ultimately job quits.

In an industry known for its fast pace and high-pressure environments, leaders with interpersonal skills are also better equipped to manage stress and keep morale high.

Internal Team Dynamics Benefit

The construction industry, like many others, has experienced a rapid change in workforce expectations. Millennials and GenZ employees prioritize workplace culture and relationships. Leaders who excel in empathy, active listening, and emotional intelligence are more likely to retain top talent and foster a loyal, motivated workforce. In contrast, leaders who lack these skills often struggle to connect with their teams on a deeper level which can lead to disengagement*, resentment, and

External Relationship Benefits As Well

To be an effective business leader, one must establish rapport with many kinds of stakeholders. Therefore, soft skills are not only beneficial for internal team dynamics, they also benefit external relationships with clients, trade partners, communities, governing bodies, and more. Business relationships become x M s and infrastructure - the ability to work well with multiple stakeholders is of growing importance.

Change Adaptability and Productivity is Increased

Leaders who can effectively communicate the rationale for change, allay employee fears, and guide their teams through transitions are far more likely to have teams that are cooperative, innovative, resilient, and tenacious problemsolvers.

How to Develop Soft Skills

To develop *any* skill requires starting with self-awareness. Regularly seeking feedback, investing in "soft skills" training, and practicing relationship building techniques are ways to develop the interpersonal abilities that today's leadership demands. Mentors and coaches are also helpful resources who can guide decision-making and communications that involve more than just technical expertise.

As the construction industry continues to evolve, the demands for leaders who are both technically proficient and socially skilled is only going to increase. Knowing "the numbers" and having operational expertise will always be important, but today's leaders must also inspire, motivate, empathize, and lead change well. Soft skills are not optional.

*According to Gallup, 51% of American workers are moderately disengaged and 17% are actively disengaged.