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Q&A: MADISON CONCRETE EMBRACING CONSTRUCTION SAFETY CULTURE THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

We're fortunate to work with an incredible portfolio of clients at Graham Company, putting their interests first to provide high quality insurance products and services that exceed expectations. One of these clients is **Madison Concrete Construction**, a company that has been a leader in the construction industry for more than 50 years. We're proud to work with Madison Concrete as a true strategic partner to reduce risk exposures by implementing a company-wide culture of safety.

Recently, Jim Dolente, Jr., president of Madison Concrete, presented at our Executive Leadership Summit about how Madison is building a culture of safety among not only leadership, but all levels of the company. Afterward, we sat down with Jim to discuss the impact of our partnership and Madison's dedication to employee safety and wellbeing.

How has the Graham Company Kairos Safety Commitment Model transformed your operations?

It's been an exciting journey for Madison Concrete since we began our partnership with Graham Company and implemented its Kairos Safety Commitment Model. We've experienced a substantial reduction in incident rates on our jobsites, realizing our initial goal of improving our safety program and minimizing injuries and accidents.



Even more than affecting our safety statistics, our experience has strengthened the relationship among all Madison Concrete team members, especially between executive leadership and field leadership. This positive shift has helped crystallize awareness among field leaders for our ownership's message that above everything else, we care about our employees as people – their wellbeing, their families and their aspirations.

You mentioned during your presentation, “You can teach an old dog new tricks.” What approach do you take for educating veteran workers to embrace safety in a new way?

When someone performs the same task or job for a long period of time, that particular way of doing it becomes habitual and ingrained in their minds. Similar to how sports have embraced helmets and other protective gear over the years, we've seen an evolution in the mindset around safety in the construction industry. For us, I think it was the radical move from a focus on compliance to holistically examining our safety culture. Equally important, ownership's consistent reinforcement of this message has shown veteran employees that safety is core to everything we do.

Above all else, our longtime Madison field employees are good people. When we discussed our ownership and management approach to caring about people, explaining that the safety program is in place for the benefit of everyone, it wasn't a hard sell.

How could these lessons be applied to the larger construction industry?

The biggest lesson we've learned that should be applied to the industry at large is prioritizing culture over compliance. Too often on jobsites, I see a mentality where the construction manager is “policing” safety compliance, which creates a negative culture and makes it difficult for people to embrace safety practices.



When we discuss safety measures and how to minimize the risk of incidents and injuries, we're working for the betterment of everyone, not just to avoid a penalty from OSHA. This genuine attitude and concern for others is what draws employee buy-in, supporting the overall safety culture we've developed.

What impact has your Executive Safety Committee had on the culture at Madison?

Our Executive Safety Committee is comprised of ownership, top office management and field leaders. Just like how we discuss topics such as productivity, profitability, schedule and quality, we use this group to discuss the vital safety measures we're implementing in our culture and on jobsites. Our field leaders - superintendents and foremen - deserve all the credit for taking our message and driving it home for every employee. We want to ensure everyone in the field knows how important they are to our operation and how the safety measures they take every day help ensure they return home safely to their families each night.

What are Madison's safety goals for 2020 and into the future?

We're currently in the process of strategic planning and the very first subject is our safety culture. Now that we have an effective safety program in place and running smoothly, our leadership team is focused on ensuring we don't become complacent. Graham Company has really helped instill the importance of embracing a safety culture where it's not about becoming "good enough" and then resting on our laurels - it's about continuing to improve our safety operations with the goal of being better every day.

Working with Graham allows us to stay on top of new developments and best practices in safety so we can continue to push the envelope. We can't say enough about how much this strategic partnership means to us, far beyond what you

might think of as your insurance broker's typical scope of services.



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