



Improve

How to Build a Learning Culture That Sticks



A Quick Start Guide **2025**

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After years of working alongside the Dirt World's best, we've picked up on some patterns. And when it comes to how the winners win, there was one trait that eclipsed them all: **continuous improvement**.

The best Dirt World companies are successful learning organizations. It's the foundation for achieving low turnover, high profits, and an outstanding safety record. And it's the only way to stay competitive, innovate, and recruit the next generation.

Now, there's a practical way to operationalize it—a simple playbook based on the best in the industry. Think of it as the scaffolding for building your own learning organization.

The BuildWitt Blueprint

1. Get Leadership Buy-In
2. Set Expectations
3. Learn First Thing Daily
4. Discuss
5. Track and Celebrate
6. Communicate Continuously

WATCH:

"Dealing with Change" from Leadership With Jocko Willink: Culture and Adaptability



Step 1: Get Leadership Buy-In

Culture is contagious. If leaders treat training like a priority, crews will too. Here's what it looks like for execs, field leaders, and champions.

Executives Should:

- Lead or co-lead program kickoffs and discussions to show commitment and make training a visible priority.
- Own tracking systems like Streaks boards to highlight progress and fuel friendly competition.
- Communicate the “why” consistently, connecting training back to company goals and personal growth.
- Hold field leadership accountable for participating and leading by example.

Field Leaders Should:

- Watch videos alongside your crew or ahead of time, modeling active participation and buy-in.
- Lead daily talks using the training content to connect lessons to real-world tasks and decisions.
- Reinforce the “why” behind training by linking it to safety, production, and individual advancement.
- Recognize participation and effort publicly to build momentum and normalize involvement.

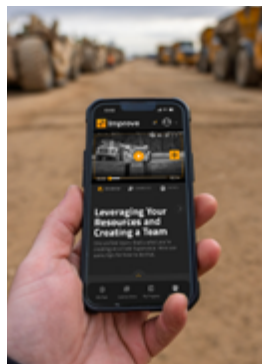
Pro Tip: Don't frame training as “more to do.” Frame it as a proven way to build better crews, solve recurring problems, and achieve more. This helps take training from a checkbox to a culture-builder.

Champions Should:

- Advise on the best ways and times to roll out training so it feels natural, not disruptive.
- Get hands-on with the platform early to guide others and act as a resource for issues.
- Build a network of peer champions and act as the go-to contact for team support and feedback.
- Help track success metrics and stay in touch with customer success partners for ongoing tips.

+ In the Field:

Executives from a natural gas company in New York knew the cascading effect of leadership buy-in. So, they took on personal responsibility for making sure their team was set up for success by working with learning partners to give simple discussion prompts to field leaders to learn how to lead training talks. This small step provided field leaders with ready-to-use examples for how to start a new task and helped carry buy-in down the chain of command.



Step 2: Set **Expectations**

Your team can't hit a target they can't see. Make expectations clear, relevant, and repeat them often—especially in the first few weeks.

- Start with why it matters to them (think safety and growth opportunities).
- Keep it simple and give two clear actions:
 1. Watch 1 video a day.
 2. Participate in daily discussions.
- Make participation part of performance reviews—it signals that you're serious about training.



In the Field:

A construction and building materials company in the Intermountain West makes training completion part of yearly performance reviews. Employees' ability to earn their full raise is contingent upon their participation in training, driving home just how critical training and offering a way for those that are committed to be rewarded.



WATCH:

"Why Change Initiatives Fail"
from Leadership With Wally
Adamchik: Business
Foundations



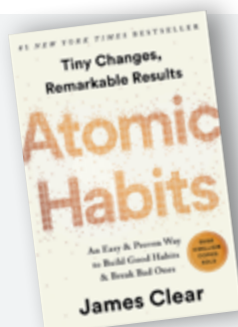
Step 3: Learn First Thing **Daily**

Training does not have to slow production. Winning teams are incorporating daily training into their routine by extending existing morning meetings. It'll help make those meetings more effective, too.

1. Start shifts with your crew meeting.
2. Watch a training video together (or skip to the next step if they're watching on their own before).
3. Spend 5-10 mins discussing the day's training video as a group.
4. Move into your Job Safety Analysis (JSA) and day plan.

Why it Works: "Stacking" a new habit on top of an existing one makes it more likely to stick.

Read: *Atomic Habits* by James Clear for more habit-creating wisdom.



Step 4: **Discuss**

Not only does discussing training help people remember it, it gives the team a chance to share their knowledge, personal experiences, and ask questions. Transforming the theoretical to practical only takes a few minutes!



Three Question Types to Use:

1. **Search Questions:** “What new tip did you pick up today?”
2. **Analyze Questions:** “Why is this technique important?”
3. **Apply Questions:** “How would this help on our next project?”

Make it Yours: Different questions generate different responses. Try your own versions of **what**, **why**, and **how** questions.

Crew Leader Tips:

- Use names to engage people—it creates psychological safety.
- Use “Yes, and...” to dig deeper or pivot to a more substantial answer.
- Redirect negativity by affirming legitimate concerns and guiding toward solutions.
- Make room for quieter voices by inviting them directly to contribute.
- End by having someone summarize key takeaways—it’s a great way to get shyer people to speak up and helps with retention.



WATCH:

“Healthy Conflict” with Wally Adamchik for more guidance on dealing with tense moments and arriving at a solution.

Step 5: Track & Celebrate

Training doesn't work in the dark. Track it, talk about it, and celebrate the small wins—because small wins add up fast.

Think about it: Micro-training has a compounding effect.
 $10 \text{ mins/day} \times 5 \text{ days} \times 50 \text{ weeks} = 40+ \text{ hours of development}$
a year without lost time or travel. Worth celebrating? Heck yeah.

What to Track:

Daily participation

Are most people watching training videos daily?

Discussion quality

Are people actively (not begrudgingly) contributing to discussions?

Behavior changes

Do you notice safer sites, less rework, and more teamwork?

Business impact

Are you seeing less turnover, greater efficiency, or a better safety record?

How to Celebrate:

- Public shoutouts
- Small rewards (gift cards, gear)
- Recognition boards
- Monthly "Training All-Stars"
- Personal thanks from leadership



In the Field:

An Ohio-based paving company has created dedicated posters for recognizing training milestones, taking the gamification of their platform's Streaks feature out into the real world. This not only gives their employees well-deserved props, it spurs a sense of friendly competition and motivation, and firmly signals to the entire company that training is part of their core culture.

Step 6: Communicate **Continuously**

Use your platform for more than videos—make it your culture hub. Keep important news, updates, and recognition where people are already expected to go every day.

- Post weekly updates
- Share leadership messages
- Give crew shoutouts
- Deliver consistent safety moments

Why it Works: It turns your platform into a central place for training and communication, creating even more reasons for people to keep coming back to it.



In the Field:

A general contractor out of Louisville uses its platform to send weekly video updates about what's going on in the company to its 150+ team members. They cover new projects, wins, and challenges so that everyone knows the exact direction the company is heading, keeping their team consistently aligned.



Build a **Culture of Practice**

The first version is rarely the final version.
Focus on progress, not perfection.

If participation dips or discussions lag, switch things up. Test new discussion questions, train leaders again, or try out a different incentive.

The most successful teams stay flexible and stick with it. You got this.

Improve | Better Every Day

