

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. Give us the benefit of your comments. We'd love to hear what you have to say about our blogs. Also, click on our social media icons. Thank you.

I want to talk this week about the secret to growing your business. Now, why is this important to you? Golly. I think that the secret, if it really is a secret and it's not, is probably something you know about and you think about and you care about, but you probably don't devote enough time and attention to it. So, I want to tell you a story and I think you'll relate to this story.

In January of this year, Dennis and I went to Seattle and we did a presentation for Payne West, which is an insurance agency in the Pacific northwest. They had a construction summit. They invited their construction companies to come and we did a couple of days of education. I sat at breakfast one morning with a fine man named Jeff Deswert from Kirby Nagelhout Construction in Oregon. I was really enthralled with his story. They've grown the company five times in less than 10 years. Wow. That is, I mean, that's explosive growth. So, my question is, as a consultant was, "Okay, Jeff, you've, you've managed to enjoy this wonderful growth, what gives? I mean, how did you do it?"

He really ... most people don't have an answer. They kind of sort of don't know how their growth happened. They know they grew, they know their revenue's much higher. They know they're more profitable, they know they have a different caliber of personnel on board now, but they really don't have a menu for how they did it. Jeff did. So that's what I want to relate to you. I think you can all empathize with this and you can see it and then we'll come to the secret at the end.

The first thing Jeff said is, "I know what I don't know," which, that's a sentiment you don't often hear from a CEO of a company that's grown 5X and less than 10 years. Right? Because those people read their own press clippings may be, and they start to think, "Hey, I'm a business genius. I've grown five times in less than 10 years and it's all because of me, me, me." He wasn't like that at all. He was very humble. Humility is a key piece of this equation.

The second thing he says, "I hire smarter people than me," and that's something I really believe in here. I know what you're thinking. You're saying "Wayne, the bar aint that high. It's easy for you to hire smarter people." Well, maybe not so easy with Jeff, but as an example, he had his associate, Henry Alaman was there. Henry came from a bigger company and was hired specifically to help Jeff engineer this growth, to control it, to manage it, to get the right people on the team, to get the right components in place, hiring smarter people. If you can hire people smarter than you, gosh, there's new talent, what you can accomplish. I thought that was wonderful.

The third thing that Jeff said was, "Culture runs the company." Wow. Okay, what's culture? Employee engagement, and they measure it. There's a, I forget what tool they use, but they do measure it. Accountability was a key piece of it. Then Jeff said these words, "bottom up buy-in." Everybody in the organization from ... it's not top-down imposed like, "I'm going to press this down on you," it's everybody from all parts of the company buying into these concepts.

I just thought that this. A great recipe. I know what I don't know, hire smarter people, and then culture runs the company. Construction or any other business, for example, is a people business. All businesses ultimately are people, businesses. But none of you, none of you watching this blog right now, started your business or came into your business or attempted to run your business because you wanted to manage people. Nobody ever ... I've asked people in audiences so many times, "Show of hands, who got into your business because you wanted to manage people?" Nobody ever raises their

hand. But the reality is if you're going to grow five x or you're going to grow 10 x, or you're going to grow 1.5 x, you're going to need people to make it happen.

In today's world, if you want people, you have to create the culture that will attract them. You can engineer the culture. Kirby Nagelhout has done that as a company, and that allows them to attract the people, that has allowed them to grow in a very short time, five times.

So, I'd like to hear what you're doing to grow. What are you doing to change and shape or engineer your culture? What are the things you're putting into place so that you can be a bigger and better company tomorrow?

This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.