

Hi everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI where *We Build Better Contractors*. This week I want to ask the question, “When?” Before I do that, before I get into it, Boot Camp is coming up February 9th and 10th, 2023 here in Raleigh. About half the seats are already sold up, so please don't hesitate. Go ahead and get your folks signed up now and block off that space for them. And we thank you for that.

So, this is a book review. The book is called, *When*, by Daniel Pink, and the subtitle is, *The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*. So more on that later. According to the Oxford University Press, the most common noun in the English language is time. And I don't have to tell contractors about the importance of time.

But let's consider this, if you were going into the hospital, would you go to a hospital where there's a three times greater likelihood that you're going to get a fatal dose of anesthesia, or that you're more likely to die within 48 hours of surgery? Or gastroenterologists find fewer polyps, so that means more cancer patients. Or the doctors are 26% more likely to prescribe unnecessary drugs, or the doctors and nurses are 10% less likely to wash their hands, would you go into a hospital that you knew those statistics about? Well, of course you wouldn't. That's not a real hospital, but it is real statistical fact that these occasions happen across hospitals during a certain period of time. And Pink talks about that in the book extensively.

Now, if that applies to physicians and nurses and hospitals, does it apply to construction companies? Are there certain times of the day when construction professionals, construction workers are more productive and less productive? And the answer is universally, yes. Okay? So that's what's important about to you. What I want to get to is a couple tips for how you can make your teams more effective and times during the day when you can expect your teams to be less effective.

So, there's a pattern to people's days. So positive effects. Positive effects are active engagement, feeling hopeful about the day. Positive effects rise in the morning. They plummet after lunch, and they begin to rise again between four and 5:00 PM. And this just isn't Wayne or Neha, this is the majority of people. In fact, it's about two thirds of people. Now, there's another about 20% of people that they refer to as night owls that this pattern doesn't apply. But you can expect, if you look at your workforce, about two thirds of the people have this rise in the morning, plummet in the afternoon, come back up in the early, late afternoon, early evening hours. Pink writes that it explains 20% of the variance and cognitive undertakings. What that means is, if you give school kids a math test in the morning and you give another class of school kids the same test in the afternoon, the afternoon kids, on an average, are going to do worse.

Again, that applies to construction workers, right? If it applies to school kids, it applies to construction workers. Now, there are these night owls that do really well, and when they talk about this pattern, they talk about the midpoint of sleep. So, most of us are getting our deepest sleep around 2, 3, 4 AM and then gradually wake up at five or six or seven or whatever, and that's kind of normal. Night owls are people that have their best sleep much, much later than the rest of us. But it also turns out that night owls tend to be the most creative people. So, if you do have night owls in your group and they don't like showing up for work at 7:30, they'd like to come in at 9:30. Keep in mind, they might be your very most creative people, so don't just discard their preferences.

So, two things that I want to talk about in terms of construction, people, productivity, and the first thing is breaks. They talk about the value and the importance of breaks. Now, if construction is a very head down, get your work done, by God, you got to make it happen industry. But they said that the best workers, the most productive workers have a pattern of 52 minutes on, 17 minutes off. 52 on, 17 off. If you think about the army marching people, they work, they march, they move for 50 minutes, they always have a 10-minute break. Not a perfect 52, 17, but you get the point, right? The second part, the second key element to breaks is move. Taking a break and sitting in your chair is not nearly as effective as getting

up and walking around. The third piece is social. Being with other people on your breaks is better than taking a loan break where you just walk around the office.

The fourth thing is, outside is better than inside. So, you take a break, you move, you're walking, you're walking with other people. Ideally, you're doing it outside. I think in Japan they refer to them as nature baths, but the value of getting outside has a unique name in Japan. And then the fifth tip to an effective break is be detached. If you're outside, you're walking, you're with other people in the company and you're taking a break from work. If you're checking your email or you're checking your texts or you're worrying about getting back for this meeting, you're not detached. So, the more you can detach from the task you were on at work, it will actually make you better and more productive when you come back to the task. Okay? The second thing about work is the most important meal of the day. We all think, "Ah, it's breakfast."

Pink says it's not. Pink says it's lunch, and there's some rules about lunch. He said 62% of people in the workplace take lunch at their desks, and he refers to them as the sad lunch. I mean, that's kind of harsh, but still, you get the point. So again, the importance of lunch, detach from the office, get out of the office, even if you just go out to your car and drive to a park and have lunch there, by gosh, that's better than do it in the office. The second piece of it, for lunch breaks, to work effectively, employees have to feel autonomous about the time they take lunch. Where do they go for lunch and who they go with. So, if you say lunch is from 12 to one, by gosh, well that may not fit with all your people. So those are the two key lunch imperatives.

And then the second, they said, in fact, CBRE, this giant real estate company we've probably all heard of, they banned at desk lunches. They were so moved by this fact. They said nobody can eat lunch in the office. Now, that might be a little heavy handed too, but at the same time, you see if a big company like that, that we kind of all know and have some respect for, "Hey, no lunch in the office." That's it. He talked also about the importance of endings. Everybody knows in a construction project, as you get closer to the end, to the deadline, its hurry, hurry, and rush. But he talked about, this is not just in construction, it's across all kinds. NFL teams score more when? At the close of the first half and at the end of the game. Now, if you ask me, I would say they scored more points at the very end of the game, the two minute drill, it's actually, they score twice as many points prior to halftime as they do at the end of the game.

I was actually pretty shocked by that. But again, the importance of deadline. And he also talked about nines. People at nines. 29, 39, 49, 59 years of age. A huge proportion of marathoners are niners, 29, et cetera. In other words, you're getting ready, it's a deadline, your decade is getting ready to expire. So that's the time at which, and so you would think there'd be a normal age distribution for marathoners, but there's not. It's 49, almost half are niners. And I thought that was a remarkable thing. So that's the deadline too, right? The change of a decade is a deadline. So let me read very quickly the way he closes out the book, because I think what he realized in his research will also have an impact on you.

I used to believe in ignoring the ways of the day. Now, I believe in surfing them. I used to believe that lunch breaks naps and taking walks were niceties. Now, I believe they're necessities. I used to believe the best way to overcome a bad start at work, at school, or at home was to shake it off and move on. Now, I believe the better approach is to start again or start over.

I used to believe that midpoints didn't matter. Now I believe that midpoints illustrate something fundamental about how people behave and how the world works. I used to believe in the value of happy endings. Now I believe that the power of endings rests not in their unmitigated sunniness, but in their poignancy and meaning. I used to believe that synchronizing with others was merely a mechanical process. Now, I believe it requires a sense of belonging, rewards a sense of purpose, and reveals a part of our nature.

So having read this, I have a totally new appreciation for the rhythm of the day for myself and for the others on the team. And I think you'll have one too. So, I'd like to hear what you think. If you read the book or maybe you've read it already,

let us know in the comments what you think. What's worked for you in terms of scheduling and organizing your folks for more and better productivity? This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.