

Are You a Builder or a Destroyer?

A railroad crew was working in the hot August sun replacing railroad ties and adjusting tracks. As they labored in the blazing heat, an engine pulls up with a fancy caboose all decked out with company colors, and stops a short distance from the crew. A man in a sharp pinstripe suit steps out of the caboose and yells toward the crew, "John. John Hayes. Is that you?"

To the laborers' surprise, John yells back, "Yeah, Tom, it's me. Good to see you."

"Well, come on in and visit for a while," Tom yells back.

The labor crew stared on in amazement as John laid down his shovel, wiped the sweat from his forehead and walked toward the caboose. The man in the pinstripes gave him a big handshake and a slap on the back as they disappeared into the caboose. After a short time, John came walking back out to once again pick up his shovel and take his place on the crew.

Everyone stopped working and stared up at him. "John?" someone finally spoke up. "John, wasn't that Tom Miller, the president of the railroad?"

"Yep," came his lonesome reply.

"Well, John, how do you know Tom Miller?" the man continued to pry.

"We both started working for the railroad on exactly the same day over 20 years ago."

The man couldn't help but ask the obvious question. "John, if you both started working on the same day, how come Tom Miller became president of the railroad and you're out here in the hot sun laying ties?"

To which John stopped working, leaned forward on his shovel with a look that seemed to instantaneously play back the past 20 years and said, "20 years ago Tom went to work for the railroad. I went to work for \$1.20 an hour."

THE SECRET TO CAREER SUCCESS

That's an old story. But in it is the secret to career success. In every organization that I have been fortunate to work with over the past 15 years, I see examples of both types of individuals mentioned above. There is the individual that comes to work not only wanting the best for his family and future but also has a sincere interest in helping the company grow and succeed. I call this person a BUILDER.

On the other hand, I often come in contact with the individual who has one thing in mind: getting the most amount of money for the smallest amount of effort and doesn't care what happens to the

company. He will just find another job someplace else if this one doesn't work. I call this person a DESTROYER.

The interesting thing about builders and destroyers is that they each have made the choice of which side of the line they will be on. This is the most important decision an individual can make because it will very likely determine the outcome of a career and future. A look at the characteristics of each will help you to understand why and may help you choose wisely.

DESTROYERS HATE

If you listen to a destroyer talk, you will hear a word or at least a form of a word that all of them seem to use. The word is “hate” and they use it in reference to many things. They hate:

Management: for all the “stupid” things they do and all the money they make.

Customers: for all the demands they make and complaining they do.

Money: because the paycheck is so little and there is never enough to pay the bills.

Other employees: because they get all the easy jobs and “kiss up” to management.

Family: because their spouse said something or their child did something.

If you listen to destroyers long enough, it becomes evident whom they hate the most—THEMSELVES. But in this fact is the hope that all destroyers can change and become builders by simply changing the way they feel about themselves.

BUILDERS DO WHAT'S IMPORTANT

As I continued to be curious as to what sets builders and destroyers apart, I found the inspiration for my first book, Five Important Things. It became apparent through observation that builders generally do five things that help them on the road of success. The Five Important Things that builders do are:

- **Continue to learn:** They read, go to seminars, attend company training, think creatively and are open to the opinions of others.
- **Appreciate people:** Realizing that every great thing that was ever accomplished or will be accomplished happens through people. They focus on learning to work with and understand people.
- **Have great attitudes:** It takes constant effort, but they focus on things like exercise, eliminating bad habits, getting around positive people and having fun at work or play.
- **Set goals:** They take the time to have clearly defined and written goals realizing they may not reach them all, but having them gives direction to their life and career.
- **Don't quit:** Builders understand obstacles. In fact, they even welcome them. In overcoming obstacles they know they become stronger. Learning to persist is what takes them to higher levels and more responsibility in the organization they work for.

THE BUILDER'S FUTURE

It is not difficult to predict the future for builders and destroyers. Based on my observations, the builders have an opportunity to make an outstanding career and lifestyle for themselves and their families.

There are examples all around the country of successful builders who because of their commitment to hard work and the "Five Important Things" listed above are now making outstanding salaries with tremendous opportunities for growth in the future.

THE DESTROYER'S FUTURE

On the other hand, I see many examples of the most capable individuals who, at the age of 25, 35, or 50, are old and worn out, discouraged that they ever got into their profession.

It doesn't matter if it is a salesperson, technician or business owner; they feel the profession is a dead-end job with no hope of getting better. There is no attempt to improve themselves or their company, which results in no improvements in their careers.

They are like what Benjamin Franklin said, "Most men die at age 21 and are buried at age 65." The future is over for those who choose to be a destroyer.

It is a choice going to work for the company or going to work for an hourly wage. The only thing separating the builder from the destroyer is a choice. How will YOU choose?

- Jim Paluch, President

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