

Hi everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about nine attributes of successful leaders. This comes from a column written by the former facilitator from my peer group, Arianna Campbell, who's with Boomer Consulting. And Arianna was a terrific facilitator. She's so talented and I love this article. She actually came up with seven attributes of a transformative leader. I added a couple more, but she talks about, okay, well, what's the definition of transformational leaders? Well, first they push boundaries. They challenge norms, they build cultures, they manage complexity, they take risks, and they drive change in their organizations. Transformation equals change. So, what about this is important to you? Well, golly, are you not managing risk? Are you not experiencing change in your organization or among your customers or trade partners or technology or something? I mean, all of this applies to pretty much everyone in our viewing audience.

So, the first thing is visionary. Transformative leaders have to be visionaries. Do we need to go into depth on that? I think it kind of speaks for itself.

Second, visionary leaders need to understand what their competitive advantage is in the marketplace. What's your back in the day, we used to call it the unique selling proposition, the USP, Unique Selling Proposition. And let me tell you something. It ain't quality. It is not quality because pretty much any contractor in your market can pave a road or bore a tunnel or build a big box store or something to an acceptable degree of quality. That if it can be canceled out that easily, it's not quality. Your unique selling proposition has got to be something else. I think contractors and any business people really try to be all things to all people. They think everybody's their customers. They're not. Figure out what unique strengths and niches you can exploit. That's the wrong word. You can take advantage of. That's the wrong word too. But you know what I'm saying. Where are your unique strengths? Where are your unique niches where you can add value, can deliver things better than the competition?

The third thing, transformed leaders seek out feedback. They listen. That is so difficult sometimes for us to do, and they also seek internal and external feedback. So obviously internal is important, which is more important. I could argue either way, right? Both are very, very important.

The fourth quality is of course they listen. They know that great ideas can come from any place, any person, at any time. And so, they listen to what's out there. They allow other people to have airtime versus instead of talking all the time. They take the time to listen to other people.

The fifth quality, I love this one. I think Arianna was very clever with this one. They diffuse trauma. In our organizations today, it's so important to have psychological safety. And if there's all kinds of drama and intrigue and gossip and things going on in the organization, that's just a recipe for an unraveling culture. So, these leaders, transformative leaders, try to snuff out uncertainty. They want to create a clear pathway for their organizations and their people that they can see. I guess it's a part of transparency in the organization.

Sixth quality. They encourage other people to lead. There's all kinds of situational leaders. So, if I'm the leader at FBI on a given day and I walk out into the parking lot and someone has had an accident and there are EMTs on the scene, well, am I the leader of that situation? Absolutely not. I'm taking a backseat to those people who are the professionals that know their job. So, understand that there are opportunities for other people in your organization, your trade partners, et cetera, to lead in some situations. You don't have to be the go-to all the time.

And the seventh thing is they hold others accountable. I think they also hold themselves accountable. Transformative leaders, they coach people. I was talking to one of our guys today and he was talking about his experiences at Belfour Beatty, which of course is a huge international construction firm. And he was talking about the big companies in general, travelers, you name it, the big companies and people who rise to senior management levels in those companies are trained to coach leadership out of other people in the organization. I think it's very true. I think it's less true probably in our smaller

and mid-sized companies, but it's something to aspire to. Coaching and leading other people to find their great strengths and their capabilities and their careers.

Now, what are the other two attributes that we added? First, transformational leaders attract and retain great talent. You can't do it by yourself. You've got to build an outstanding team. And then of course, once you've attracted those people, you got to keep them on board. And the final thing is they inspire people. I don't think people can be motivated. I think most people are self-motivated. What you can do, however, is inspire that last little bit of discretionary effort. Mike talks about this in bootcamp all the time. How can leaders inspire everyone? If I'm going to come in, I feel like it's a 50% day or 67.5% day, how can I as a leader extract that last little bit of discretionary effort from that person so they deliver their max each day and rise to the level of their capabilities?

So, I'd like to hear from you, what are your thoughts on what it takes to be a transformational leader? These are nine points. Maybe you can give us a few more. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.