to keep in mind from a business management standpoint, exploiting time, but we have to achieve strategic advantage to exploit time. It's making the right investments in general. Again, I'm talking about training, but it could be anything. And then three setting the appropriate business goals. If we don't have appropriate goals, they're probably not going to be easily attainable. So those are the three tenants that I would share.

Speaker 1 00:08:41 That's excellent. And I didn't know that that's how you spelled Sayonara, S A Y O N A R A. Indeed. I had no idea. It's on the cover of the book. I learned something today. There ya go! Lookie there! It's not even 10 o'clock. It's a Tuesday. And it's a Tuesday, Jim, thank you so much for your time today. I appreciate your leadership in our team. And hopefully this will help a dealer, when you know, they've got an employee who's maybe struggling with understanding something like, Hey, maybe it's time for you to take a half a day and just sit down and pound out some LMS courses, or maybe we need to sign you up for the next training. Again, everything that we offer here is free and for their success and for their advantage, so everyone benefits. Absolutely. That's why we're here. That's awesome. Thank you so much Jim.

Speaker 1 00:09:28 PGTI University is the customer education team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original Eze-Breeze porch enclosure line, then became PGTI, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows, and Eco Windows and Doors. We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure, and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality. PGTI University is here to educate you, our listener, so that you can be a more informed consumer of window and door products.