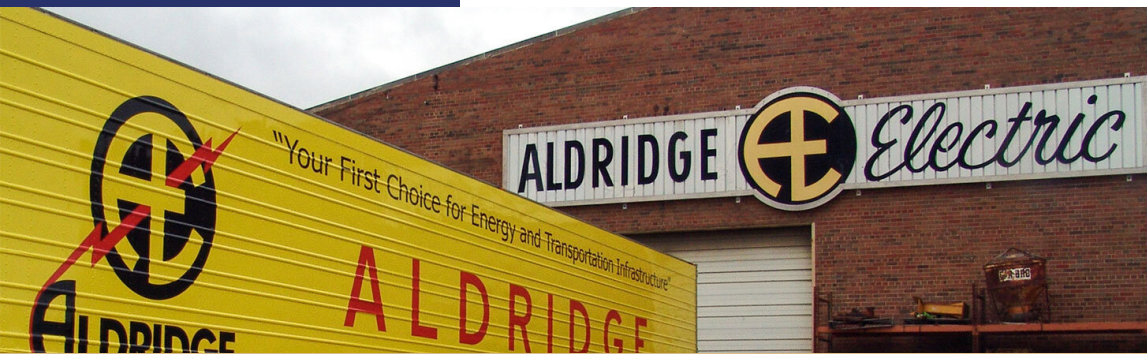




A LEADING ORGANIZATION IS ALSO A LEARNING ONE: A LOOK INTO ALDRIDGE'S DEDICATION TO DEVELOPING ITS LEADERS

CASE STUDY



"Training is preparing people for their jobs today; but development is preparing them for their jobs tomorrow." - KRISTA ROBERTS, VP OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

ABOUT ALDRIDGE

With \$550 million in annual revenue and over 65 years of experience completing complex infrastructure projects, Aldridge Electric Incorporated is widely recognized as one of the leading contractors in the country.

Aldridge has built a reputation for completing challenging projects in the transportation, power, utility and industrial markets while upholding a commitment to being incident- and injury-free. With close to 1,300 of the industry's best individuals driving the success of the organization, Aldridge provides quality work through innovation, finding better and more efficient ways to approach client projects and ensure customer satisfaction.

BUILDING A PIPELINE

Back in 2005, the world was a different place. YouTube was a small, fledgling website. Everyone was on MySpace (and stressing about their "Top Friends" list). We were all wearing rubber bracelets in support of various causes, and we had never even heard of an iPhone.

The same year, with a transition of company ownership underway, Aldridge decided it would start preparing for the future in the most meaningful way possible; by investing in its people. While no one could know what the future would hold, Aldridge's core focus on people would allow it to weather any unexpected environment. The decision was made to invest in personnel development and specifically leadership development; the next round of leaders at each level would have to step in at some point, and there was no time like the present to begin preparing them.

And while identifying and training the next CEO down the line was important, engaging and preparing the next round of leaders in the levels under that role would be just as pivotal to ongoing success at Aldridge. Not only to develop a strong bench of talent, but to make sure a strong executive team and supporting players were ready to surround the new leadership when that transition happened. "The real challenge is two levels below the CEO," said Krista Roberts, VP of talent management at Aldridge. "The next round of leaders needs to be ready, so we need to think years and years ahead."

Additionally, the need for strong leadership at different levels of the company was a key part of their growth plans as they expanded beyond their Chicago base. Learning to support satellite offices and projects across the country requires strong communication, organization, and most of all, leadership skills. Moreover, Aldridge wanted to build a pipeline of talent that can move up the chain as others above them continue to climb or move on. Teaching current VPs to identify potential VPs that will one day replace them, for example, can ensure that things aren't dropped and issues don't arise when someone is promoted.

"Training is preparing people for their jobs today; but development is preparing them for their jobs tomorrow," said Krista. That perspective set a clear goal for Aldridge; but how could they achieve it?



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CHALLENGE

As a learning organization, Aldridge is constantly evolving. This forward momentum is propelled by the passion and creativity found within Aldridge personnel.

Unique and determined individuals are needed to make the organization exceptional. Ensuring these traits are promoted and rewarded within the company is a crucial part of guaranteeing that strong leadership remains the backbone of a growing organization.

A LEADER TO SEEK OUT LEADERS

That year, Aldridge's CEO Ken Aldridge decided to bring in an expert in leadership development to build programs at the company that would allow for this kind of seamless and effective pipeline. He called Bill Treasurer of Giant Leap Consulting to come and give a presentation to the Aldridge team to see how they would take to him.

It was quite a first impression. "Right off the bat, he showed us a video of him lighting himself on fire and then doing a high dive. We all thought, 'who is this guy?'" said Alex Aldridge, Ken's son and now CEO.

"Bill was up against a lot of challenges when he walked in," Krista explained. "Construction, in nearly every aspect, is something that people tend to learn on the job. It's a rugged, do-don't-say industry traditionally, all about hard work and stamina and without a lot of time or patience for developing soft skills. That first meeting was practically an audition to see if he could connect with our employees even about the ambiguous things like leadership qualities. And fortunately—for everyone—he really got through and communicated with them."

"Bill is great at building a collaborative process and moderating meetings to make sure things stay productive and focused," said Alex. "He feels like a true partner—he's been here and has earned that trust. Bill's focus on leadership development was a perfect fit for us; we knew it's something we needed to have in place but we weren't able to do it ourselves, and he helped us build out a system that can harness tomorrow's talent and make sure it comes to fruition."

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL LEAD

Treasurer and Giant Leap Consulting developed several programs that have helped Aldridge sharpen the leaders it has in place now, many of which continue to develop the next class of construction leaders at the company:



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"Giant Leap has worked with so many clients and different industries that they can bring unique perspectives we never would have thought of but turn out to help us immensely." - ALEX ALDRIDGE, CEO

ADDITIONS

Giant Leap also introduced many other programs and events whenever it was clear the team would benefit from them. This included:

- A High Performance Program
- A Successor Program
- Virtual Power-Hour Sessions
- Facilitation of the Annual Offsite Business Planning
- Board of Advisor Meeting Facilitation
- Department Team Building
- Executive Coaching for Senior Leaders

"We run these programs in tight collaboration with Bill," said Alex. "They were developed hand-in-hand with the top leadership at our company, from high-level program goals right down to the agendas for specific meetings. We've built a lot of trust with Giant Leap, and we look to them for guidance and a diverse background of knowledge."

THE LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PROGRAM

The LSP was the advent of structured development programs at Aldridge and is still going strong today! It was focused on both developing leaders to be more effective and identifying who those next leaders will be. The program included guest speakers, teambuilding events, and participant work directly with Giant Leap to build a personal connection and facilitate their core, fundamental leadership capabilities. "It was a full program, from Management 101 to courageous leadership, from selling a product to building a team," said Alex. "Going through LSP, I met a lot of peers who were coming up at the same time. Additionally, I benefited from extra off hours coaching on Leadership 101 skills, which were very impactful."

VP TEAMBUILDING PROGRAM

Still going strong today, this program is meant to break down barriers among colleagues. It is comprised of a team of Vice Presidents who run divisions or departments, and, along with their EVP bosses, meet quarterly to strengthen cross-divisional connections. "Within any organization there will be competition, but it's important that it remains healthy competition," Alex said. "This regular meeting helps us build a culture of transparency and collaboration that has made us far better off as a company."

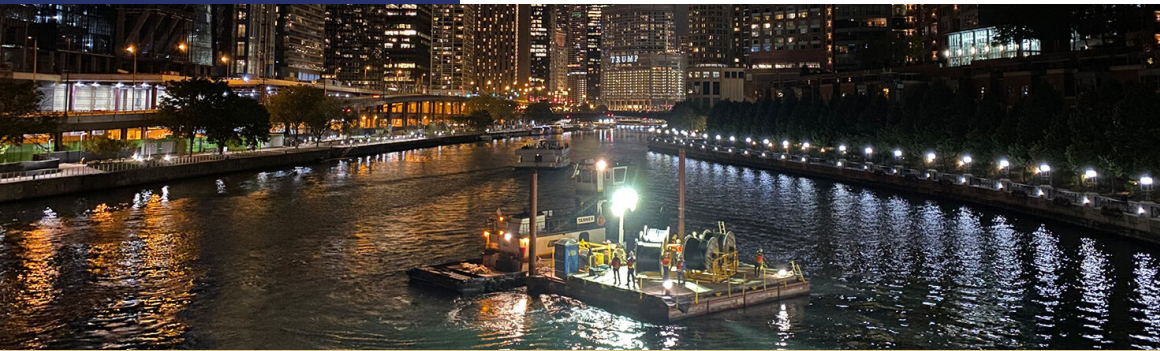
VP EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (VP EDP)

Even the higher-ups in organizations still need to develop and grow as leaders. The VP EDP program was put in place to provide one-on-one training and coaching with each executive in the company. Coaching is an important aspect of leadership development that GLC has brought to Aldridge. Up and coming leaders (and those already leading) have regular meetings with Bill where he spurs them toward growth and offers his help and resources wherever they may need them. Having this pause in day-to-day work and receiving a moment to reflect on what one needs to develop has been extremely beneficial for many at the company, and VP EDP program is also still in place at Aldridge today.



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CONCLUSION



"Today, we are a strong, trusted, family-owned business with a strong culture that gives our employees the tools they need to bring the best out of themselves." - ALEX ALDRIDGE, CEO

CONTACT US

For an initial consultation with Giant Leap Consulting, contact us by phone or visit the website to learn more.

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GiantLeapConsulting.com

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

According to Alex, most leaders at the company today went through these leadership programs brought by GLC on their way up. Alex, now CEO of Aldridge, and Brian Mazzei, executive VP of the Power Division, are just a few examples of the current generation of leaders who arrived ready to lead thanks to these effective development programs and the trust that Bill Treasurer and Giant Leap have built throughout all levels of the company.

"Today, we are a strong, trusted, family-owned business with a strong culture that gives our employees the tools they need to bring the best out of themselves," said Alex. "I've worked on and off with Bill since he began working with Aldridge in 2005 and know firsthand how important he's been to our success on both company and individual levels. Even now, I still work with Bill often; he's an excellent facilitator and I've pulled him in for consultation matters and leadership issues whenever they pop up in the company. And this is in addition to the leadership development programs he's still running here."

The transition to a new CEO at any organization is always an ongoing process—and one that doesn't ever truly end, since CEOs still need to grow and strengthen their leadership abilities with time. With Alex at the helm, Bill is continuing to serve as a trusted partner and resource as he steers the company.

"No one is ever done learning to be a better leader," said Krista. "They want to figure out the next way to improve themselves and those that are coming up after them. It's a continuous improvement process. We always find ourselves, following a program's conclusion or a successful seminar or meeting, saying 'That went great—now, how are we going to do even better next time?'"