

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI and *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about three tips for keeping your mission front and center. Before I start on that don't forget about our next Boot Camp class, November 3rd and 4th in Dallas. We're about half full but still plenty of room so go ahead and sign up your high potential folks for our next bootcamp, and we appreciate that.

This comes from an article by a woman named Shalini Rao, who is a partner at Generation Investment Management. And she talks about how as companies get bigger and scale up how much harder it is to keep mission front and center. Startups and very small businesses, it's kind of easy because the owner or the founder is around, the senior leaders are around all the time and so we can sort of almost by osmosis keep the mission front and center. But as the company grows to 15 and 50 and 500 employees it becomes much, much harder. So, growth creates lots and lots of challenges and keeping mission is certainly one of them.

So, what about keeping mission front and center is important to you? Well Deloitte says that mission driven companies have 40% higher retention and 30% higher levels of innovation. I mean, that kind of speaks for itself. They grow faster, attract better talent, and retain better talent than non-mission focused companies. So that right there ought to have your attention.

So Shalini Rao prescribes three things for keeping your mission front and center.

The first thing is focus on the how. Companies that are mission centered focus on not just outcomes but how they achieve the outcomes. And it's very common in construction for people to say that they have mission focused companies. And then when you really drill down, they may have a value of teamwork or whatever it happens to be, and you really drill down, and you find that they've got a lot of people who are on board that are rough around the edges let's say. And as Dennis has said in some of his blogs the culture of any organization is shaped by the worst behavior leaders are willing to tolerate. So, if you claim on the one hand that you're a values driven company and then you've got people in your employee that don't really adhere to those values that speaks quite loudly. And as we know actions speak louder than words.

The second thing, make onboarding count. When new people come on board you really need to make the first week, if not longer, a very special experience. These people are investing sometimes their lives in you, and to bring somebody on board and to just treat it willy nilly, oh, we'll get to it when we can, that sends all the wrong messages.

I spoke in a previous blog about my son. The hiring process was first class, really well done, and then he was supposed to go to Charlotte for onboarding and it was a mess. Postponed, last minute changes, people not showing up to do the things they said they were going to do. It was a mess and it really caused me to wonder about this company, which has a great reputation, how good are they really? So, onboarding is really, really important. And you want to treat those people in their first week or longer, you want to treat them to an immersion in the mission and vision and values of the company. That's when you have the best opportunity to really make that part of what that employee experience is in your company. Treat onboarding like a project, you guys are great at managing projects, here's another one for you.

The third thing, build your culture like a product. Culture usually happens by default in companies, whether it's good or bad, it usually happens by default. Sometimes you get it right, but you do have a chance to engineer your culture. If you treat it like a product or a project you can define it, you can ask your people how do you see the culture? How do you describe the culture? How do you think we're doing in terms of building our culture? Ask for bottom-up assistance. Too many times in construction things start at the top and you try to cram them down into your organization. Start at the bottom, create a wave from the bottom and let it come bottom up, and I think you'll get more traction when you're talking about non-construction things. These are nebulous things, mission, vision, values. They're not the kind of concrete objects

that we like to be able to get our minds and our hands around. So, start at the bottom, let these ideas bubble up and you'll have much more traction with getting them done.

And the final point with respect to building culture like a product or a project is measure it. Find some commercial tool, do a survey, do something, measure your culture from time to time so you make sure that you're going in the right, not the wrong direction.

So, we'd like to hear in the comments what are you doing? How are you keeping your mission front and center? How are you getting the values into the hearts and minds of your people successfully? And let us hear from you there. Don't forget about Boot Camp in November. And this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.