

Hello everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI and *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about an unwelcome surprise and six things that you need. Okay? First, don't forget about Boot Camp February 9 and 10, 2023. As you listen to this, it's already over half full. Don't wait. Get your folks in there. Then we'll be announcing some other future Boot Camp classes in Charlotte, Dallas, Denver for 2023 just a little bit later.

Sunday, I'm playing tennis. I'm running for a shot, hit the brakes, part of me stops and part of me doesn't. I hear this awful tearing sound and that was it for me for the day. That's it for me for the next four months likely because I tore a quadriceps muscle. So, it was pretty bad. I got to ride in an ambulance, and it was kind of embarrassing. All those people were looking like what happened to that guy?

But it got me thinking. Could have been much worse, I'm sure. But I'm in the ER and then I'm at home and waiting for results from the MRI and all that stuff. So, I'm flat on my back. I'm just sitting around, not much to do, and I start to think about what if. My thoughts got pretty morbid pretty fast. I mean, I have to confess. I mean, it has an impact on all aspects of my life, but especially work. I was thinking about work. I got stuff to do. When am I going to do it? Oh my gosh, I've got surgery scheduled for this day. Holy moly.

What about this is important to you? Well, golly, a few years ago I had another health scare. Dennis had a health scare and had to have a heart bypass surgery. Now here this pops up and I'm just thinking, well, it happens to me and Dennis, it happens to all of our people here at FBI from time to time. It could happen to you too. We kind of think we're ready. But here I am now trying to scramble. Maybe I'm not as ready as I thought I was going to be.

So, Dennis said at our last strategic planning meeting, even though we're twice as big in terms of gross revenue as we were only five years ago and we have 40% more people, Dennis said, "We're still a very vulnerable organization." He's right. He's right. So, I don't want you to feel as vulnerable as we do.

So, what can you do about it? The morbid stuff. Okay. What if something more serious had happened? What if I'd had a heart issue or a cancer issue or something like that? What if it wasn't me that got injured? What about my wife? My poor wife is having to do all kinds of things for me she didn't plan on doing. But what if it was reversed? What if something had happened to Lisa and that I was the caregiver at home? So, I still couldn't get into work.

So, these are contingencies, but they're very real. Happen to all of us. So, there are three contingencies that you have to be prepared for. The first is, what if I live? Well, that's the best one. What if I live? And, what if I'm healthy? How are we going to execute our plans? Still at some point, we all have a shelf life. How am I going to exit the business? Who's going to take over? What does the plan say? What are the dates? What does the timeline look like?

The second thing, the second contingency is what if I can't work for weeks or months or longer? What happens then? Do we have a contingency plan for that? The third thing, of course, is what if I die? You've got to have a contingency plan for the worst of all outcomes. You get struck by lightning and boom, you're not around anymore.

Here's six things that I think everybody needs, every contractor needs, every businessperson needs. I think I've got them in order here. The first thing you need are people. If your construction company is still dependent on you to do business development, and to manage projects, and to hire and fire all the people and do all that stuff, you are very, very vulnerable indeed. You've got to have great people. We're blessed with a great team here, great COO. Just across the board really, really terrific people. I'm convinced if I got struck by lightning, the company would be maybe even better off. I mean, they all have more business experience than I do for the most part. So, you've got to have great people and having a great...

This brings me to my second point. You've got to have a great COO, general manager, second in charge, whatever you call it. You've really got to have a go-to person that if you can't show up for a day, or a month or a year, you've got to have a go-to person that can assume those responsibilities and lead the company.

Third thing, you've got to have a strategic plan. If you've got that framework, it almost makes... This sounds terrible. It almost makes the people interchangeable. If you've got the plan and you've got the framework and your business development person quits, okay, fine. You scramble, you do what you have to do in the short run. In the long run, you hire another BD person. Probably you're wiser and smarter than you were before. You might even get a better one and BD continues as a part of the plan. Say you lose your chief estimator, same thing. The plan, the framework, the outline, the guiding north star works for everyone and people... I know it sounds mercenary. People are components that you can put into the plan.

The fourth thing you need at the individual level, you need wills, trust, testamentary documents. In North Carolina, the rules may be different in your state, but when I go into surgery and I'm unconscious, my wife has the power, the right to make medical decisions. What if something goes wrong and they have to deliver some sort of extraordinary care? She can make those decisions. Your state may be different, but you need your attorney to put those plans in place for you.

The fifth thing, if you have multiple shareholders in your company and you do not have a 21st century buy sell agreement, shame on you. Let my phone ring, let me hear from you. Because by gosh, they're not all that complicated and if you don't have one, you are setting yourself up for heartache, misery, uncertainty, dealing with lawyers, all kinds of things. All kinds of rotten things. You've got to have a great buy sell agreement. If you have one shareholder besides yourself, as you look at this, who owns 1% you need a buy sell agreement. If you have 10 shareholders that own all kinds of different stuff, that contract needs to be cast iron and locked down.

The final thing is, again, on the personal side, you need to have a legacy plan. Letters to friends and family if you want that. A video. I know I recently saw a nice video, a series of videos actually, that someone had left behind. The people that mean something to you would like to know that they mean... Wait. Yeah, that means something to you would like to know that they're important. That's the way... When you're gone, you can't tell them. You can't hug them; you can't put your arm around them anymore. That's the way to leave a legacy, something tangible behind on a personal level.

So, what would you add to my short list of six things here? I'd like to hear from you in the comment section. Don't forget about Boot Camp and this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.