

Invest in Yourself and Your Business Through Ongoing Training

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Kevin Marcano, owner of Marcano Roofing, believes ongoing training is the key to personal and professional success. Photos: Katie Carodine Photography

By investing in yourself and any employees you might have through continuous education, you help build your individual value and grow the company business overall. In many regions of North America, residential roofing slows during the winter months because the weather is not conducive to installing roofs. That opens the door for setting aside time for continuous education so that precious work time is not a conflict.

Kevin Marcano, owner of Marcano Roofing in Salem, Oregon, is a firm believer in regularly learning any time of year because of its benefits in our professional and personal lives. He talked about it in a recent episode of our podcast.

“If you want to be the best in this industry, in your business or in your personal life, then continuous education is crucial,” Marcano says. “Being a business owner is challenging in the ever-changing roofing industry, in which each decade brings new building products, practices and concepts. If you don’t decide to incorporate continuous education into your process you become a dinosaur; and it’s not a matter of if but when your process becomes extinct. If you want to stand out, if you want to be memorable and leave a legacy, continuous education must be part of your process.”

Back in 2016, two years before getting Marcano Roofing off the ground, Marcano attended our best practices and solutions in residential attic ventilation seminar. It’s a collection of tips, mistakes to avoid and success stories from across North America. He says it was two hours of learning that has paid off tremendously. “For my professional career, that was probably the most impactful and beneficial educational seminar that I can think of,” Marcano says. “The level of educational value and resources provided in that course is profound. It has directly impacted where Marcano Roofing is today.”

Equipping Yourself for Success

Throughout his professional career in various industries, Marcano says he has tried to learn about people and leadership skills to help him be as successful as possible. “It occurred to me early on, the more literature, books, and content on the topics of leadership, influence, emotional intelligence, and persuasion I can consume, the better equipped I would be for success in whatever my endeavors were at that time in my life,” he says. “So now, as part of my daily routine I seek out continuing education about whatever it is I’m passionate about.”

Marcano shared his “must read” list of books he found most helpful in his ongoing effort to learn, lead and help develop others.

- *How to Win Friends & Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie
- *The Obstacle Is the Way*, by Ryan Holiday
- *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, by Travis Bradberry
- *Leaders Eat Last*, by Simon Sinek

“All of these books and many others have helped me in the areas of leadership, sales, coaching, conflict resolution, and standing out being memorable, because that’s what we’re all here to do,” Marcano says.

For the seasoned roofing professionals whose businesses are thriving and their schedules are packed, setting aside time for continuous education may seem too challenging, so it sometimes gets delayed indefinitely. Marcano cautions against this mindset.

“Being busy in this industry can grab ahold of you,” he says. “When I have that feeling, that feeling of being too busy to try to learn and possibly becoming stagnant, I say to myself the same thing I would say to anyone:

‘Congratulations for your thriving business and its success so far. But remember how and what it took to get there. Remember when you were building that company and the momentum of the success — how in order to build it you were willing to put in the extra time and effort when others weren’t. Don’t let your thriving business culture become numb to the threat of the most debilitating sickness a company can become diagnosed with: complacency.’”

Avoid Complacency

Marcano believes continuous education is the best antidote to complacency. It can enhance a successful business, as well as a successful personal career. He says learning is not a finite strategy — it’s ongoing. “One thing that motivates me when I’m feeling tired and would rather just call it a day, I think about someone else out there is putting in the time and doing the necessary work. That someone else may as well be me,” says Marcano.

Is continuous education beneficial for everyone within the roofing company, management, office personnel and the crew working in the field? “Continuous education is for anyone who chooses to recognize its value,” says Marcano. “Whatever role you have within the roofing company, you could stand out through continuous education. For example, the person who answers the phone and schedules the estimates with customers. What additional knowledge would be helpful for that person to have to make the telephone interaction with potential customers more meaningful and beneficial for both the customer and your business?”

At Marcano Roofing, the office administrator is armed with enough roofing knowledge and probing questions to explore with the homeowner over the phone about the roof’s performance, its age, the presence or lack of attic ventilation, etc. “That’s the first point of contact for potential customers with Marcano Roofing. Now put yourself in the homeowner’s shoes. You’ve telephoned multiple roofing companies and they all say and ask similar things. But one company stands out because of its thorough Q & A about possible heat buildup inside the attic, unusual sources of



Sara Klindtworth and Kevin Marcano present an in-house seminar on attic ventilation for employees at Marcano Roofing.

moisture, a brief description of the size and type of attic, etc. It speaks volumes about your company to potential customers. And that's what continuous education can do," Marcano says.

There are learning opportunities by simply participating in Q & A sessions of your chosen topic of interest, whether you're contributing to the answers, the questions or just listening, says Marcano. "There are many ways to obtain continuous education."

Recipe for Better Outcomes

Marcano shared his recipe for achieving better outcomes in life. "It starts with your thoughts. It moves on into your actions. That compounded over time builds the habits you have in your life. That equation equals the results of your current situation," he says.

Marcano makes continuous learning a habit. Recognizing that the residential roofing industry is ever-changing, Marcano encourages his peers to view continuous education not as an "obstacle" but as an "opportunity" toward sustained success.

"If you find yourself too busy to listen to a podcast, to watch a YouTube video, or to study more about your industry so you can stand out, just remember where else can you put the blame when things get tough and you start seeing those around you adapting and finding ways to use these 'obstacles' to their advantage," says Marcano. "Incorporate continuous education into the functionality of your business. Make it less of a fight and more of an opportunity to thrive."

Regular doses of learning can help individuals within the company find a strength or passion perhaps not previously discovered. That is motivating and rewarding for the individual employee and beneficial for the company as a whole. "Continuous education will help you narrow down your strengths and your weaknesses," says Marcano. "And I always say triple down on your strengths. There will be plenty of people who are great at what you are weak at. Together you can be a great team."

About the author: Paul Scelsi is marketing communications manager at Air Vent Inc. and leader of its "Attic Ventilation: Ask the Expert seminars (airvent.com). He hosts the podcast "Airing it out with Air Vent," and he's the chairman the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association Ventilation Task Force. He is the author of the book, *Grab and Hold Their Attention: Creating and Delivering Presentations that Move Your Audience to Action*.