

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week, I want to talk about gratitude as a strategic advantage. I know it sounds cynical. I'll come to that in a minute. The idea came from the CEO network daily email that I get. This is actually from July of 2021. And they talked about attracting and retaining employees via gratitude, which struck me as being a really simple thing that we all should know, but we don't. Now what about this is important to you?

Golly, what's your number one headache these days? Is it not attracting and retaining your people? So, anything that you can do to gain an advantage in attracting and retaining people has got to be a benefit to you. Now, we're talking about gratitude here. It does sound cynical to say, "Oh, I'm going to have a gratitude-based business because it's an advantage to me to get more people." I hear it doesn't sound exactly right.

The key thing I think about gratitude, this will help strip the cynicism, is, it really has to be genuine. It has to be heartfelt, ideally in the moment. If you're trying to fake gratitude, there's an old saying, once you can fake sincerity, you've got it made. Obviously, it's a pretty cynical joke. You can't fake gratitude. It's got to be genuine and maybe you're not good at it. Maybe you're just so driven it doesn't resonate with you mentally, somehow. That's okay. Find people in your organization who are good at it and delegate to them that they should spread the cheer via gratitude in the company. Okay?

So, you're not going to believe these five statistics. I mean, they're really attention grabbers. It comes from a book called, *Leading With Gratitude* by Chester, Elton and Adrian Gostick and they say, "Gratitude is the most powerful retention tool." I think I might agree with that. Five stats that are just going to blow your mind.

Employees are five times more likely to feel valued if you express gratitude in your company. They're six times more likely to recommend your company to other potential hires. They are seven times more likely to stay with you for their entire careers if you express gratitude. And get this, they are 11 times more committed to the mission of the company in a gratitude-based organization. Think about that. I mean, that's really something.

Now, what can you do? Seven ideas here for how you can express gratitude. First thing is you can use technology. You can use emails and text. They help in the moment. So, technology, in some ways it limits us, but in other ways, it gives us great breadth and leverage, so technology, emails, text, whatever it takes, make sure you express gratitude in the moment.

The second thing is, write notes, write little notes. So, my peer group member and friend, Steve Anderson has these little note cards made up and it says, I appreciate somebody because they did this. So, I appreciate Neha because she films the blogs, and she gets them edited and published and out in time every time. And it's a nice little thing that it's a headache nobody else has to worry about.

The third thing. Why can't we have a Thanksgiving mindset every day? So, at our place, we have this Thanksgiving family tradition. We go around the table and we talk about one thing that we're thankful for. Why does that have to be relegated to only one day? Why can't we do it the other 364? Obviously, we can. So, have that Thanksgiving, what are you thankful for? What have people done for you that have made you feel special, that have made your job easier, that have made your life better? And express it to them.

The fourth thing is have an award system with nominations. You're not always there. You're not always seeing times and places where people deserve gratitude. So, ask for the people around you on your team to let you know when somebody is quite deserving of gratitude and an expression of thanks.

The fifth thing is encourage psychological safety. If you have the kind of construction company and Lord knows, there's a lot of them where they operate by exception. So, the company mostly specializes in butt kicking. In other words, you did something wrong, you screwed up, you were late, you were on schedule, you cost the company money and the tons of

bricks fall down on people. That's not the kind of organization where you can easily and freely express gratitude. So, you've got to encourage psychological safety in your company if you're going to make this reality. And you're going to gain all the benefits from it.

The sixth thing, start every meeting agenda, first thing on the agenda, with appreciations. What is that? I appreciate Karen because she did something nice. Or I appreciate John or Dennis, because they did something for me to make my job easier, my life better, whatever it is. So yeah, you have plenty of time to get down to business. You have plenty of time to get down and drill down into the specifics. Start every meeting in your written agendas with appreciations. It works. It sounds kind of nutty, but it works. I can tell you; we've been doing it for 15 or more years. It works.

And the seventh, and this is the most powerful thing. I was at my peer group meeting last week. And we talked about expressing appreciation and the number one way to do it, personalized thank you notes. So, find some note cards, get your company logo, print it on them, keep them on your desk, keep them in your briefcase. And when somebody does something nice, scribble out a thank you note right away, find the address, get it out to them. It is the simplest, easiest and most impactful thing that you can do. And you think about in today's world where all communication, it seems is electronic, getting a handwritten, stamped envelope in the mail that expresses someone's genuine appreciation is a special, special thing. That's a good tip.

All right. I went to a Center of Creative Leadership class years ago and they said gratitude is the most noble emotion. I've never researched it. I've never thought that that was incorrect in any way. And so, the more you can express gratitude in your organization, the better stronger your culture is going to be. And you'll see the ripple effects as other people in the organization begin to express their gratitude as well.

I'd like to hear what you're doing to have a gratitude-based organization. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.