

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

This week I want to talk about *Trillion Dollar Coach*. It's a book about Bill Campbell, it's quite a tribute really, it's written by Eric Schmidt, Jonathan Rosenberg, and Alan Eagle. Eric Schmidt, you may remember CEO of Google, that's kind of a big deal. So, for these successful guys to write a book about someone who was a coach to them is really remarkable and really quite a tribute.

So, what about this is important to you? Well, let me just read from the forward. To be a great manager you have to be a great coach. After all, the higher you climb, the more your success depends on making other people successful. I mean, that is a remarkable statement, but it's true, isn't it? As you move up in the construction world, as you get promotions and enter into leadership, it's less and less about the things you do and more and more about the things you can inspire other people to do for the team and for the company. So that I thought was really tremendous.

Who is this cat, Bill Campbell? Bill Campbell was sports nut, he wasn't a big guy, but ended up playing on the offensive line at Columbia University, graduated in 1962. Stayed on and got a master's degree in 1964. Then Boston College said, "Come on up and be our assistant coach." So, he did that in 1964. And Columbia asked him to come back in 1974 to be their head coach. So, Columbia's not exactly a football powerhouse, it wasn't then, it isn't now. And he had a bit of a struggle, he thought as hard as he tried and as good a coach as he might have been, you still need talent. And that was the problem with a program like that. They couldn't really get the football players that they needed.

So, he actually worked so hard, he worked himself from the hospital because of exhaustion. But at age 39, he realized he probably topped out as a football coach at Columbia. And that was 1979 and he decided to go out to what he called the wild west. He just thought that a 39-year-old guy, he'd been a football coach or coach most of his life, probably would do better with a fresh start out west. So, he ended up with an advertising agency and ultimately with Apple. And he was responsible ... he and his team were responsible for that famous 1984 Super Bowl Ad featuring sort of ... not featuring. But based on some of the behaviors in the book, 1984 by George Orwell. And it probably is the most famous Super Bowl Ad of all time. If you're too young to remember it, as many of you are, just YouTube 1984 Super Bowl Ad and it'll pop right up.

In 1994 at age 60, he was asked to be ... now that was at age 54. He was asked to be the CEO of Intuit. Pretty impressive. He stayed on until 2000. In 2001, a big really successive venture capital firm brought him on as a coach for their growing entrepreneurial stable of companies. And ultimately one of those companies became Google. So, if you think about it, this guy had tenures at Apple, Intuit and Google three of the most successful IT companies of all time. So, what made him successful? Why is he considered a trillion-dollar coach? Well, just those three companies alone, he helped create well over a trillion dollars in market capital.

But what made him successful as a coach? What made him so valued as a human being that these people would write a book to tell his story? Well, he apparently was a very warm guy, he was a hugger. And not just a friendly pat on the back, apparently, he was a bear hugger. And he was genuine, people thought he was really genuine. And he was really ... as you might expect from a former football coach, he was really profane. Which he thought gave him a competitive advantage because he thought it helped with his genuineness. Even though he had been the CEO of a really successful company, he wanted people to think of him as just another guy. And he thought the profanity was actually advantaged to do that.

He emphasized community and the way he defined community was that people put aside their individual differences to obsess over what's good for the company. Think about that. Obsess over what's good for the company. So, if we're going to aspire, we're going to grow our companies, we're going to be significant people. We have to put ourselves aside for the benefit of something bigger than us as individuals, don't we? He said the best coaches make good teams, great. And there may be some evidence to support that.

So, what can we glean? What's in it for us? How can we bring this back to our companies and construction companies? So, he had six tips that sort of, I think we can extract pretty easily, and it would help us. He said, "The path to success is to form high performing teams and give them the resources and freedom to do great things. An essential component of high performing teams is a leader who is both a savvy manager and a caring coach." Now you've heard many times that there's a difference between a manager and a leader. Manager and a coach. And Bill Campbell didn't necessarily believe that; he thought that you ... and sometimes you had to manage and sometimes you had to lead or coach. So that's an interesting departure from the conventional business wisdom, isn't it?

All right, so here are the six tips. First, start your meetings with thank yous. Get personal first, that was a big part of who he was as a person and what made him so successful. A quick anecdote, one time in the interest of efficiency we decided to shorten our peer group meetings. And generally, on the first night, there's no real formal business agenda, we just get together for social, dinner and social. So, we eliminated that. We said we'd get together the first night, but we're going to go ahead into the meeting room, and we'll have dinner, we'll have a working dinner.

It was a disaster. Those groups, there were new groups with which we tried it. There was so little chemistry. And we could contrast that with the existing groups that we had in place, where we always, as a piece of the tradition, had the first night social. The elimination of that social was a flop. Those groups were never nearly as functional as the groups that we allowed to start with the personal. So, I think he's brilliant in that respect. And as you've heard me and Dennis talk about before, we always start our meetings with appreciation. So, it's about people first. Plenty of time to get to the business aspect later.

The second thing, you've got to make your people feel valued. And he gave six specific tips for doing that. Active listening was the first thing, we're not always great listeners as leaders. Paying attention, you can't actively listen if you're not paying attention. Free your people, remove the friction from their jobs and their interactions, free them up to do the things they're capable of doing. Give them the right tools, that's the fourth one. Fifth, encourage them, grow the people, inspire them to go onward and upward. And the sixth and final thing is, think about their wellbeing. That's a big term. Wellbeing is a lot more than just how they're feeling about the company, how they're doing in their job. It's their life, it's their family, it's their home life, it's what they do outside of work. So, focus on people's wellbeing, not just, ah, you're getting the job done or not. Okay.

All right, third tip. My wife used to hate this when I did it. Use the Socratic approach. Don't tell people, ask people questions. Now my wife had been exposed to the Socratic approach in law school, that's the way a lot of law school professors do their jobs. And I thought it was more effective raising children, instead of saying, "Go clean your room." "What are you going to do today?" Oh, well. "What do you think chores might be good to help your mom?" I didn't want to tell them what to do, I wanted them to come to conclusions on their own. And I thought it was a way to help mature. It's a good business practice. Socratic approach, don't tell, ask. It just works better in my opinion.

The fourth thing, recognize your job as the leader. Your job is to help other people in your organization be more effective. And Bill Campbell thought that one plus one can be greater than two. That's what he was trying to get at there, grow your people, and then help them grow, prosper and do better in their jobs. The fifth thing, this was a technique that he used for managing people. Have them come in and put five words on a whiteboard or have them come in with five words prepared. Five words, not sentences, not paragraphs, not books, words. And that will help you assess how they're investing their time and how they're prioritizing themselves and their jobs. So those five words, it could be trouble, it could be project, that will help you ascertain how they're prioritizing their energy, their time and where they're focusing their attention.

And the sixth thing that he said is that "peers are the most valuable evaluators." You've heard us talk about 360-degree reviews for leaders and things like that. Peers are the most valuable evaluators. Now I've just come from my peer group

meeting. And obviously we run peer groups and I believe a thousand percent that peers are the most valuable evaluators. He said that peer relationships are critical. So, six tips from Bill Campbell, The Trillion Dollar Coach. Maybe we can be \$200,000 coaches or \$1.7 million coaches, I don't know.

But let me hear from you. What has worked for you in your construction company in terms of coaching people, helping people rise and get to the next level? Maybe there's an inspirational tale you can tell of someone that you gave freedom and room to. And they not only hit the targets, they exceeded them. So, we'd like to hear from you. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI and *We Build Better Contractors*.