DEVELOPING A PRODUCTION MANAGER

At a certain point, your business will reach the size where you need to consider leaving the day-to-day operations of your installations to someone you trust so you can focus on high-level projects and big-picture goals. When this time came in my own design and installation company, Enlightened Lighting, I found it difficult to leave. There were a number of reasons for this:

1. I really enjoyed installations. I like the challenges, coming up with solutions, working with my hands, and seeing the final result.
2. I can be a little bit of a control freak. On consultations, I would make promises to customers and I knew if I were there, it would be done right.
3. I wasn’t sure if I had the right person for the job.
4. I wanted to be sure my crew understood I was not just trying to get out of work.
5. I needed to have enough work to support a full time operations manager.

“HAVING A PRODUCTION MANAGER IS VITAL TO GROWING YOUR BUSINESS.”

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For many years, these five reasons kept me in the field. Coupled with a small sense of guilt, even when I did find the opportunity to get away, I would always find myself back on the jobsite, leading installations.

(A small disclaimer: I still enjoy installing lights and occasionally I do get out there. When I do, I always try to do the hardest part of the job and my hope is to set the tone and speed of the installation.)

Finally, a couple years ago, it got to the point where I simply had too many responsibilities away from the field. I knew I would have to lean on my head installer, Josh, so I began to explain the vision I had for him as a production manager.

I didn’t just want him to head up the installations, I wanted him to get everyone going in the morning, look ahead for inventory concerns, manage the schedule, manage service calls, and make sure all our trucks were up-to-date on their maintenance. Basically, I needed him to handle everything that was going to take place in the field.

Although I had my initial concerns, I learned very quickly that having a capable production manager who was solely focused on installations was better than having me there with my focus split between what was going on with the installation and what was happening off the field. I also quickly realized that many of my initial concerns were unfounded and, in some cases, were simply holding back my production manager’s potential. My guilt at not being present on every installation went away, and I was very proud of how Josh was building and growing our company.

Having a production manager is vital to growing your business. If you are free to focus on bigger-picture items, like marketing and landing bigger jobs, it will help your business flourish.

THE FIVE KEYS TO DEVELOPING A PRODUCTION MANAGER

1. **Start planting seeds by discussing your vision with your team.** Vision and growth inspires people.

2. **Encourage your team to strive for consistent improvement.** That way, when an opportunity for advancement comes, the decision is easy.

3. **Look at the people you have.** Character is key. You need someone you can trust, even if they’re not necessarily the person that’s been with you the longest. If you don’t see someone in your organization, look around you for people that might fit the mold.

4. **Remember that managers don’t lead by observation, but by example.**

5. **Finally, look for someone that works hard, is organized, and can lead.** If you see potential, encourage and invest in them so they’re prepared for success in the position.

With a vision for growth and a reliable production manager, you can take your business and grow it like you wouldn’t believe.

- Patrick Harders, Co-Founder
Upcoming Programs: Sterling Rewards & Advisory Group

We’re already halfway through 2019, and it’s a good time to look ahead at some future programs our team is looking to implement in the third quarter of the year.

REWARDS PROGRAM
We couldn’t do what we do without your support, which is why we wanted to create a program that would benefit and reward our loyal customers. With Sterling’s new Rewards Program, you’ll be able to take advantage of all the value-added services we offer, in addition to receiving exclusive, quarterly rewards. We’ll have more information on this new program soon, so stay tuned!

ADVISORY GROUP
In tandem with our Rewards Program, we’re also excited to introduce our Advisory Group. We’re committed to designing and manufacturing the best low-voltage LED fixtures on the market, which is why we’ve always valued your feedback, suggestions, and ideas. With this new Advisory Board, we’re giving our customers an even bigger voice in our company to help us innovate and create new fixtures and programs to help you grow your business.

We’ll have more information on these programs—and more! To keep up-to-date with the latest on what we have going on at Sterling Lighting, be sure to follow us online:

- Facebook.com/SterlingLighting
- Instagram @SterlingLighting
- Twitter @SterlingLights
- LinkedIn.com/company/Sterling-Lighting

Fall 2019 illi Intensive Course

Registration is now open for the International Landscape Lighting Institute’s Fall Intensive Course!

This five-day Intensive Course will take place in Rio Verde, Arizona, from October 31st-November 5th.

Some members of the Sterling Lighting team attended last year’s course at the University of Oklahoma.

They enjoyed the opportunity to expand their knowledge of lighting design and industry advancements alongside other professionals who are passionate about elevating the landscape lighting industry through education and hands-on training.

Learn more and register at illiedu.org
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**CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS**
Open M-F 8:00am ET to 5:00pm ET
info@sllights.com
Email us 24/7, we are always eager to hear from our customers!

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**Book Rec:** How to Win Friends and Influence People

As business leaders, every day we must face the difficulties that arise from managing people and interacting with customers. For some, navigating these social interactions comes naturally. Others struggle. However, whether you find management easy or a challenge, Dale Carnegie’s “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” is a timeless classic for becoming a better leader in your workplace.

In my own lighting design and installation company, Enlightened Lighting, our management team is reading through this book together. We’ve found that the fundamental principles Carnegie establishes are still as applicable as ever, as the original book was published in 1936 and has timeless truths, alongside updates in recent, revised editions to reach a modern audience.

It’s one thing to have a vision for your company, but in order to be successful, it’s paramount that you have the ability to convince others of your vision—both your employees and your customers—in a winsome way. This book is a great tool to begin building the social and conversational skills you need to win friends, influence people, and grow your business.