Hi everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at Performance Construction Advisors, where *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about how you can add value, but in a little bit different context. How can you add value for your employees? Something to think about. This comes from an Entrepreneur magazine article, May of '23 by Robert Finley, and he asked two really good thought provoking questions. Number one, what makes a workplace viable? Wow, that's kind of interesting. And the second thing is, what keeps employees engaged, happy, and productive? And his answer to those two questions is value.

So, we talk all the time about, you've heard Dennis and me talk about the experience economy and creating meaningful experiences for your customers, but why can't we ask the same question about employees? How can we create meaningful experiences in the context of working for this company or under this roof?

Doesn't that make sense? I'm embarrassed, I haven't thought about this before, but this article really got to me. So, Finley says in this article that quote, "A self-respecting employee will not tolerate a poor work environment, community dissonance or dismissive bosses." So, you know people hate bad bosses, and that's why they quit their jobs. And community dissonance, I think he's talking about the lack of culture, the lack of congruence around values and other things in the organization. And he's right, and he starts off with self-respecting. In other words, people who are good employees, people who are great respect themselves, and they won't put themselves into an organization where mediocrity and poor performance is tolerated. They know they have choices, and they'll go, and what does that mean? If you lose those top performers, you're stuck with what? A bunch of mediocre performers, sure, to make your life harder and more complicated in the context of running a construction company, right.

So, you want to emphasize a culture that emphasizes wellbeing and fulfillment among your team members. You've heard Mike Flentje and others in Boot Camp say over and over, you cannot motivate people. You cannot motivate your team members or employees. And I agree with that a thousand percent, I've always believed it. Mike says you can inspire them, you can inspire them, and you can get more of their marginal performance. You can raise the level of their marginal performance through inspiration, not motivation. People are motivated personally, internally by things we may or may not understand, but they can be inspired.

Okay, 10 tips for how to add value to your employees from Robert Finley. Number one, you got to have above average compensation and benefits. I don't see how anybody proposes to get top shelf, world-class employees by going on the cheap. I know there's contractors that say, "Hey, our base salary's a little low, but we make it up in bonuses." Well, bonuses don't always happen. I think in today's world, you've got to expect that you need to be near the top of the wage scale to get the right people on your bus to make that bus go effectively. So that's kind of a given. What was I reading recently about a company that pays triple? That's not right. They pay 30%. I forget there was a three in there somewhere. They pay 30% above the prevailing wages in their area because they've found that one terrific employee can do the work of three average employees. So, they're willing to pay 130% of the base, but that's still cheaper than 300%. If they had three people, they'd be paying 300% of that number. They can get away with 130 or 150 or whatever it was percent and have great people. Something to think about.

All right, second thing, what can you do for your employees? We're always thinking about when you go in retail stores, back in the day, they would say, "Oh, what can I do for you? How can I help you?" Why not ask the same question in the context of your employees. It makes perfect sense. What can you do for them to make the workplace better, to make the culture better, the atmosphere better, the camaraderie better, all those kinds of things.

Third thing, and I think we fall down on this quite a bit, listen, listen to your folks. Listen to their input. Listen to their suggestions. Give them opportunities to help you make decisions. We have a very egalitarian culture at PCA, and I think it helps because, number one, I don't always have the best ideas. Some of the things I come up with are pretty hair brained. But if you're listening to the other folks, we have some smart people here, and listening to the other folks is paramount to our success.

Number four, put relationships first between you and your employees and among your employees. Emphasize the personal and the home and all that kind of, those aspects, I think make a difference.

Number five, open and transparent communications. I remember we worked with a family business ages ago, and they had quarterly family meetings on the state of the business, but then we got into that horrible economy in 2009 and 10 and all that stuff, and they quit having the meetings. I was like, oh my gosh, just when you need the meetings, the most, things are bad. In the absence of real information, people make up their own information. That's how rumors and gossip get started. So, oh my gosh, open, transparent communications are more important in challenging times than they are in good times. That's for sure.

Number six, training and tools. Boot Camp, for example. Boot Camp is in Denver in August and Raleigh in October. Investing in your rising leaders and putting them in Boot Camp sends a message that you care about them, and you care about their professional development. So, get the training and tools that your people need to be successful.

Number seven, work on your culture. Your culture is a living, breathing thing. What's the definition of culture? So, Steve Anderson, my peer wrote ages ago in his book, *The Culture of Success,* the best definition of culture, and it was simply culture is the way we treat each other on our shared journey. I think that's about as good as I've ever heard. It's the way we treat each other on our shared journey. That's your company culture. Work on it. It's a thing. It's a thing.

Number eight, fair constructive feedback. Two-way feedback, right. Let that feedback come to you as the leader, as well as giving feedback to other people.

Recognition. We talk about this all the time. I know you're tired of me talking about it in our videos, but appreciations. We start every meeting, the first thing on the agenda is appreciations. I appreciate that someone did this above and beyond the call of duty, and somebody did me a small kindness and the little things add up. So, provide recognition and appreciations whenever you can. It makes a difference.

And then number 10, and this is kind of reality in today's world, anyway, this has almost been forced upon us, but flexible work schedules. Why not? Why not let your people... People are smart, they're motivated, they're ambitious. Why not give them some flexibility to take the children to the doctor or have an extra-long weekend day off or something like that? Flexible work schedule. So, I guess what we're challenging here, this author, Robert Finley and me, what we're challenging you to do is to rethink the experience economy from the perspective of your team members.

So, I'd like to from you in the comments, what do you think? These are the 10 things that Finley suggested. What are you doing to create wonderful experiences for your employees, and how do you add value? This is Wayne Rivers at PCA, Performance Construction Advisors, where *We Build Better Contractors.*