

Are You a Builder or a Destroyer?

By Jim Paluch

As a railroad crew labored in the blazing August heat, an engine pulled up with a fancy caboose all decked out with company colors and stopped a short distance from the crew. A man in a sharp pinstripe suit stepped out of the caboose and yelled 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.

John laid down his shovel, wiped the sweat from his forehead and walked to the caboose. The man in the pinstripes gave him a big handshake as they disappeared into the caboose. After a short time, John came out, picked up his shovel and took his place on the crew.

Everyone stopped working and stared. 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?"

"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. "If you both started on the same day, how come Tom Miller became president of the railroad and you're out here in the hot sun laying ties?"

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

THE SUCCESS SECRET

In that old story is the secret to career success. I see examples of both types of individuals mentioned above in every organization I have worked with over the past 15 years. There is the individual that comes to work wanting the best for his family and future and displaying a sincere interest in helping the company grow and succeed — a builder. And there is the individual who has one thing in mind: getting the most amount of money for the smallest amount of effort. He doesn't care what happens to the company; he will just find another job someplace else if this one doesn't work — a destroyer.

Destroyers. If you listen to a destroyer talk, you will hear a similar word, or at least a form of the word, from all of them: "hate."

They hate:

- **Management.** For all the "stupid" things they do and all the money they make.

- **Customers.** For all the demands they make and the complaining they do.

- **Money.** The paycheck is so little, and there is never enough to pay the bills.

- **Other employees.** They get all the easy jobs and "kiss up" to management.

- **Family.** Their spouse said some-

thing or their child did something.

If you listen to destroyers long enough, it becomes evident that they hate themselves the most. If all destroyers changed the way they feel about themselves, they would become builders.

Builders. Builders do what's important. There are five general activities that put builders on the road to success:

- **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 happens through people, builders focus on learning to work with and understand people.

- **Have great attitudes.** It takes constant effort, but builders focus on things like exercise, eliminating bad habits, being around positive people and having fun.

- **Set goals.** They take the time to have clearly defined and written goals, even if they may not reach them.

- **Don't quit.** Builders understand obstacles. In fact, they even welcome them. Learning to persist is what takes them to higher levels and more responsibility in their organization.

BUILDING BUILDERS

One of the favorite sessions in the Training Challenge is the topic of builders and destroyers. As companies focus on their people, individuals begin to recognize choices that lead to their own personal and professional growth, as well as the company and those around them.

One company was determined to continue the builder campaign and capitalize on the current momentum. It developed a committee made up of one person from each area of the company and challenged them to develop a program that would integrate the builder/

destroyer session into the culture of the company. The committee had "carte blanche." It decided to kick off the plan on March 31, in conjunction with the company's annual "Tailgate Party" where baseball's opening day was celebrated with stadium food and Cincinnati Reds attire. Prior to the event, the committee displayed posters such as "Builder at Work" or "Builder Hard Hat Area" to pique curiosity.

Before munching down on hot dogs, pretzels and Cracker Jacks, the committee passed out hard hats to everyone and explained that they were all working in a Builder Zone. Every time someone is caught displaying the attributes of a builder, they will receive a star to put on their hard hat, which must be displayed in the individual's work area so everyone can see who is taking actions as a builder. Each Monday, the person with the greatest number of stickers receives a dollar, and their name is put into a monthly drawing for the Builder Of The Month Award, four Reds tickets. There will also be monthly team lunches awarded if everyone in a unit has received builder stars and a big six-month drawing for outstanding builders. To avoid the question of discretion in the distribution of the stars, members of the awarding committee will constantly rotate.

Individuals choose the attitude they will have each day, and building builders is a choice that organizations can make as well. With everything to gain and nothing to lose, get creative and build your builders today! 🏗️

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CHALLENGE CALENDAR

21 Participating garden centers

248 Average number of employees trained per week

New participants:

Scott's Orchid & Nursery,
Glasonbury, Conn.

June Training Topics:

"Stress Management —
Avoid Burnout"
"Start Plans for a Summer Field Day"
"Product Return Philosophy"
"Merchandising Review/Evaluation"
"Tree Planting and Staking"
"Presentation Skills"
"Spacing and Cleaning Plants"

ACTION ZONE: GARDEN CENTERS IN TRAINING

Vinny's Garden Center and Schafer Nursery, Inc. are the first two companies to complete the *Lawn & Garden Retailer Training Challenge* with a perfect record of 52 weeks of consecutive training. Both companies have not only benefited from the discipline of training and the information gained each week but have also seen great camaraderie and teamwork develop in the process. They are both so excited about the results of their Training Challenge that they have accepted the Challenge for Round Two and are striving to keep the habit going for another 52 weeks straight. Congratulations and good luck on reaching 104!

Market. Vinny's Garden Center, Wallingford, Conn., discussed what value means to its customers and decided that the price of an item is not the only thing that determines its value. Value is also determined by quality, usefulness and individ-

ual taste. They said the five building blocks of intimate customer selling are: building knowledge, developing trust, customizing solutions, delivering value and becoming indispensable.

Teamwork. Wayne's Country Market, Mansfield, Ohio, held a group meeting for the first time with its landscaping crew and retail management team to go over company policies and equipment care. In the past, the company operated like two separate businesses. This was a good start to making the retail and landscape crews feel like they work together as one company instead of two.

Training. Sabellico Greenhouses & Florist, Hopewell Junction, N.Y., said its yearlong staff was wondering how it was going to train all of the seasonal staff that has dribbled in since February. It came up with a great idea for training the newcomers without boring the rest of the

staff. The employees played a game with prizes for the winning team. It was all in good fun and they used silly prizes. The game consisted of each team answering questions that were based on previous training sessions. Questions were picked out of a hat, and the first person to raise their hand got to answer for their team. They said there was lots of laughter and good-natured competition.

Spider Web Gardens Center, Tuftonboro, N.H., had a couple from Canada come in and present a program on Alpine Trough Gardens, which it will be selling. Employees were able to learn planting techniques on a miniature scale, like building a fairy garden. They also learned about the care of the gardens and everyone had a hands-on opportunity to learn about grafting plant material. They said they had a great time.

Systems. During a training ses-

sion on "Developing an Orientation Program," Bayview Nurseries, Northfield, N.J., developed a "Welcome Back" orientation day to be held in the near future. It also created a New Hire Orientation Outline, which included the important information that each new hire should know about the company, benefits and job responsibilities.

Cost Control. Louisiana Nursery, Baton Rouge, La., held a meeting about inventory shrinkage and said that afterward everyone understood how the company's loss affects them personally.

Rewards. Vinny's Garden Center, Wallingford, Conn., celebrated the end of the 52-week training journey with a toast of sparkling grape juice. The team members discussed the highlights of their past meetings and agreed that their fashion show, tool time show and Christmas carol sing along were at the top of their list of favorites. 🍷