

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. As always, thank you. Click on the social media and give us the benefit of your comments below, and also don't forget about Boot Camp. The second spring Boot Camp is April 15th, so if you haven't signed up your next generation high potential people yet, do that. We appreciate it. All right, thank you.

This week I want to talk about a question. What's your leadership style? This is pretty embarrassing to talk about really. So, we were in an interview with a prospective employee, and she looked at me and she said, "What's your leadership style?" and my mouth hung open. I'd never had that question before, and it didn't occur to me that I needed to be prepared. My COO, John, leaped into the breach and came up with some sort of rambling, semi-coherent answer, but after the meeting I was like, "What? What was that all about?"

But it's a perfectly valid question. I mean, I don't think of myself that way. I'm like a lot of you. I started the business knowing very little and I kind of learned through trial and error and learned along the way, and I just consider myself on a team of equals. But the reality is that, as our former secretary of state in North Carolina used to say, I'm the oldest rat in the barn, and so I've been around the longest and for better or for worse, people look at me as the leader, and they look at you that way too. It is the reality. You may not think of yourself that way anymore than I did, but it is the reality in your organization. People look to you for leadership and it's a perfectly valid question. What is your leadership style?

So, I've been thinking about it for the two or three years since that young person asked me the question, and I still don't have a very good answer, but I do have a way to hold it up to the mirror. So, my answer now is to talk about our culture. Now there's a great book, *The Culture of Success* by Steven J. Anderson. He's a peer group member of ours. I know you're sick of me talking about our peer group, but it's such a powerful tool for building your wealth of knowledge and your inventory of tools and just collaborating with other gifted business people.

So, Steve wrote this book several years ago and I recommended it in a blog three years ago. I recommend it again now, *The Culture of Success*, and he defines success, let me make sure I get this exactly right. It's a combination of beliefs, values, attitudes, and resulting behaviors in an organization. Then he gives kind of like a secondary definition a few pages later which is even better. It's simpler, I think. It's how we treat each other. It's what it's like to be one of us. That's our culture, how we treat each other and what it's like to be one of us. The other point he makes in this book is that culture happens either by design or default. If you're not actively working on and shaping your culture, you still have a culture. It might just be one that you really don't care to have. So big appreciation for Steve, really got me thinking more and more about culture.

So how do I answer the question, how do I talk about culture? Well, we defined it. We defined it here. I'll give you a really simple exercise, one that we use that you can use to help define your culture too. Now when I say we defined it, I don't mean I defined it. I don't mean this was a top down, "Hey everybody, this is our culture and you live by this." That is the backwards way to do it in my opinion.

What I did was I just asked everybody, this is again a simple exercise, give me 10 adjectives that you would use to describe FBI's company culture. It was really kind of easy because there was a great deal of overlap. Maybe six, seven, eight of the 10 descriptors overlapped. There were some that used fun and humor and lighthearted sort of interchangeably, so it was really kind of easy to come up with our 10. So, we put them on a whiteboard and had a meeting, and everybody just kind of said, "Hey, we can combine these and this," and we came up with a list of 10. I didn't do it. I didn't do it. I facilitated some of the discussion, but this wasn't a top down Wayne says you have to do this. This was a bottom up, everybody

participating in a very fun exercise. What are your 10 adjectives that you would use to describe your company culture? There it is.

And so, I feel really good about it because I think it's a reflection from everyone here that says this is what it's like to be one of us. This is how we treat each other in FBI's culture. So, I think it's a really accurate reflection, again a mirror image of what we've put together, unintentionally or not, what we put together as a culture, and culture ultimately is a reflection of your leadership style.

It's been a long time now, but I've worked in other organizations. My son works in an organization now, the culture is miserable. I mean, it reflects the CEO in this particular organization. He's a hard charger, very demanding, Vince Lombardi type, kicks people in the butt, never says thank you, never says good job, never a pat on the back, nothing like that. It's a very thankless organization, and you know what rolls downhill in organizations. Leadership is the same way. So, your culture in your company, the culture here at FBI, the culture at my son's company is a reflection of that leadership style.

So, I'd like to know if you have... This is a question for everybody, all our subscribers, what measures do you use to evaluate your culture? What tools? What exercises? Please give us the benefit in your comments for my benefit and for the benefit of all our subscribers. Thanks very much. This is Wayne Rivers.