

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

This week, I want to talk about the thorny issue of legacy employees. We'll define that term in a minute. Our members are growing. Their volume is growing. Their employee engagement is growing, their IT capacities. They're just growing in so many different ways. And growth presents challenges. So, what about this is important to you? Well, we all have legacy employees. Any of us that have been around for a while do. And my observation, both with me at FBI and with so many of our members is that we wait too long to take necessary actions with legacy employees. This idea for a blog came from an article in the CEO Network, which is a very worthwhile daily newsletter that you can take online.

So, let's define legacy employees, okay? Legacy employees were once key team members, they helped you get where you are now, and they have a long tenure with you. So those three things mean that there's a lot of emotional connection subject to the legacy employees. And it makes it harder to make decisions when you're embroiled in emotion, doesn't it? So, what I'm going to suggest with legacy employees is do what Steven Covey says and begin with the end in mind. The first thing is look at your strategic plan. What? You don't have one? You've got to have one. Dennis and I preach about this all the time. It's probably the most important tool that you can have for long run success as a contractor. But look at your plan and think about where you're going according to plan. And then ask four questions with respect to your legacy employees.

Number one, does this person have the skills and energy necessary to help us get to the next level? Number two, what if I had an entire team like this legacy employee? What would that do for me? Or what would that prevent me from doing? Number three, what if this person walked in tomorrow and quit? 12 months from now, would I be better off or worse off? And for the acid test question, would you enthusiastically rehire this person today in his or her current role? That is the most important of the four questions.

And you think about that. You think about, oh, today I'm a hundred-million-dollar heavy civil contractor, but in five years, our ambition is to be a \$200 million contractor. Well, running a company that's twice as big as the company you currently run requires different skills, different talents, all kinds of different things. And if you can't say, "I would enthusiastically rehire that person right now today, as I look out over the next five years," then that really is a point that you have to reckon with.

So now if your legacy employee, as you analyze these four questions, doesn't really fit in your future. That doesn't mean you have to fire them. That doesn't mean they have to become persona non grata. They could teach and mentor young people. They can provide a ton of value and knowledge transfer from them to the people that are going to succeed them in their jobs. And they can help onboard new people because they're familiar with the culture and all those kinds of things. So, all of that history and knowledge and experience that they have is really valuable, but you may need to tap into it in a way different from what they're doing today and have them adjust their roles.

So, we'd like to know, in the comments, what tools and tactics have you used to successfully retrain your legacy employees so that they add value versus holding you back from achieving the goals that you want to in your future. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.