

# Steel Building Company Stabilizes Turnover, Increases Sales

Employees who love their work are more productive and make great recruiters



**\$14**  
million  
2019 Revenue



**61**  
Employees



When Jeff Snell and Gordon Harton were looking for a business to buy, it had to meet two criteria: it had to manufacture its own products and have room for improvement. After three years searching, they found Worldwide Steel Buildings. The company started locally in 1983, changing hands several times and pivoting to national sales by the time Snell and Harton bought it in 2016. Though it was running at 100 percent capacity, the facility was run down and had high employee turnover.

So, they asked employees what they needed to improve the product and productivity. The employees weren't shy, citing concerns like turnover, a leaky roof, bad lighting, and no break room. "They wanted a better place to work," says Snell, president.

## NEW INFRASTRUCTURE, BETTER MORALE

The company closed its doors for a week just to clean and remove trash. Then they began checking items off the employees' list. They added new LED lighting and repaired the roof, and the crew designed, built, and furnished a 1,500-square-foot break room, used for lunch, breaks, and socializing. Later they expanded by 17,000-square-feet in additional manufacturing space stocked with new equipment. "We made it a shop that employees now take pride in," Snell says.

The biggest improvement was eliminating the high turnover, Snell says. "You cannot have a well-run company when you have a revolving door of employees." When they bought the company, they had a permanent "help wanted" sign hanging. Now, new employees come from referrals, and the voluntary turnover rate is zero. "People want to work here, and we hold them to a high standard," Snell says. Employees have a vested interest in holding their referrals accountable as good coworkers, he adds.

"Once you create that culture, my job as a

business leader is pretty simple," Snell says. The company also empowers employees to make decisions without second-guessing them, as long as they were made with customer satisfaction in mind. The company also offers zero-interest loans to employees for emergency expenses. "All these little things create the culture that's made us successful," he says.

## BUILD A BETTER WEBSITE AND THE CUSTOMERS WILL COME

As an e-commerce business, the company's website upgrade made a big difference. They created a 3D design tool, which allows customers to envision what they want. Almost 60 percent of leads now come from that tool, and customer referrals are also a big lead source. Worldwide Steel Buildings doubled its staff to handle sales and manufacturing growth, opening sales offices in Colorado and Kansas.

They directly sell the customized steel buildings to the end users, providing everything but the interior finish. About 90 percent of sales are to individuals, for personal or business use, including homes, "barndominiums," airplane hangars, garages, and equipment storage. Commercial sales focus on the middle market of light industrial buildings, not large-scale warehouses. "Literally anything the customer can envision, we can design and manufacture," Snell says.

[WORLDWIDESTEELBUILDINGS.COM](http://WORLDWIDESTEELBUILDINGS.COM)

