

Westgate Resorts Builds a Career Ladder That Drives 50+ Engineering Promotions



Key Successes:

- Promoted 50+ team members into new engineering roles.
- Reduced 90-day new-hire turnover by 12%.
- Standardized engineering training across 20+ resort properties.
- Established structured career pathways across five engineering role families.
- Onboarded 200 new team members to a consistent company-wide safety baseline.

About Westgate Resorts

Westgate Resorts is one of the largest privately held resort and timeshare companies in the United States, operating over 20 resort destinations nationwide. More than 450 engineering team members maintain the critical building systems that support guest operations across the company's portfolio, including HVAC, plumbing, electrical equipment, commercial kitchens, and pools.

Training Program Goals

- Deliver one consistent engineering learning experience across every resort property.
- Create a transparent career ladder spanning engineering role families.
- Base promotions on demonstrated competency rather than course completions alone.
- Build a sustainable pipeline of engineering talent from within.

Summary

- As Westgate Resorts expanded across more than 20 resort properties, engineering onboarding and technical development varied by location, creating inconsistent skills, role expectations, and career opportunities.
- To create one consistent learning experience company-wide, Westgate launched Engineer's Edge—a structured career ladder that combines Interplay Learning's video and 3D simulation-based training with hands-on competency verification.
- Every engineering team member begins with the same foundational safety curriculum before progressing through role-specific learning paths aligned to one of five engineering disciplines.
- Certified Field Trainers and managers verify real-world skills through hands-on observation checklists, ensuring employees demonstrate competency before advancing.
- Since launching in June 2025, Engineer's Edge has supported 50+ promotions, reduced 90-day new-hire turnover by 12%, and created a scalable framework for developing engineering talent from within.

Training Challenges

- Inconsistent engineering onboarding and technical development across resort properties.
- No shared framework for defining skills, competency or career progression.
- Limited opportunities to prepare team members for specialized or senior engineering roles.
- Growing demand for skilled trades talent amidst a national skills shortage and high industry turnover.

Building One Consistent Learning Experience

As Westgate's resort portfolio expanded, so did the challenge of developing engineering talent consistently across 20 properties. Rather than continuing to address workforce development at the property-level, Westgate partnered with Interplay Learning to build Engineer's Edge, a company-wide engineering development program that standardizes onboarding, technical training, competency validation, and career progression across all resorts.

Westgate's Learning and Development team curated Interplay's course library into a structured two-part program: Onboarding and Career Path. Onboarding establishes a common safety and engineering foundation for every new hire, creating a shared baseline of knowledge. Certified Field Trainers then verify that employees can apply those foundational skills through hands-on observation before advancing.

Career Path is where employees begin developing role-specific technical expertise and advance into more specialized or senior roles. Each engineering role follows a dedicated Career Path flow aligned to one of five engineering disciplines:

- Engineering Tech (I, II, III)
- Projects (I, II, III)
- Trades – HVAC (I, II, III)
- Trades – Electrician (I, II, III)
- Trades – Plumber (I, II, III)

Learn, Practice, Demonstrate, Advance

Through Interplay Learning's immersive 3D simulations and digital coursework, employees build skills in HVAC, electrical, plumbing, appliances, facilities maintenance, and professional development. Simulations reinforce technical concepts, build confidence in troubleshooting, and prepare learners to apply those skills in the field.

After each major skill category, learners complete manager-led competency evaluations before advancing. This learn, practice, demonstrate, and advance model ensures career progression is based on demonstrated performance, not course completion alone.

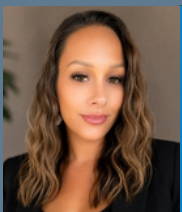
Employees progress at their own pace, making technical development accessible without requiring expensive outside schooling or formal apprenticeship programs. One engineering team member shared:

"This program has helped me understand how to be a more independent and proficient team member."

Career Path completion is a consideration in Westgate's promotion process, providing leaders with an objective way to evaluate demonstrated competency and employees with a transparent roadmap for career growth. The impact has already been evident at the property level. As one Resort Operations leader shared:

"Engineer's Edge helped us realize 15+ promotions in half a year from our Smoky Resort alone."

"Everyone's talking about the skilled trades shortage. We stopped talking and built a career ladder."



Stephanie Ketron

VP of L&D

Westgate Resorts

CASE STUDY:

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A Proven Pathway for Growing Talent

Since launching Engineers Edge, more than 200 new team members have completed standardized onboarding, 160 employees have completed at least one full Career Path level, and 44 additional learners have progressed beyond the halfway point of their assigned pathway.

The program has supported 50+ internal promotions, 10+ role-family transitions, and a 12% reduction in new-hire turnover during the first 90 days. By replacing fragmented property-level training with a single company-wide development framework, Westgate has created a scalable model for identifying promotion-ready talent and growing engineering expertise from within.

Today, every engineering team member, regardless of property, prior experience, or role, has equitable access to the same learning experience, performance expectations, and opportunity to build a long-term career at Westgate. Stephanie Ketron, Vice President of Learning and Development at Westgate Resorts, proudly explains:

“Our L&D team turned a real business problem into a program that’s changing people’s careers.”

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