

The Dow Smithsonian

A newsletter for clients, colleagues, and friends of Dow Smith Company, Inc.

Summer 2022

Serving Clients Starts With Staff's Well-Being

There's an old saying we like: You can't pour from an empty cup. At Dow Smith Company (DSC), we believe in hard work. We believe in doing what it takes to make sure projects are completed both on time and on budget. We believe in a servant culture that offers the very best possible experience for our clients and our community.

To do that, our employees need to be invested in our mission, excited about their work, and growing in their lives and careers. Serving our clients starts with serving our staff. We know that when our team members are happy and fulfilled, their attitude and energy will come through in their work.

That is why Holley Potts is so important to the DSC team. As our Director of Well-Being, Holley is available as a life coach to all of our employees and their families.

Holley helps Dow Smith employees in a variety of ways. "For some people, it's losing weight and being healthy. Or it could be budgeting and personal finance," says Holley. "For others, it's purchasing a house or handling big tasks in their life. Maybe they need help with time management. Some people have big ideas and they want to know how to get them heard."

But beyond all of that, it's helpful just to have someone to talk to. According to an article in *EHS Today*, "workers in the construction industry are more vulnerable to burnout than in any other field. Long, irregular hours spent in dangerous work

environments, along with the added stress of job insecurity, are major stressors," *EHS Today* contributor Jill Fleming writes.

"Nearly 60 percent of construction workers reported struggling with mental health but only a third said they would communicate this to their employers. Their reasons for not telling their employer about their struggles include fear of embarrassment, a belief their employer wouldn't be able to help, and the fear it would negatively impact their career."

Holley says it can be a challenge to get tough construction workers to sit down in

says having Holley at the company for the past year has created a more stable work environment.

"Any employee of ours who has spent time with Holley Potts has seen an increase in productivity," says Dow. "When you get an hour of work from our Project Managers, it's the same as two to three hours from our competitors. That's how we keep projects on time and on budget. Everybody talks about it, but this is how we do it."

While meeting with Holley is optional, she's already seeing 14 team members at least once a month.

"When they see other people benefiting, they come," Holley says. "The very first person I coached was Dow. He set the standard from the start."

Project Manager and Estimator Aaron Fisher started meeting with Holley shortly after she joined Dow Smith Company.

"It's been very beneficial," he says. "Holley asks the right questions to help you process your thoughts in a different way."

Superintendent Zac Neely has been meeting with Holley for several months. He looks forward to their regular sessions.

"Holley offers a different perspective and helps me see things in a different light," Zac says. "She helps me narrow down what I want my goals to be and gives me different things to look at to help me achieve those goals."

"Being a superintendent, I hope my



Holley Potts, Dow Smith Company's Director of Well-Being, speaks with Project Manager and Estimator Aaron Fisher.

a soft chair and talk about their feelings. But we don't want anyone on our team to just grind their way through day after day without help. We're making it a priority for our team members to have aspirational goals and dreams. This makes life better for our employees and it makes them safer and more effective on our clients' job sites.

'This is how we do it'

DSC President and Owner Dow Smith

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The Mouth-Watering History Of The Lobster

Does the thought of lobster make you salivate? Lobsters have been an important menu item in fine restaurants for years. But the pricey crustacean wasn't always so upper-crust.

Up until the 1800s, lobster was chiefly consumed by the lower classes—poor, indentured servants, and people in prisons and institutions. In colonial America, there were even laws against feeding lobster to inmates more than once a week, and employment agreements often specified that servants would not have to eat lobster more than twice a week.

One reason was probably because lobsters were so abundant on the East Coast. The Plymouth pilgrims, according to some stories, could wade into the water and capture more than they wanted by hand. After great storms, so many lobsters washed ashore that they were pulverized and used as fertilizer.

It wasn't until the 19th century that New Yorkers and Bostonians developed a taste for lobsters. Commercial lobster fisheries flourished only after the development of the lobster smack, a boat with a large open holding well on deck that allowed live lobsters to be transported.

The largest lobster ever caught, by the way, was found off Nova Scotia. It was 3.5 feet long from the tip of its tail to the end of its crusher claw, and weighed 44 pounds, 6 ounces.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Dow Smith Company Certified As Best Christian Workplace For Seventh Consecutive Year

For the seventh consecutive year, Dow Smith Company has been named a Certified Best Christian Workplace by the Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI). This certification is based entirely on a survey of our employees. This year, 100 percent of employees who responded to the survey said Dow Smith Company is an exceptional place to work.

We are a Middle Tennessee design-build firm, specializing in commercial, healthcare and church construction projects, ranging from ground-up construction to renovations and additions. Since the company was founded by Dow Smith in 1992, we have worked with hundreds of businesses and churches in Middle Tennessee.

Dow Smith Company is the only construction company in Tennessee to be certified by the Best Christian Workplaces Institute and we have been certified longer than any other business.

"It's an honor to be certified once again this year," says President and Owner Dow Smith. "This recognition speaks volumes about how deeply our employees care about the work we do every day to meet the needs of our clients. I hope it also says a lot about how dedicated our leadership is to valuing and retaining the incredible people who work here."

Certified organizations received exemplary ratings from their employees who have completed the Best Christian Workplaces Institute's employee engagement survey. All of the organizations were evaluated according to BCWI's FLOURISH model: Fantastic teams, Life-giving work, Outstanding talent, Uplifting growth, Rewarding compensation, Inspirational leadership, Sustainable strategy, and Healthy communication.

Out of the Dow Smith employees who completed this year's BCWI engagement survey,

- 100 percent said there is generally good teamwork across all departments.
- 100 percent said they are motivated to put in extra effort beyond what is expected to help Dow Smith Company succeed.
- 100 percent said the mission and goals at Dow Smith Company make them feel their work is important.
- 100 percent said their supervisor cares about them as a person.
- 100 percent said leaders at Dow Smith Company demonstrate compassion for people at all levels of the organization.
- 95 percent said someone at Dow Smith Company encourages their development.
- 95 percent said fellow employees are highly committed to excellence in their work.
- 100 percent said Dow Smith Company has an effective strategy for meeting the needs of the customers we serve.

"At Dow Smith Company, our mission is to serve," says Smith. "I believe the scores we've received on this survey are a reflection of our employees' dedication to our mission."

The benefits of being a Certified Best Christian Workplace by BCWI affect our employees, as well as our clients. When our employees are supported and encouraged to grow within our organization, our clients are also supported and encouraged to grow.



Want To Get Ahead? Don't Wait To Be Offered That Promotion

Most people don't want to spend their entire career in the same job, for the same pay, with the same level of responsibility. But getting promoted isn't automatic. You've got to show that you want it and that you deserve it. Here's how to prepare and position yourself for advancement:

- **Decide on what you want.** "A promotion" is nebulous. You've got to target the specific job you want so you can start working toward it. Be realistic; if you work in the mail room, you're not likely to immediately win a VP's job.
- **Do a stellar job.** The bare minimum isn't enough. You'll get noticed if you make a practice of going above and beyond your job description. Work harder than anyone else, take some initiative, and get results.
- **Be a team player.** Support your co-workers, your manager, and your organization. You've got to show that you're ready for the responsibility of leading other people, and you can't do that if you get a reputation as a lone wolf.
- **Invest in your own development.** Don't wait around for your boss to send you to a training seminar. Find out what skills you need in order to do the job your eye is on. Then go ahead and learn them. You'll show your commitment to improvement and you'll get the benefit of increasing your knowledge no matter what happens.
- **Talk to your manager.** Let your boss know that you're interested in advancement. Don't be pushy or demanding, but send the message that you're ready for more responsibility and ask what you can do to be considered for promotion.
- **Solve problems.** The best way to get noticed is to solve problems for your organization quickly and creatively. Be on the lookout for situations where you can help your colleagues and the organization with ideas and knowhow. The ability to provide useful solutions will help you stand out.

"When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world."

—George Washington Carver

The Internet By The Numbers

The information superhighway (as the Internet was dubbed in the 1990s) is packed, but most of us are headed for the same few off-ramps. Here are some numbers associated with biggest, busiest destinations on the World Wide Web, from the internet data firm *Alexa*:

- **Wikipedia.** The online encyclopedia ranks sixth in U.S. traffic, and seventh globally. The average visitor spends about five minutes on the site, and about 52 percent of those visits are "bounces" (users view just one page before leaving).
- **Amazon.** Online since 1992, Amazon's users are more often female than male (55 percent versus 45 percent); about 19 percent of its visitors are referred to it by search engines. The average load time for an Amazon page is 1.783 seconds.
- **YouTube.** The second biggest search engine on the internet has three billion searches per month. Only 22 percent of YouTube visitors come from the United States.
- **Twitter.** Visitors to the 280-character posting site view an average of 3.5 unique pages per day. They spend about seven minutes on the site, with 51 seconds per page view. Around 62 percent of visitors are women.
- **Facebook.** With more than 2.9 billion monthly users, the social network is ranked second in U.S. traffic. The highest percentage of users (30 percent) are in the 45–54 age range, and 57 percent of them are female.



Test Your Knowledge

1. What were the first modern Olympic pole vaulters' poles made of?
 - a. Plastic
 - b. Bamboo
 - c. Birch
 - d. Sugar cane
2. What is December's birthstone?
 - a. Garnet
 - b. Pearl
 - c. Sapphire
 - d. Turquoise
3. Before it was called the Big Mac, McDonald's signature sandwich went by what name?
 - a. The King
 - b. The Duke
 - c. The Aristocrat
 - d. The Royal
4. What color M&Ms did not exist from 1976 to 1987?
 - a. Red
 - b. Blue
 - c. Green
 - d. Yellow
5. Which country released the world's first Christmas postage stamp?
 - a. The United States
 - b. France
 - c. Canada
 - d. England

ANSWERS: 1. b; 2. d; 3. c; 4. a; 5. c

—Random Trivia Generator

Serving Our Clients... *continued from page 1*

going will make people feel more at ease with meeting with Holley and talking to her," he says. "I think we have a stigma about talking to people, especially as men in the South. But it's been one of the greatest blessings for me, being able to open up and talk to people I trust and get some good advice."

Zac says that he's already seeing progress toward his personal and professional goals.

"It's just one more person to hold me accountable to the goals I want to achieve," he says. "We're all good at procrastinating when we don't want to deal with things. But when you've got that person who wants to see you succeed and do well, it gives you that extra initiative to go ahead and get it done."

Building trust

A big part of coaching is accountability. The fact that DSC works so hard to create internal accountability is just one more thing that sets us apart.

"I think this goes back to the question, 'What kind of person are you hiring and what kind of company are you trusting your project with?'" Holley says. "When we focus on employee engagement and well-being, we create consistency. Repeat clients are seeing the same employees on this job that they had on the last one. Things like that are important."

Holley knows that creating this level of consistency and accountability can require some difficult conversations, which are all confidential. But if she starts to see themes emerging with the conversations she's having with staff, sometimes she'll ask, "Would I have your permission to bring this up as an issue?"

By talking with so many employees, she's gained a better understanding of how everyone on the DSC team fits together and how they will work best together. This allows us to put our best foot forward with everything we do.



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The construction of Building H at Seven Oaks Business Park in Smyrna is taking shape!

Project Updates

- **Marquee Dental** - East Nashville - 3,000 SF Interior Build-out/Lennox Village -
- **Seven Oaks** - Smyrna - New Construction of Building H
- **Jaymes Academy** - Murfreesboro - New Construction - 10,000 SF Daycare
- **Murfreesboro Medical Center Veterans Parkway** - Murfreesboro - New Construction - 75,000 SF Building
- **City Church** - Murfreesboro - New Construction
- **North Boulevard Church of Christ** - Murfreesboro - New West Campus Building
- **Dr. Thompson** - Murfreesboro - New Construction

