



CASE STUDY

Wiley|Wilson Ownership Culture Planning: Employee Retreat

Wiley|Wilson engaged Praxis Consulting Group to assist with developing its ownership culture. Several possibilities were discussed including a senior team ownership culture planning retreat, ESOP committee engagement or a large group employee-owner retreat. Because Wiley|Wilson believed that it was important to ask all employees for input on how to define and build an ownership culture, they agreed to engage Praxis to design and facilitate a two-day employee-owner retreat. The retreat design involved employees learning more about each other across jobs and locations and large and small group discussions that engaged employees in thinking about desired ownership behaviors at Wiley|Wilson and how the company can support them.

Wiley|Wilson is a multi-disciplined architectural, engineering, and planning firm serving a solid base of industrial, commercial, and government clients. Its services range from architecture to design-build to energy audits to power systems and water resources engineering. The firm focuses on reliability, quality and responsiveness to clients in all their work. Headquartered in Lynchburg, Virginia, the firm also has offices Richmond, Alexandria and Atlanta.



Organization Type

Employee-owned,
Architecture and
Engineering

Number of Employees

175

Client Since

2011

Services Delivered

Ownership Culture
Planning
Large-group Employee
Retreat

Website

www.wileywilson.com

Goals of Engagement

Engage employees in defining ownership behaviors

Assess employee attitudes toward the ESOP and employee ownership

Gather employee input on what the company should do to support ownership behaviors

Facilitate a process that models collaboration and high employee participation

Results

Nearly 100 employees (over half the company) volunteered to attend the two-day retreat

Employee identification of priority areas for company action including renewing core values, knowledge sharing between sites and projects, developing a stronger culture of appreciation, and increasing company communication

In the year following the retreat, the company began to follow up on many of the identified priorities, including:

- Developing new corporate core values through a task force consisting of a diagonal cross-section of the company; the task force's primary role was to gather input from all the departments and sites and consolidate the suggestions into a final document
 - Investing in professional development and formal leadership development training for middle management
 - Creating an Intranet site using SharePoint, with content primarily driven by employees. Features include daily updated announcements, longer news items that might feature a project or an ESOP event and an Ownership Page including a message board, ESOP information and ESOP committee updates
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They also moved forward in the following areas:

- Fostering greater connection between offices and departments
- Creating momentum for the executive team to ask for more employee input on a wide range of issues. For instance, project managers played a larger role in contributing to the new strategic plan
- Company-wide employee retreats are becoming an annual tradition for the company; the firm is currently planning its next ownership retreat