

Hello everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute and the CEO Roundtable Program for Contractors. Thanks to tuning in today as we dig deeper.

So the last few weeks, we've been talking about a couple of companies we witnessed in our spring roundtable meetings that had truly great cultures, and trying to establish for you maybe a pathway or a connection for you to be able to establish or sustain a great culture yourself.

So, one of the other things I noticed with these great cultures is that people really understood the why. Not just the why of the company itself, its sort of mission and vision, but the why of their role within the company. What's important in their job that connects all the way to the company's why, which maybe building great stuff, taking care of customers, those sorts of things.

So, I just wanted to give a few examples and allow you to think about as you look down in your organization. Do each of your people really understand the why of the company and their connection to the why?

So, a few things that I've seen out there. A receptionist. You think, "All right. What's the connection here?" Well, think about it, anybody that either comes into that building or calls into that building, first of all, getting greeted with a smile or even if they're coming in over the phone, feelings like they're being greeted with a smile. Courtesy, attentiveness, all of those things make an impact on making people feel like they're getting a better experience in life and a better experience from your company.

We have one client that instead of receptionist, actually terms that position as director of first impressions. I thought what a great way to connect the why to that position through the title of the position itself. If you just thought of a receptionist as the director of first impressions, well that can have a great impact on how they approach their job and how people see the company from that first impression.

Let's look at a couple of other positions. Accounts payable clerk. Well, that sounds sort of drudgery. Every day I'm the clerk that goes through accounts payable, logs them in, makes sure people get paid. Good deal. Well, how does that connect to the why of the company? Well, first of all, obviously your subcontractor and supplier relationships are key to the success of your company. So how people are dealt with regard to payments going back and forth and bills coming in and that sort of stuff has a lot to do with those relationships. Those people getting paid well, paid accurately, paid on time certainly relates back to the relationship you're going to have with those folks, and ultimately that relates back to having the best team on a job working together, people collaborating and getting jobs done well.

So instead of that AP person being an impediment to a supplier or sub getting paid, think about them enabling. There's a lot of paperwork that has to be done. Well, if that person takes the responsibility to make sure all their subs and suppliers have those things done, make it easy for them to get done, gets to them before their payment gets delayed to get it done, then people get paid on time. They don't have to be making phone calls back and forth. "Where's my money?" Et cetera. Everybody's happy, and again, relationships are better.

Let's think about the client team, the team that's out there on the project working to get the project done. Well, what's their why? Well, their why is pretty simple. They're trying to deliver a great construction project, but probably more so one of their core purposes is to provide trust and assurance to their customer. Just think about this if your customer, if you're a trade, your customer maybe the GC or the end customer. But if your customer can go home at night knowing that you've got it, they can sleep well knowing you've got it. Well, maybe that's your ultimate why. That's your ultimate purpose that you do your job well enough that the people you work with don't have to worry about you. They can worry about some other problems they have because they know you've got it.

All right. Now let's go to a project manager. One of the great visuals that I've seen and one of my clients actually has a streetlight in their conference room with the red, yellow, green light changing things. The theory there is the project manager keeps all the lights... Well, let me start with the superintendent. Superintendent drives the bus, and the project manager keeps all the lights green. What that means simply is they keep all the materials, supply, contracts, everything, submittals, everything that needs to be done so that the job can continue to progress nonstop. That's really the project manager's job, to keep the lights green. So maybe that's the purpose for the project manager is to keep those lights green.

Let's move to the superintendent. What's the superintendent's why? Well, as I think down deeper in that, the superintendent's job is really to create success for all the teams that they're coordinating and overseeing. If all of those teams have success and all of those people can be productive, provide quality, have safety, that's really how you define success for all the people working on that construction site. Quality, production, safety. The superintendent is really an organizer or enabler of all of that quality, production, and safety. So, I think that's their why is to produce success for all the teams working on that job site.

Now finally and last, what's the why for the CEO, for the leader of the company? Well, maybe you haven't thought of that lately, but to drive it down to just the few things, number one, it's your job to provide the vision. I mentioned last week the clarity for the company, where you're going. Number two, it's your job to steer the ship, and you don't always steer the ship in calm water or calm seas. You got to steer the ship in good times and in bad. Then finally, it's your job to set the stage for success for your teams, all the way down through the company, to provide the resources, direction, support that they need to be successful.

Ultimately, going back to this truly great culture we're trying to establish, again, it's the CEO's job to really, really care.

So hopefully you've heard the last three weeks, and this week will help sort of put a bow on it. But if you want to have a great culture, provide that caring, smart, strong decision making, calm leadership, make sure the heart of the company is in the field and that you've got culture-builders. Number three, reinforce your values constantly, daily across your whole company. Then number four, make sure everybody understands the why.

Again, Dennis Engelbrecht digging deeper. Good luck out there.