



# Collaboration and Innovation

## Driving Continuous Improvement

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**Make it Better!**



# Change the Culture Change the Game

Roger Collins and Tom Smith



# Defining the GDOT Culture

- You can define your culture or your culture will define you.
- Today's success does not guarantee tomorrow's, it only ensures you knew how to do it today.
- To meet tomorrow's challenges we must continuously improve.





# Defining the GDOT Culture

- When are we at our best?

## Emergencies



- I-85 collapse and rebuild
- Inclement weather and natural disasters
- Started by looking at how our employees respond to emergency events
- What did we learn from those events?
  - Given a common goal employees work together to solve problems
  - Collaboration and Innovation are dynamic and critical
  - Employees make decisions and find solutions
  - Partnerships with external stakeholders play key roles



# Emergency Events as a Guide

- **Failure can be a cruel teacher, but a very effective one!**
  - Used to be primarily a GDOT maintenance response event
  - Created positions dedicated to Emergency Operations
  - Employees given time to think, collaborate and innovate
- Partnerships and collaboration were key
  - Now involves entire agency: maintenance, construction, HR, communications, procurement, accounting, etc.
  - Partnerships with other external resources
    - Other agencies (federal, state, local)
    - Other impacted states
    - Contractors, etc.
  - Incorporate dry runs, document lessons learned, strive for continuous improvement
  - **Big take away...Collaboration and Innovation work!**





# Emergency Events as a Guide

How can we do this at a sustainable level everyday?

Answer:

We rely on our greatest asset—our employees.



# Creating a GDOT Culture for the Future





# Empowering Employees

- Empowering employees is all about creating an environment where people are encouraged to try to find ways to “make it better.”
  - Not all ideas will work out – but there’s value in the journey
  - We want all employees to:
    - Be Guilty of Trying
  - Many solutions require cross-functional efforts, Collaboration
  - All must to be willing look at the big picture and not just within their office or division



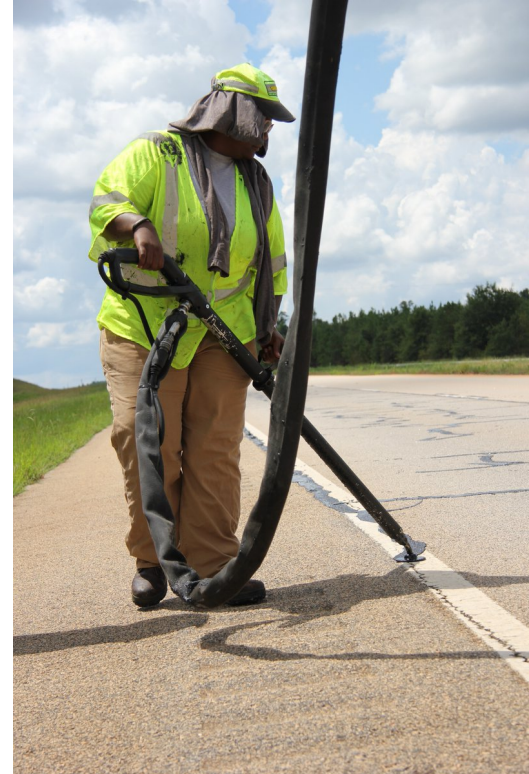
# Collaboration



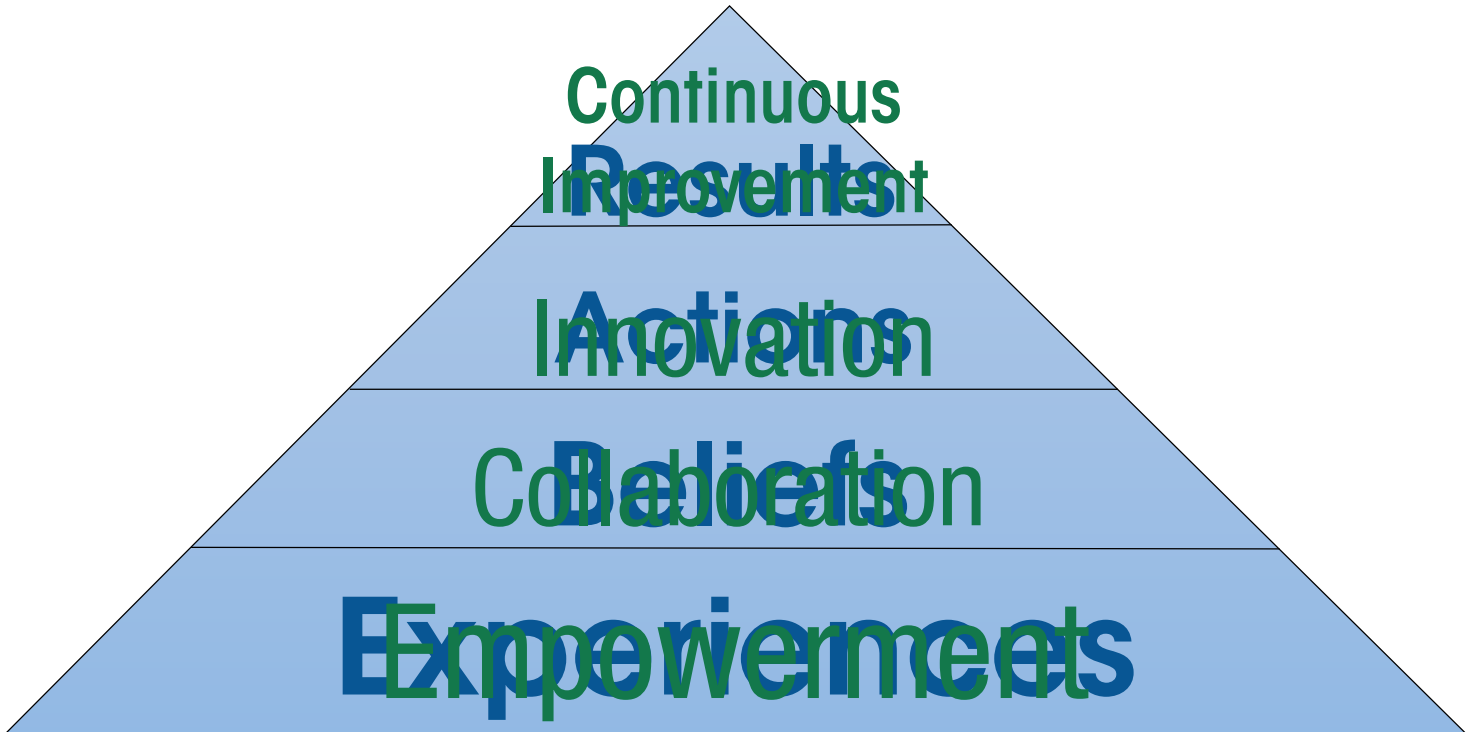
- Large organizations, including DOTs, often suffer from a “silo mentality”
- Identifying common goals and open communication at GDOT often lead to multi-office teams partnering to solve issues
- This extends to partners outside DOT
  - Federal, state and local partner agencies
  - Other State DOTs
  - Private sector

# Innovation

- Dispel the ideas:
  - “That’s how we’ve always done it”
  - “No need to reinvent the wheel”
  - “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”
- Guided towards developing innovative solutions to problems, not just being innovative for the sake of change
- Begin by asking simple questions:
  - Why?
  - What?
  - How?
- Strategic partnerships – internal and external to GDOT
- Finding “best practices” – even if outside organization



# GDOT Culture Pyramid





# Cultural Grapevine

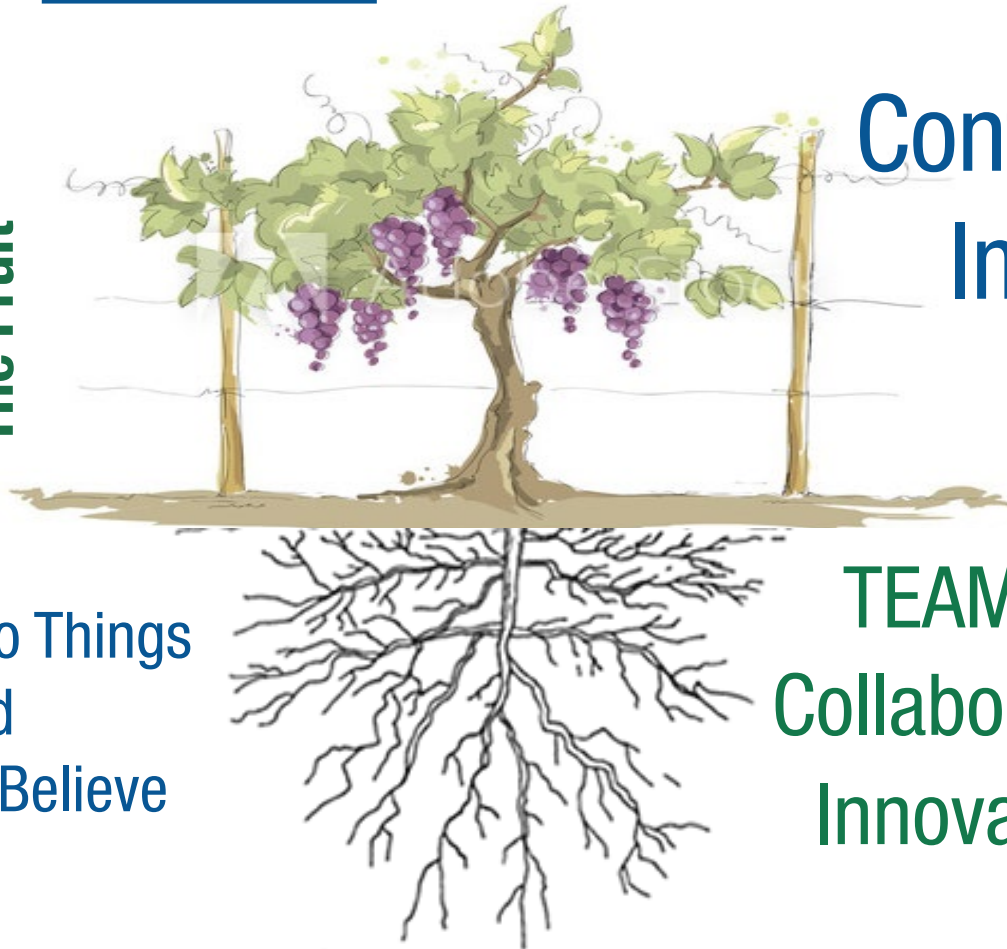
## What We Do

Produces  
↑  
The Fruit

Continuously  
Improve

How We Do Things  
and  
What We Believe

TEAM  
Collaborate  
Innovate



# A Culture of Collaboration and Innovation

## EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSES

- I-85 Rebuild and Northwest Corridor/I-75 Express Lanes
- Creation of new Interagency Office of Environmental Quality
- Revamped Maintenance Employee CDL and Employees Skills Development
- Deployed worlds longest continuously video monitored corridor on I-475 in Macon
- Developing “V2I” (Vehicle to Infrastructure) hardware and software by Traffic Operations
- GDOT Communications and Traffic Ops (TMC) support to city of Atlanta for SuperBowl 53.

# Culture at GDOT



- How do we celebrate our successes at GDOT?
- Celebrate “small wins” as well as major accomplishments
- Formal and informal recognition
  - Motivates employees to find more ways to “make it better”
  - Improves employee morale and retention

# The Role of Human Resources

- By its very nature, an organization's culture is centered around people
- HR's role in supporting these efforts
  - Starts with understanding where we are headed as an organization
  - Ensuring policies, practices and procedures are in line with culture
  - Encompasses all aspects of employment – from recruitment and onboarding through retirement
  - Engaging in workforce planning efforts

The image shows a stack of employment interview forms. The top form is titled "EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW" in large, bold, black letters. Below the title, there are several sections and checkboxes. On the left, under "DESIRED EMPLOYMENT", there are questions like "ARE YOU EMPLOYED NOW?", "EVER APPLIED TO THIS COMPANY BEFORE?", and "EVER WORKED FOR THIS COMPANY BEFORE?". On the right, there are checkboxes for "GENERAL INTERVIEW" and "PROMOTION INTERVIEW". At the bottom, there are checkboxes for "1st Interview" and "2nd Interview". The forms are slightly overlapping, and the background is a light beige color.



# The Role of Human Resources

- Partnerships with external resources
  - State Human Resources Administration
  - AASHTO – committee involvement and participation in national efforts
- Impact on employees
  - When an office/team/individual culture is aligned with organization
  - When an office/team/individual culture is out of alignment with organization
- Ensure managers and employees have resources to support organization's culture
  - Succession planning, knowledge transfer activities, training and development



# Innovative Succession Planning Knowledge Transfer Strategies

- Field Maintenance Staff
  - Bootcamp for new employees
  - CDL incentive program
- Civil Engineer Staff
  - Road Design's RAPID Program
  - PEDP
- Supervisor/Management Staff
  - Management Development Program
  - District Leadership Programs
  - Succession Planning Program
- Mentoring/Networking
  - GDOTConnect
  - Informal mentoring/job shadowing
- Traffic Operations
  - Innovative projects/ software development
    - AUDI
- In-House Academies
  - Foreman
  - Area Manager
  - Project Engineer

# Summary

- You can define your culture or your culture can define you
- Like the grapevine an organization's culture must be constantly nourished and looked after if it is to bear meaningful fruit
- GDOT's culture is one that drives continuous improvement by empowering our employees to collaborate with internal and external partners to find innovative ways to "make it better"



# Key Components

- 3 components critical to fostering a Culture of Innovation and Collaboration:
  - Empowering employees to come up with innovative solutions and encouraging collaborative efforts
  - Providing a system to capture and document ideas and solutions
    - Capture successes as well as lessons learned
  - Ensuring there is proper governance of ideas and solutions





# QUESTIONS?



***Building potential future employees:***

*Georgia DOT partners with Discovery Center at LEGOLAND Atlanta on I-85 Rebuild teaching opportunity for kids*