

Hi everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about why diets don't work, why change is hard for contractors, and what we can learn from NASCAR. Okay? So, bringing all this together is going to be interesting. Don't forget about Boot Camp. Get your high potential people signed up ASAP. Contact Charlotte for more information.

I looked it up this morning. I Googled it. The weight loss industry in the US is valued at about \$160 billion a year, 160 billion with a B. Worldwide the weight loss industry is valued at about 723 billion, almost a trillion dollars a year. Three quarters of a trillion dollars a year goes into weight loss books, diet programs, what have you. Atkins, these are household names, Atkins, South Beach, Weight Watchers, all this. Stuff here we're in the first quarter of 2024, and I bet the resolutions, probably what? 50% of New Year's resolutions have to do with getting in shape or losing weight or something.

Anyway, the cycle. You make a news resolution, you go on a diet, and you maybe exercise some more, lose some weight, pat yourself on the back, say, "Man, that was great." You have a sigh of relief. You assume that the changes that you've made are permanent. You move on to the next thing in life, guess what? Weight comes back. You're right back where you started. Maybe even worse off. Who knows?

Generally, the reason that diets don't work is because people assume that the changes they've made are permanent and they're not. Now, what about this is important to you as a contractor? Well, contractors do the same thing. They find a problem, there's a problem in their organization or with a particular job. They put a full court press on it and bring their best people to bear and find a resolution to the problem. They breathe a sigh of relief, "Golly," and then run off to the next problem, and they fail to learn and examine what happened? How did we get in this fix? Why are we here? Sure, we solved the problem, but why did we allow the problem to manifest itself anyway? Same thing with diet. Same thing with contractors. These changes are not permanent.

I remember talking to a small contractor years ago, and on the surface, on the outside, they seemed very successful. They were getting high profile jobs. Their signs were all over town. Things looked really good for them, and I went and interviewed the owner and his son, and I was talking to them, and they said, "We have not made money in three years." I'm like, what's going on? They knew exactly what was happening. All of their jobs would come in pretty much on time, pretty much on budget, except jobs run by one particular project manager. Three years in a row, this project manager had lost enough money to suck the profit out of all of the other successful jobs the company was managing, and yet, that PM was still employed there. They had not taken corrective action. They had not gotten him additional training or whatever it is, whatever additional help, additional, an assistant, nothing, nothing.

They were just letting this problem go on and on and on and on. They needed to make a change, but they failed to do so because they weren't learning and examining their mistakes and putting proactive measures in place. When you make changes, diet, project manager, whatever, when you make changes, you've got to realize that the changes you make are not permanent. I heard this from a consultant a long time ago. Change is fragile and it must be protected. Change is fragile and it must be protected. If you're making a big change in your organization, you're using new estimating and project management software, you are really working on your culture, your mission, vision and values and all those things, whatever it is, you're making big changes in the company.

A senior executive, I read this a 100 years ago, a senior executive needs to spend about 50% of his or her business time looking after that change in order to make it permanent. Change isn't permanent by itself, it's fragile. Somebody's got to protect it. Somebody's got to shepherd that change through the organization for at least six months, 50% of an executive's time for about six months to get changes implemented. That's why 90, what is it? 90 something percent of corporate initiatives fail because executives, senior executives say, okay, we're going to do this, but then they don't invest themselves in making the change actually happen, and they don't protect the changes that they want to make.

Now NASCAR, so I'm watching a NASCAR race, and these cars are zooming around the track and it's very exciting, and they come into the pits, and they change the tires and they add fuel of course, but they clean the windshield so the driver can see. They adjust the track bar because they're communicating all the time on the radio. So, you say, I'm a little loose in this corner. I think I'm slipping in the right rear, so we're going to make this adjustment. So, what they're doing is they're communicating incredibly frequently and they're making preemptive changes. They're making little adjustments. They're making preemptive changes to get ahead of their problems because if the tires get really worn, they're going to lose speed, they're going to lose traction. So, they want to get ahead of these problems before they manifest themselves. What a great model. What a great model.

When you think about your company, think about NASCAR, what little changes, what little modifications can you be making to get ahead of problems before they become problems? What can you identify that's out on the horizon six months or a year from now that you need to address, and how can you get ahead of that curve?

So, three things. Recognize when you have recurring problems. Recognize when you have potential problems on the horizon. Second thing is anticipate the changes that you're going to need to make and design the changes. Small ones are better than big ones, and the third thing is protect the changes. Some senior executive has got to put time, love, and attention on those changes if you're going to make them permanent in your organization.

I'd like to hear what you think, when you've made changes in your shop, what's happened for good or bad? When you've had changes that didn't make it through what happened? And when you had changes that were successful, what happened in those cases? Please share with us in the comments.

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