

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with our legacy series, Digging Deeper.

I asked some folks, what I should talk about. And the thing that comes out of everybody's mouth is people. It's still all about people. And the market for people in construction is unbelievably tight and doesn't seem to be loosening up. And I hate to say it, I've got bad news for you. Even if we have a slight slowdown in this industry in the next year or two, which I don't expect too much of a slowdown, that's probably not going to change the dynamic that we have in people in construction, all right? People is the whole thing, our capabilities are tied to our people, and our success is tied to our people. There really are two issues, finding people and keeping people. If you keep people better, you'll have to find fewer, right? If you're not so good at keeping people, you're going to have to find more, so the two work together.

So, how do you keep people? It really comes down to how they feel. First of all, people on the outside are coming after your people. There is no place to hide any longer in construction. I don't care where, you could be in Northern North Dakota, 50 miles from the nearest town of 10,000 people, and there's still somebody coming for your people because the whole workforce has become mobile. And of course, national companies have spread throughout the United States, and they'll hire people from anywhere, and they're after your people. Search firms are after your people, they're calling your people, they're coming to get them. So, the number one lesson to know is very simple for retention, if your people are listening, you're going to lose them. Not everyone, of course, but if they're listening, when those calls come, if they're looking at ads or looking for where there's work, you're already 80% to the way to losing them.

Your job is to make sure they're not listening and they're not looking. All right? Why wouldn't they be listening? Why wouldn't they be looking? Because they're happy. And they're happy in all ways you could probably measure.

Pride: they have pride in the work they're doing, they have pride in the company they're working for, they have pride in the team they're working with. They feel good about where they work, they feel good about who they work with, which by the way, if you have some culture killers among your people, that's going to cause other people to possibly be looking as well. And they may be in manager roles, or they may be just coming up through the ranks, but make sure you don't have culture killers, because that's putting everyone else at risk.

Employees want to see that they have a good opportunity for the future, that the future's secure, that the company's secure, that you're communicating that, "We're cool, we're good. Oh, we have a tough economy coming. Don't worry, we're all set, we've got plans, and we're in good shape. We're going to be here for you. You have a positive future, and you have it with us."

Winning: being part of success, make sure you're sharing success. And by the way, success is not all the bottom line. Success can be an individual good project, it could be you just want a new customer, could be you just got a five out of five on your QA results, you could be just won a bid. All of those things are wins, and if you share those wins with your people, they feel better. They belong to something, they're part of something. So, pride and feeling good, being part of something, all of those, of course, are part of your culture.

If you have a good culture and your people feel that way, they're less likely to be looking and they're less likely to be listening, even if somebody's calling or trying to talk to them. So, those are important.

The other thing that's important is purpose. Make sure your company's purpose is clear and people have a clear purpose for their job, within that greater purpose, they know why they're working and what they're trying to accomplish. Make sure you've got training available. People do strive for mastery. They want to be good at what they do, so help them be good at what they do. Give them the support, give them the training, give them the coaching that they need to be better.

And they like autonomy. All right, so micromanagement, not good. People like autonomy. Give them the goals that they have for their position in their job, both in the big picture and even along on a regular basis, milestones that they need to

hit. Give them the resources they need. Then give them the autonomy to go out and achieve it. Purpose, mastery, and autonomy, the best motivators for your workers. All right, so that's how you keep people.

Now, finding people. I want to go back to something we talked about recently, which is differentiation. When you differentiate, you're not just differentiating your business to be able to get more business and more customers, you're differentiating your culture and working for you versus other businesses. So, how you differentiate for your employees, or the next employees is key to being able to draw people in.

First part of that is, if you have a great culture, the people that work for you are going to be your best salespeople. They're going to be your best cheerleaders. Even if somebody's coming to interview and they interview with three or four people, they're going to get a feel for, "Do people really like this company? Is this a good place to work?" And that comes from your people. So, they'll see the passion, enthusiasm, or the opposite side of those things if they don't exist. So, you differentiate with a good culture, you differentiate by, actually, if you're interviewing people, by sharing your values, sharing your mission, sharing your purpose so that people know that there's something more than just coming to do their transactional employment, eight to five, that this company's got something that they're really trying to achieve, that they're striving for. So, two things with people, finding and keeping, make sure you're working on both sides.

Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.