



Building Teamwork at Scale

How Center for Internal Change Helped Ryan Companies Strengthen Culture and Their Business

A success story featuring:



Everything DiSC® in Action

In commercial real estate and construction, project work is often complex and deadline driven, making team cohesion more than a ‘nice-to-have’—it’s imperative to business success. When teams grow quickly or span unfamiliar geographies, miscommunication has the potential to quickly turn from minor inconvenience to delay, conflict, and margin erosion, which jeopardizes business growth and the bottom line. Ryan Companies experienced this turning point when coming out of a period of rapid growth and market tension, which heightened the risk of misunderstandings across newly formed teams and new markets.

The Turning Point

Leaders at Ryan Companies identified a critical need: improve cohesion through deeper understanding and improved communication so teams could navigate conflict, align on decisions, and execute consistently. In collaboration with experts from Center for Internal Change, an Everything DiSC® Authorized Partner, leaders and internal facilitators seized the opportunity to form Team Excellence, a communication-focused team-building experience designed to improve team dynamics, relationships, expectations, and accountability. Powered by Everything DiSC®, Team Excellence started in 2021 and has been consistently used to improve teamwork and empower employees with the skills they need to collaborate effectively in a fast-paced and challenging industry.

“We experienced rapid growth, hiring quickly while our projects became more complex and demanding. Teams were formed from people across different regions and parts of the company who didn’t know each other, creating many dynamics at once,” says Erin O’Hara Meyer, Vice President of Learning and Development at Ryan Companies.

Why Everything DiSC®: A Shared Language for How We Work

With expert guidance from Center for Internal Change, leaders introduced Everything DiSC company wide to give employees a simple, shared language for understanding

their own and others’ behavioral styles. Adoption has been broad, with 1,600+ assessments completed, making DiSC® a natural backbone for Team Excellence. The program also integrates The Five Behaviors® model and the Checkpoint Team Survey to structure conversations around trust, healthy conflict, commitment, accountability, and results.

From the start, Center for Internal Change noted that the organization had all the pieces to make integrating Everything DiSC a success.

“I think Ryan has always had the values of family and respect and having fun. Those three things combined with DiSC® were a great fit. People were hungry to learn more,” says Jeannie Brill about her work with Ryan Companies as an Everything DiSC Facilitator and the ease with which they were able to integrate DiSC into their organization.

“I’ve believed in DiSC for over 30 years since being trained in it, and I still see its value today. It’s the right tool for Ryan because it fits our culture. It’s easy to understand, non-threatening, and not judgmental in how it helps people learn about themselves and others,” O’Hara Meyer says.

The Solution in Action

Center for Internal Change worked with the Certified Practitioners at Ryan Companies to facilitate Everything DiSC on Catalyst™ to intact project teams in order to strengthen their dynamics, which is imperative when working on such dynamic and complex projects with safety considerations and cross-functional teams. Using their DiSC style profiles, teams can surface tendencies and blind spots, explore how different styles prefer to communicate and make decisions, and build agreements for how they’ll handle conflict and accountability on the project. Activities like plotting team members on the DiSC map and style based breakouts make the concepts tangible and immediately usable on the job.

“Despite all the changes in technology, people haven’t really changed. From seasoned superintendents to Gen Z employees, everyone connects with it, they understand it, enjoy it, and have fun applying it within their teams. They even follow up with team-building sessions, which shows DiSC continues to prove its value,” says Sarah Dittmer, a Learning Specialist at Ryan Companies.

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-O'Hara Meyer

With help from Center for Internal Change, leaders also bring DiSC language to client partnering sessions so cross company collaborators can align on pace, communication preferences, and decision making approaches.

"The DiSC exercise allowed us to better understand how team members process information and approach work differently, some are fast-paced and action-oriented, while others are more cautious and methodical. Recognizing these differences helped us tailor our communication and collaboration strategies effectively," says Adam Burrington, National Director of Project Development at Ryan Companies.

"We always give our teams the team DiSC map. They appreciate the visual of that. They enjoy looking at it as a team and go, 'Oh yeah, that's our team for sure.' And then they have a good discussion around the fact that, 'Oh, we're heavy oriented in the D style. What does that mean for us?' It just sparks really good conversations," says O'Hara Meyer.

Center for Internal Change equipped Ryan Companies to facilitate Everything DiSC learning experiences that create those illuminating moments of insight that last long after the session is over.

Real-Life Impact

While many team building exercises provide a day of fun away from the work site, Center for Internal Change ensures that these valuable learning experiences provide ongoing return on investment. Participants can refer to DiSC insights on Catalyst™ repeatedly, guiding better and more effective interactions that improve productivity, teamwork, morale, and performance—not just once, but on every project.

"We hear people say, 'I love Catalyst! I go out there, I pull my comparison reports.' So, they're using it as a tool too. They're not just learning it in a room. They're actually using it," O'Hara Meyer says about the return-and-learn benefits of Everything DiSC on Catalyst.

In 2024, a team working on a large, complex multifamily project surfaced low scores in commitment and

accountability. Feedback cited role clarity issues, inconsistent processes, and a tendency to work in silos. This friction was creating undue stress and inefficiency, indicating a clear need for intervention.

Team leaders requested a Team Excellence session to address the brewing tension, and the session introduced the DiSC model. Through this experience, the team gained a practical framework to understand their diverse communication and work styles, while focusing on behaviors of successful teams: trust, healthy conflict, commitment, accountability, and collective results.



After the initial workshop, the team launched its own "book club" to deepen the work, reading Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and applying the concepts they learned directly in their daily work. By mid 2025, they proactively requested a second session; together, they anticipated likely conflicts, planned responses, and identified where strengths could become liabilities (e.g., high trust slipping into lack of oversight, accountability drifting into finger pointing). The result: accelerated delivery and improved results.

"Something that stood out to us was seeing each team member's style graphically plotted out on the DiSC wheel



to compare with the personal interactions the team had previously experienced up to that time,” says Michael Easter, Project Executive, speaking about how the DiSC map activity helped provide context for behaviors and tendencies until that point.

Ongoing Benefits: Culture, Retention, and the Bottom Line

Across major projects with \$60M+ budgets where teams completed Team Excellence, profit erosion held at 0%, far exceeding the company wide strategic goal of <5%. Post session data shows 93% of participants say the session helped build trust, and program feedback averages 4.5/5 with 94% favorable responses. By all accounts, Team Excellence powered by Everything DiSC has been a massive success.

Organization wide, Ryan Companies sustained a 6.0 score on the engagement item “The people I work with cooperate to get the job done,” above the 5.8 industry benchmark, showing the tangible benefits of investing in communication and team building experiences. Teams that participated also saw low turnover (0–4 departures per team in 2024), supporting project continuity.

Aside from the impressive statistical success of Team Excellence, interpersonal relationships are thriving. O’Hara Meyer shares, “I often have one-on-one conversations with managers or employees about workplace communication. Those discussions frequently lead to comments like, ‘I’m a D and they’re a C, and that’s probably what’s happening.’ The language has really taken hold. People recognize and value it as a way to better understand interpersonal dynamics. You see light bulbs go off.”

Ryan Companies’ investment in the Team Excellence program has clearly paid off. They have been named a **Minnesota Star Tribune Top Workplace** yearly since 2023 and received the **2025 Silver Brandon Hall Excellence Award recipient for Organizational Teamwork and Collaboration**, thanks in no small part to their ongoing commitment to learning and development.

Center for Internal Change Equipped Ryan Companies for Success

Center for Internal Change worked to empower Ryan Companies to evolve from DiSC users into true subject matter experts. By strategically integrating DiSC into their culture, Ryan Companies have transformed DiSC into a primary tool for solving complex workplace challenges and driving organizational development.

What began as a commitment to building internal expertise has evolved into something far greater: a true partnership between Ryan Companies and Center for Internal Change rooted in shared purpose and a belief that organizational growth is never a destination, but a continuous journey. By investing in certification, developing deep expertise the Catalyst platform, and stepping into the role of innovation partner, Ryan Companies has moved well beyond implementation. They have become architects of their own culture, equipped not just to use the tools of behavioral science, but to wield them with confidence, shape their future, and inspire the people around them to do the same.



**CENTER FOR
INTERNAL CHANGE**

A division of The TEAM Approach®

support@internalchange.com

(847) 259-0005

<https://internalchange.com>