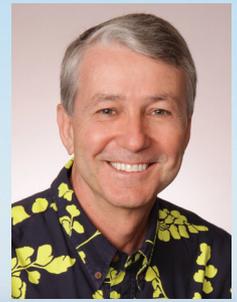




Staying Competitive WITHOUT WORKING 80-HOUR WEEKS

BY GARRETT J. SULLIVAN



Do you find yourself at the end of a week wondering why you ever became a contractor in the first place? Are you constantly stressed about your company even when you're not physically there? Are your personal relationships strained by the amount of time and attention you devote to your business?

If you're like most hardworking contractors, you've answered yes to at least one of these questions. As a result, I have news for you – your life is out of balance.

Contractors often work around the clock without ever stopping to consider why. For some, it's a fear of failure. For others, it's the desire to earn money. Wanting to be successful is a good thing, but society has blown it out of proportion. Modern society tells us that anyone with a lot of money is wealthy. I disagree.

Wealth is not solely about money. Instead, it's about having a balanced life. It's having financial resources as well as a healthy mind and body. It's the ability to decide what you want to do each day – not doing what you have to do.

Ready for a change? Follow the steps below and you will live a better life within six months.

• Create a Five-Year Vision

Imagine you've just awakened. The calendar reads March 15, 2017. Now, tell me this: What is your life like? What is your company's total revenue and net profit? How many employees do you have? What kinds of jobs are you building? Are

you the general contractor for the biggest project on Oahu or are you languishing along trying to stay in business?

How many workers do you envision when you visit your 2017 jobsite? What do your financial statements say, line by line? Are you a best-in-class contractor? Are you planning any travels with your family? Remember, if you don't specifically decide upon – and record in writing – your vision, you'll awaken in 2017 in exactly the same place you are now.

Be specific in your vision and don't stop at your business. Envision your family, your home, your car, and your post-work activities. Write out what your day will look like. The more you write, the better.

• Identify Your Goals

Identify five to six business objectives to accomplish in 2012 that will bring you closer to this vision. They should be clear, concise, quantifiable and regularly reviewed. You may not achieve all of them, but you will constantly be reviewing your road map to bring you to your vision. These objectives serve as the basis for your one-year business plan. Each year, you update that plan.

• Prepare a Strategic Plan

A strategic plan spells out the long-term actions needed to achieve your vision. Where do you begin? Honestly assess yourself and your team's strengths and weaknesses as well as any external threats to your company. There are many templates out there for

strategic plans, but the important thing is to clearly identify what you're trying to achieve and your strategy for getting there.

• Review and Make Adjustments

Your objectives may change slightly over the years, so take time each month to review and adjust them accordingly. Have your employees join you for the company-specific goals and let them set their own visions as well.

• Stay Healthy

This is an often-overlooked component of a successful life vision. You play a big role in your health by the choices you make. Are you eating properly, exercising, limiting alcohol and getting proper rest? A good plan includes a personal section for you to benchmark your health and other pursuits.

• Simplify

Make a conscious effort to downsize. Do you really need that next job, new gadget, tee time, Vegas trip, etc.? Carefully weigh whether to commit to taking on new endeavors – even if it's bidding a job. Be deliberate and scale back your commitments so you can focus on the activities you most enjoy while giving yourself regular down time. When you're not rushing around, you think more clearly and creatively.

• Be Patient

Yesterday is gone, but you still have the present. Life often throws curveballs, but have patience with yourself and others. Don't sweat the small irritations. As they say, live today (within reason) as though it were your last. One day, it surely will be. **BI**

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