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always come naturally to everyone, your employees need tools to enable them to ...

Jun. 14, 2022

Pillar 1 - Success Skills: Formal Training			
Foundational Offerings			
The 5 Choices of Extraordinary Productivity - Annually to all new employees			
Introduction to RMA Service Offerings - Annually to all new employees			
	Year 1 Team	Year 2 Leadership	Year 3 Clients
Level 1	Professional Essentials	Leaders at All Levels	First Class Communications
Level 2	7 Habits of Highly Effective People	Extraordinary Execution	Extraordinary Execution
Level 3	Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable	STRIVE for Results	STRIVE for Results
Level 4	Better Together	Next Level Leadership	Next Level Leadership
Elective Offerings			
The Loyalty Effect - Annually to all new staff at the manager level or above Talent			
Development Coaches Training - Annually to new coaches			

The three-year curriculum of Pillar 1 (Success Skills) laid out in easy-to-follow grid

By Jeffrey Pawlow and Sara Huddleston.

Right now, CPA firms are under tremendous pressure. Fewer college graduates are choosing accounting as a profession, and there is intense competition as firms race to support their profit margins. On top of that, a worldwide pandemic has upended working norms and disrupted everyday life to an unprecedented degree. With all this to cope with, how do accounting firms mold themselves into the CPA firm of the future to succeed in the face of tomorrow's realities?

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meaningful culture of ongoing success and provide your firm with a competitive advantage in the ongoing war for talent.

The pandemic has been a catalyst for so many things, including the investment employers need to make to differentiate their employee value proposition. Many people are asking themselves, “Why should I work here or stay with this employer?” as evidenced by mass exodus of talent across all sectors. As a result, it is the responsibility of the employer to make a compelling case by providing their people with training that level-sets cultural norms and expectations and helps people navigate new and changing demands they encounter inside and outside of work.

Creating a Next-Level Classroom

Your curriculum should focus on core competencies like success skills, technical expertise, and coaching. But how do you implement something like this in your firm? Ask yourself: should one person lead the charge, or should you hire someone to help? Who should be involved in the planning and execution of this program: partners, staff, outside consultants? Investigate whether there are existing programs you can participate in, or whether your firm needs a customized approach.

Most importantly, where do you go about getting started? Should you create your own program from scratch, or should you approach an outside consulting group with expertise in personal and professional development, such as [The Growth Partnership](#)? Some firms feel they lack the specialized expertise required to execute such a program successfully, so they seek external support.

Faced with today's challenges, Brady Martz & Associates—a Top 100 accounting firm according to *Accounting Today*, venerated as one of the oldest CPA and advisory firms in the state of North Dakota—decided to take its future into its own hands and engaged a third-party consulting firm to create a customized three-year employee

growth program called Brady Martz University. For a year, Brady Martz collaborated

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three Pillars: Success Skills, Technical Expertise, and Coaching. The chart below shows the curriculum for Pillar 1, Success Skills: Formal Training. While Year 1 focuses on creating a cohesive Team, Year 2 centers on developing strong Leadership; Year 3 is devoted to cultivating a keen ability to serve clients. In each year, employees progress through the courses assigned to their organizational Level.

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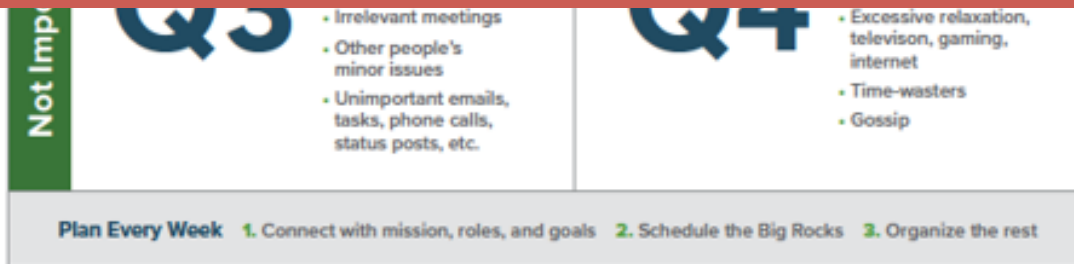
The three-year curriculum of Pillar 1 (Success Skills) laid out in easy-to-follow grid

[Click graphic for larger image.]

The core lies in The 5 Choices of Extraordinary Productivity class, which teaches that because everyone has the same number of hours in the day, time management is a key differentiator for getting results. By scheduling priorities, make sure you spend time on things that are important, but not urgent.

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This graphic divides tasks into four quadrants of priority

[Click graphic for larger image.]

What Did Employees Learn?

One employee declared flatly: “This was by far the best and most powerful training I have ever participated in. It has changed my life forever.” The Habit 5 class, “Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood,” taught her excellent concepts in understanding others that brought her relationships to a new level, both inside and outside the workplace.

Other employees noted key takeaways such as:

- Identifying what time of day they’re most motivated and creative, making it easier to meet deadlines
- Discerning how someone prefers to be communicated with and how to identify their behavioral style
- Prioritizing and limiting interruptions to focus on the task at hand
- Discovering a new sense of accomplishment

The Power of Strong Success Skills

After University Week, Todd VanDusen, the firm's Managing Partner who was

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A training program devoted to behavioral changes benefits both employees and senior management. Employees today *want* to change to cope with a new work environment and new demands being placed on them. In their workplace training and development, they're seeking a transformative experience. For a firm's training and development professionals, a comprehensive, customized training program can free them up from having to function as event planners for training sessions and allow them more time to ignite training at their firm, enabling it to morph into the CPA firm of the future.

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Jeffrey Pawlow is president and Sara Huddleston is director of learning and development at [The Growth Partnership](#).

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