

A WEEK IN *Learning*

LET'S TALK ROC: HOW GCNA'S NEW DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM IS GIVING OUR TEAM MEMBERS A GOOD PATH

Trisha Martin, Learning & Development Consultant
& Lori Glenn, Director of Transportation

Do you recall the island question game, where someone would ask you: *If you were trapped on an island, and you could only bring ONE thing, what would it be?* In relation, what about the hard-hitting, journalist-award-winning question: *If you had to pick one food to eat for the rest of your life, what would it be?* Somehow, I doubt that either of those scenarios are plausible. However, I can say with confidence that you WON'T like eating the same food every day (and, yes, you will go insane reading the same Nicholas Sparks book you just HAD to take with you on that deserted island).

Is it surprising that we, as humans, enjoy variety (possibly even NEED it)? Moving on from the thought of eating pizza every day, let us apply this same concept to opportunities within an organization. When organizations lack a variety of pathways for employees to grow in their career, it suffers. In the modern day workforce, employees are not only looking for a pay raise, but a wider map of opportunities. We simply cannot expect someone to do the same job without the opportunity to develop – whether that is within their role, or a different one. In 2018, Randstad North America collaborated with Research Now to gather data on the reasons why top-talented employees wanted to leave their current jobs. Research showed that 57% of respondents felt like they *needed* to leave their job in order to find career growth.

Providing pathways for our team members is critical. These paths could be upward, lateral, or merely the opportunity to learn a different skill in their role. Other organizations have recognized the importance of this, and GCNA is no exception. I had the pleasure of sitting down with Lori Glenn, Director of Transportation, to hear more about a new career path opportunity for our team members.

Lori and her team noticed that there was a substantial driver shortage, nationwide. This lack of trade brings forth a challenge to attract 'ready-to-go' drivers. Recruitment was an obvious task the team needed to take into consideration for their driver positions, but so was career pathing. For example, Forklift Drivers can apply to be a Lead Forklift Driver, or possibly a Supervisor. However, this is still quite a narrow path, and it could cause a waiting time if openings are limited. After further explaining these impacts, Lori led with passion to say, "We *knew* we had to do something else." Thus, the Driver Training Program became a project focal point.

With the help of GCNA's Safety department, and others at the ROC, Lori and her team went to work on creating a robust training program. She explained that safety was the most significant element during the development



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process. “It’s really important to us that they are well equipped with all the proper tools and knowledge. We want them to safely drive a truck and make it home to their families every day.”

The Driver Training Program provides team members with the skills it takes to learn, or enhance, within the trade. As of right now, the program is geared towards training for Class D Straight Trucks (similar to U-Haul trucks, for those of us not familiar with the term). The following is a general breakdown of the program experience:

- The team member will first need to obtain a medical card.
- The team member will then begin a week-long job shadow, riding alongside several different GCNA drivers.
- An accumulative of 24 to 40 hours of driving behind the wheel will take place in a safe, enclosed area, with another driver beside them. This week will also contain training around how to do a proper vehicle inspection.
- Another 24 to 40 hours are dedicated to the team member driving on the streets, with another driver in the vehicle.
- After passing a road test, the team member will begin their 90 days of driving. Once those days are completed, they are an official Truck Driver.

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So far, the Driver Training Program is being piloted at the ROC, with hopes to open spots up to other departments in 2020. Lori also mentioned that the program is taking trainees one at a time, in order to focus on that team member’s learning. Currently, one team member has already completed the program, and another one has just started.

I asked Lori what else she wanted to see come from a program like this, and her response is exactly what some other organizations need to hear. “I think the most important thing for us is to give our team members the opportunity to grow - to provide them a path they didn’t have before. I know there are other paths to take within the organization, and I hope it keeps continuing throughout all our departments. Anything we can do to open up a different door for our team members, even if it is at another organization, is great.”

Lori, thank you for sharing more about this career path, and emphasizing the importance behind it. This is another **good step** in serving the mission.

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