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Mr. Dale "Skipper" Branscum
Administrator, MOST Trust
753 State Avenue, Suite 800
Kansas City, KS 66101

Dear Mr. Branscum:

On behalf of Eddie Downs and myself, many thanks to MOST and Local One for inviting CB&I to participate in the new Boilermaker Code class this week in Chicago. Our class was led by John Skermont, Patrick Gallagher, and Tony Smarra, all of whom did a great job.

I cannot overstate how surprised and impressed I was with the program. The one-two combination of bold PowerPoint slides and unexpectedly frank [and well-made] videos led to a lot of candid discussions during our class. This was not an endurance test of boring, stodgy lectures – this was a class where everyone was engaged and participating in healthy debate and self-reflection.

The lesson plan videos included seasoned Boilermakers using very candid, colorful language (let's call it "journeyman prose") that detailed how, for the last 30 years or so, the Boilermakers have been their own worst enemy when it comes to losing market share, due, largely, to the bad attitudes and behaviors of a minority of the membership. Man hours are down significantly from 20 years ago and growth has been stifled. Owners and contractors are demanding a step change. There are some jobsites where Boilermakers have been unwelcome for so long no one on either side can remember the original reasons why anymore.

While the Code training program didn't discuss other trades, we all know the UA, IBEW, UBC, LIUNA, and other unions have members who have demonstrated much of the same bad traits, which have led to similar, self-destructive results. The Boilermakers, to their credit, are working to change that dynamic for themselves through the nationwide adoption and implementation of the Code.

I'm not naïve enough to think that a written Code or Creed, by itself, is going to suddenly reverse the long arc of declining market share for union Boilermakers. But the Code and Creed, if taken to heart and put into practice, point to a New Beginning. Who else has a union-developed corrective-action program that looks inward to start addressing its own problems instead of blaming non-union workers, union-hating owners, politicians, or others for the decline in market share. The Boilermakers have decided to stop playing the role of "victim" and to start, day-by-day, member-by-member, earning back the trust of the marketplace through deliberate changes to member behaviors and attitudes.

As the only non-Boilermaker in the classroom, I was made to feel welcome. My opinions were solicited and respected. I urge MOST to continue to invite the participation of other employer representatives like Eddie and me, as well as Owners/Clients to the program. We wish MOST and the Boilermakers Union every success with the rollout of the Code and Creed. We will be watching for the beneficial effects of its implementation on our jobsites.

Respectfully,

Patrick O'Connor
Labor Relations
CB&I