

*From Oldcastle Building Solutions Post, July 3, 2018*

## **The Top 10 Ways You Can Benefit from the ACE Mentor Program**



We're not getting any younger. Our knees hurt and we're counting down the days and months to retirement. Plus, it's getting harder to find people who know the products and specs we do, climb the same ladders, do the same tasks, and maintain the same business relationships as we can.

With only three percent of "young" people interested in a career in construction, it's going to be interesting to see how the developers, general contractors, architects, manufacturers, and tradesmen of the world change the conversation about working in construction.

The ACE Mentor Program, which [we've written about before](#), guides high school students into the architecture-engineering-construction realm that we all passionately put our shoes on for every day.

ACE and programs like it offer solutions to our industry's pressing need to recruit and retain workers. However, getting involved through mentoring, volunteering, and donating – to just name a few ways – has its [benefits for all of us](#) professionally as well.

## Top 10 Ways to Benefit

### 1. Expand Your Network



From left to right: [Tom Gilbane, Jr.](#) (Gilbane Building), [Ray Rhees](#) (Building Solutions), and [Peter Davoren](#) (Turner Construction) at an ACE Mentor Program Board Meeting.

Whether you're mentoring, attending a pancake breakfast, or judging a design competition, there will be countless opportunities to meet face-to-face with customers and potential partners in your region.

### 2. Create Leads

While rubbing elbows with your industry counterparts, you might hear about a new product or trend, or more valuable information about upcoming contracts and bidding opportunities.

### 3. Build Relationships

Whether you volunteer on a committee or mentor students, working side-by-side with your peers can build relationships that you may call on days, months, or years down the road. This can be especially important in the age of digital disruption, where sometimes it seems easiest to send a text or email rather than meet someone face-to-face or over the phone.

75% of mentors say mentoring for ACE enabled them to extend their professional network.

#### **4. Stand Apart**

In the digital age, any chance you have to enhance your image or get labeled as an industry thought leader is crucial. Whether it's photos of employees volunteering, a tour of your plant, an awesome presentation, or public donations to scholarship programs, it all can set you apart from the competition.

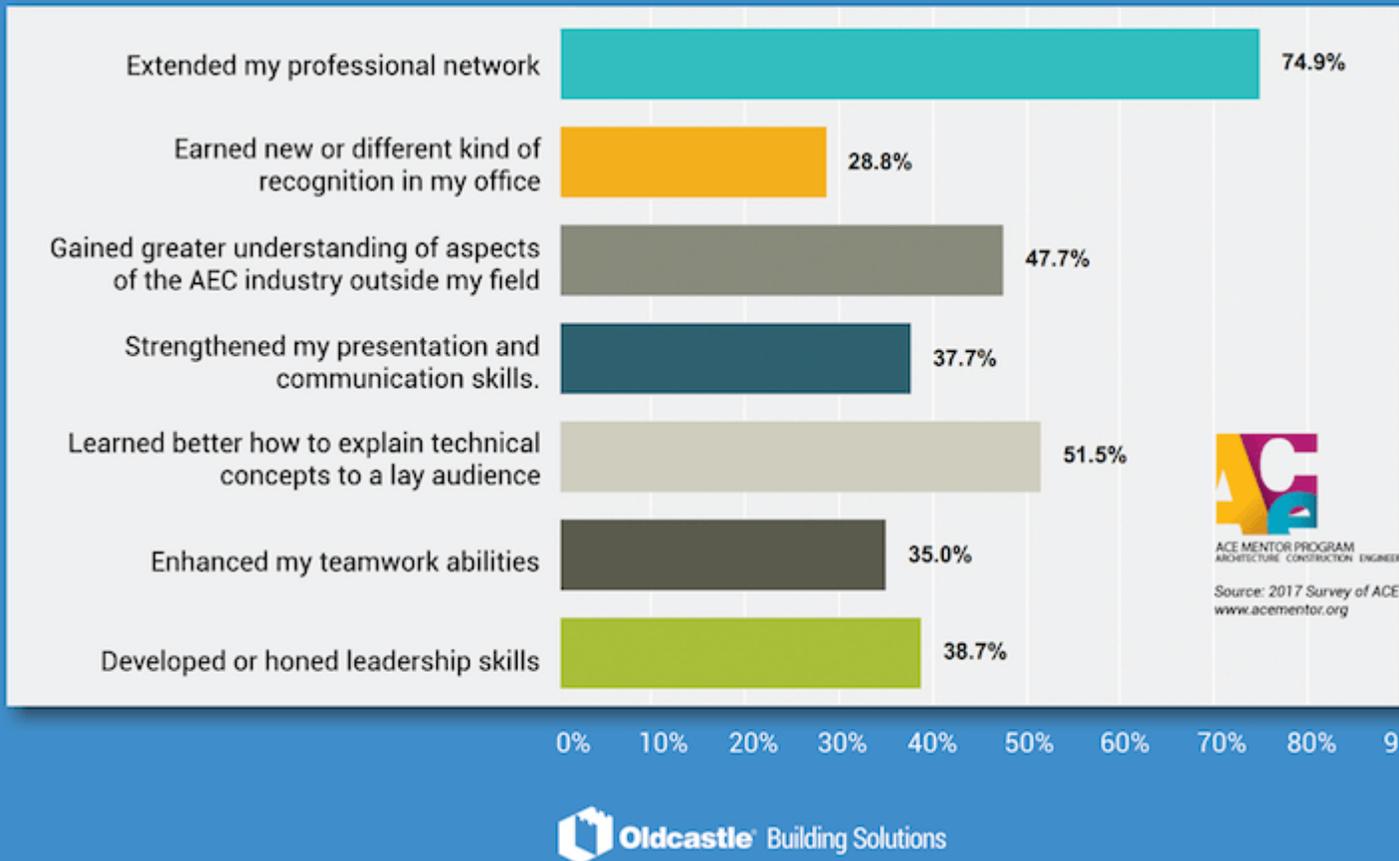
#### **5. Help the Industry Labor Shortage**

More than two-thirds of high school seniors who participate in the ACE Mentor Program will go on to college in an ACE field or enter a trade program. You can have the satisfaction of knowing that you're helping recruit the next generation of ACE professionals.

#### **6. Recruiting**

By being involved, you can connect your firm to talented and motivated part-time help, future student interns, and potential future employees.

## How have you benefited professionally from mentoring ACE students?



### 7. Broaden the Focus

Often, manufacturing isn't covered in basic architectural and engineering courses. As a manufacturer, you can give students visibility into how products are made, the costs of production, materials, and more.

### 8. Warm and Fuzzies

Helping kids is pretty rewarding and a quick way to feel good.

### 9. Be a Better Employee

It's easiest to practice your presentation and communication skills with people who aren't waiting on deadlines or doing your yearly review. Think of the students as a test group where you can practice explaining technical concepts to a lay audience. Additionally, by listening to

other industry experts, you can gain better understanding of aspects of the AEC industry outside of your field.

52% of volunteers learned better how to explain technical concepts to lay audience.

## **10. Future Business**

Even if an alumnus of the program moves across the country, he or she remembers the people and companies who invested in them during high school. They may be able to rely on a past manufacturer or architect, as examples, for a product to specify or when they need help on a project once they are young professionals in their new career.

A great first step to getting involved is to reach out to your local affiliate. You can visit the [ACE Mentor website](#) to do so.

[Learn More About Becoming Involved with ACE](#)