

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

This week I want to talk about six ways to improve your employees' well-being. I think the very idea that we're producing this vlog says a lot about the advancements in the construction industry in the last 34 years that I've been involved. I can't imagine even 15 years ago, 10 years ago, talking about employee well-being. When we think about construction, employees get to work on Monday and work super hard and work harder on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. I mean, that's kind of the way the expectation always was in the old days, but that's just not realistic with today's stresses, today's employees, today's workplace, today's challenges. It's just not possible to do it anymore.

So, this article was inspired by an article in Forbes in January of '23 by a person named Tracy Brower. So now what about this is important to you? Here's a fascinating statistic from this article. For 70% of workers, their managers have more impact on their lives than their doctors and their therapists. Managers have just as much psychological impact on workers, for 70% of workers, as spouses, significant others, partners. Think about that. Good managers, terrific. Okay, that's great. Good managers have positive influence. But there's a lot of bad managers out there. And I think if you evaluate your managers in your company, there's probably some things that you'd like people to change to make them better managers.

So how do you encourage positive impacts from your managers versus negative impacts from your managers?

So, six tips. Here's some more stats from Tracy Brower. 43% of employees report they're exhausted. 78% say that stress has a negative impact on their lives. 71% says that work stress has a negative impact on their lives. And 64% say that work detracts from their overall well-being. So that's not encouraging. And those are just for business. Now, would construction numbers be higher, lower? I don't know, but I mean, construction is very much a hurry up, what have you done for me lately business. The numbers for construction might be even higher.

Okay, what are the six tips? The first thing is recognize your impact. A third of employees say that their managers are blind when it comes to this kind of impact on their well-being over time. Just ask people, "How are you doing? What do you need? What resources can we help you with so that you'll be better able to do your job? How are things at home?" What's wrong with asking about that? Nothing in the world. Show people that you care. Just recognize the impact. Ask a few questions.

The second thing, manage yourself. People listen to what you say, but they really, really, really observe what you do. So if you're in there working 60 to 80 hours a week and you're stressed and pulling your hair out all the time and bags under your eyes and never going to the gym and eating at your desk, you just hurriedly jamming down some food at your desk, that sends a signal to your people. People pay attention to what you do way more than the things that you say.

Third, give your people a reason to care. Connect them to your company mission. I've had some discussions recently with people about their missions. I made that offer; send me your missions and I'll help you evaluate. That didn't turn out so well for some people. Those missions really, really needed a lot of thought. And to their credit, they were willing to invest in that kind of thinking. But develop your mission, build on it, refine it, work on it all the time, and then connect your people to your mission by talking about it. What's the big picture? Where are we going? Where are we headed? What does it mean to be an employee at XYZ construction company?

Number four, be accessible to your people. Connect to everybody that's in your organization laterally. And I think even more, encourage collaboration. We've gotten some great feedback here recently from our consultants, not because we encourage collaboration so much, although I think we do, they've just reached out to each other for some help, a little tweak on this or that. And it's been tremendous both for the receiver of that information, but also for the givers of the information.

Number five, provide challenges for people in the workplace. I think people in the workplace are kind of like restaurants. If you've ever been in a restaurant and you're the only diner there, the service is usually pretty bad. And then on the other side of that coin, if they're super busy and there's a line and every table is filled, service can also be pretty crappy. So restaurants have this bell-shaped curve, and when they're this busy, this right here, not this busy or this busy, but this busy, they perform at their most efficient pace. And your workplace is probably like that too. Each employee in the workplace has that sweet spot. So, you want to make sure you challenge people in their sweet spots. Don't give them too much. Don't give them too little. Make sure that they're challenged and check in with them.

And then the final thing is give your people choices. The more autonomy, the more decision-making they perceive that they bring to their positions, the better they're going to feel about that. Everybody hates micromanagement. Everybody hates that. And yet, it's still so common in the workplace. So, give your people choices. Be as flexible as you can and allow them to make their own decisions about their own pacing and their own work and how they get things done. As long as they get them done, do you really care about the style? Don't you care mostly about the results?

Okay, so those are the six tips. Let's hear from you. What are you doing to encourage your employees' well-being? And don't forget about Boot Camp. The last Boot Camp of '23 is coming up November in Raleigh. Get your folks signed up right away. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.