

Episode: 62

# Cody Rich



## Mike:

Hello, and welcome to the Mobile Workforce Podcast, sponsored by About Time Technologies and WorkMax. I'm the host, Mike Merrill, and today we are sitting down again with Cody Rich. Cody is a serial entrepreneur who is the founder of Backcountry Fuel Box and also The Rich Outdoors Podcast. We had Cody on a while back on Episode Number 37, so if you haven't had a chance to check that one out, I recommend that you go back and give that one a listen.

We talked about basically how companies are often getting in their own way, and creating their own bottleneck. Love to have you check that out when you get a minute, but in the meantime, we're going to talk a little bit more about a little deeper dive on some of those same issues. First of all, Cody's a unique entrepreneur where he loves to hunt, and not only is he good at hunting, but he actually really enjoys it, and wants to do more of it.

Sometimes he's gone for a month or more at a time, many weeks on end. His business has to continue to run while he's away. That's a great testament to Cody's leadership, and also how he's been able to set up systems and processes to help him still remain profitable while not necessarily having to be the guy behind the steering wheel every day, so thanks again, Cody, for joining us and coming back. Looking forward to the conversation today.

## Cody:

Yeah. I'm glad to be out. I feel like anytime someone talks about you, they're almost cringeworthy. You're like, "Oh, am I really all those things?" I would say I don't know if I'm a great hunter, or if I just spend a ridiculous amount of time doing it. There's like a ... I told someone one time, I was like, "I don't know if it's about being a good hunter or even having a lot of time. It's just I will neglect everything in my responsibilities category until I'm successful."

## Mike:

There you go. Well, it sounds like priorities, right? That's your priority, so good for you.

## Cody:

Yeah. We were on, like you said, a while back, and got to talk a lot about a lot of those things, and they've kind of been on the front of my mind lately, so I'm excited to talk about it, and kind of dive into it. I think for most people it's such a reframing your mindset, and it's been so hard. I've worked with a lot of people, and a lot of people reach out and say like, "Oh, how do I do that? How do I step away, or how do I have a no-work September?"

A lot of it, I do feel like is 100% reframing your mindset. There's a lot of tactical advice that goes within that as well, and we'll dive into that, but man, to even start down that path, you have to reframe your mindset into being like, "Okay, I'm going to leave in September, or whatever month you choose. Mine's a no-work September."

## Mike:

Yeah. I remember on the last episode we discussed this, but it's like your employees, they need to know you're planning on being gone. I will not be here, so now I have to do certain things because Cody's not here to ask these questions, right?

## Cody:

Right. It starts as a joke, and then it becomes a threat.

## Mike:

Yeah, I like that. Well again, back to why we have you on. Your episode is very popular. A lot of people liked it. I heard, even from our internal sales team, other people that are not necessarily running a construction business, but they found it applicable to life. Like, "How

am I a bottleneck in my own way in my daily life?" I mean, before we get into some of the more specific points, what bleed-over have you seen go into other areas of your life because you have continued to work on sharpening this skill?

### Cody:

Oh man, that's a great question. It comes from ... When I say mindset, you have to get in that mindset of shifting into this like automation, right? I think once you start doing that in your business, you start doing it in life in general. I don't want to be one of those people that just says, "You've got to automate your entire life," because what's the point of living life?

It's like this automation. You're just going through the flows, but I will say you start to prioritize what's important, and what isn't important, whether it's kids, or work, or your hobbies, right? You have to do those things. I think the best example of this is, for me, I spent most of my life trying to automate or systematize my operations within businesses so I could go do the fun things, but now it's like, I can do that to go hang out with my kid.

For me it's like, "How do I take my two-year-old on cool adventures? Those are pretty small, right? I never want to get to the point where I work too much, or there's other priorities over that. Because I've spent, let's say, the last 10 years trying to automate my life to go hunting all the time, now it's actually like I'm taking a step back, and now I get to automate to spend time with the fam or teach my kid, or make sure that that's at the forefront.

Life is about priorities, and priorities are ever-changing or ever-evolving, I should say. For me, before the podcast we were talking like, "Oh did you get a bunch of time off this year?" I took about 50 days this year to hunt, which is really good, but it's nowhere near what I used to be. Well, a lot of that's because like nowadays, I can go hunting, but I can also just hang out with my kid, or go do fun things with him.

I took my two-year-old on like three different pack outs and, and he's obsessed with hunting, and we spent a lot of time in the woods, but there's also days him and I just go to the rental equipment place, and walk around, and check out cool equipment, and things

like that. Once you start down this path of being able to systematize, and automate, and building a team around being successful, and not just you driving the wheel all the time, it allows you to do so many other things.

For me, a lot of that could be whether it's hobbies, like hunting, the kids and priority of family life, but also being able to move the entire company forward. Now it gives me time to stop and think, and that's a huge piece of it.

### Mike:

Yeah. Biz Dev, like other initiatives that you never could get to because you were too busy in the trenches literally. Love that. Love that.

### Cody:

Yeah, so many people, there's the classic saying like, "Are you working in your company or on your company?" We're all guilty of this. We all get stuck putting out fires, or trying to keep customers happy, or clients happy, and those things. I'm not saying that ever goes away. It's really easy to sit on your high horse if you've never done it, and be like, "Oh well, just automate that." From the hunting perspective, it's like, "Oh yeah, you just sit there, and a deer walks by." You're like, "Oh, it's pretty easy."

It's like, "No, that's not really how it works." People will argue that within business and say like, "Oh, well yeah, easy for you to say, but my business can't, or my business can't do this." Trust me, I've been there. I've seen a lot of those classic, "If you just do this, you'll be successful." You apply it to your business, and it doesn't work. It's an ebb and flow.

### Mike:

Yeah. I remember from, and I don't want to rehash the entire episode from last time, but we talked about giving credit to your employees. Basically giving them a line of credit to make certain levels of decisions. I love that. I mean, I heard so many comments from people saying, "Wow, I never thought of it like that. It's actually been helpful." Maybe talk about why that kind of management and leadership is so important, and what

it does to allow you to start stepping away, and have that freedom that you just couldn't have before.

### Cody:

I always say this goes into who you hire, how you hire. This is why I ask about how deep we want to go into this. This is something I'm working on currently in my own businesses, and rehashing, and kind of fine-tuning and tweaking, but when it comes to employees, we all tend to think that money is the big driver. We just got to pay enough, and then they'll stay. It's so cliché, and it's the easy fix for the most part, but it's not really what works.

It turns out like humans, they may come for good pay, or they may stay for good pay, but that's not ultimately what makes them an integral part of a team. They need more than that. It's pretty simple human behaviors that they need purpose. They need a reason. Humans, or people want to be a part of a team. They want to be a part of doing something cool. They want to be a part of that. They want to feel like they have autonomy and have voice.

These are fairly classic human traits that we all kind of overlook and say, "Well God, I just can't afford to have good employees." Maybe there's other pieces that we could add to this, and not just how much you can pay, because at the end of the day, we've all been there. You couldn't pay me enough to work for a crappy boss anymore. It's not going to happen. How do we bring things around the environment, maybe to make up for what we can or cannot pay structurally wise?

Maybe we can't just afford to pay everyone \$100,000 a year. At the end of the day, if you can provide a really good work environment, you can provide meaning and purpose, you can give that person autonomy, and make them feel like they're doing important things, then that's when you have this team-building, or you have people who want to stay. Right. That's like the hierarchy of it, and for me, the tactical version of that starts out with they call it the \$100 rule. I don't know if it's inflation or what, but I think I moved it to like a \$500 rule very quickly because \$100 rule is like I don't know what. Long story short ...

### Mike:

That won't last the curve for \$100.

### Cody:

Right. Right. When we have someone, when we first hire someone and I tell them like, "Hey, I'm trusting you to make decisions. I hired you to make decisions, and so if it's over \$100, I trust you to make the decision. This is why it gets quickly moved to the \$500 rule. It's like, "Okay, if it's under a \$500, I trust you to make that decision." I just had this conversation with an employee. They like to come to me, and I get that it's kind of a comfort thing. I'll tease them, and not be super hard on them.

They're coming to me for answers because maybe they're stuck in their own decision, or they're between this and that, and so they always come to me. I'm like, I'm pulling the \$500 card here because I was like, I trust you to make that decision. They're like, "Yeah, I understand that, but the choice is between this and this." This is where it's easy to say there's a \$500 rule, and I think it's a great place to start. It's setting the example, or setting in motion this fact that like, "Hey, I'm trusting you to make decisions, and that's what you're here for. That's why I hired you is to make decisions."

It's very easy for us as business owners, employers, to say like, "Oh, I need to make every decision. I need to be this integral part." I think that comes from being supervisors, or management in other companies. We want a value. We want to have this value, but at the end of the day, as an owner, your job is to empower those people, and I think that is huge when it comes to keeping good employees.

I don't think you can just pay your way into good employees. If you have a bad work environment, you have no goals, no anything else, at the end of the day, why are they staying? For the \$100K, for the \$200K? At what point does it stop working because you just can't keep going higher and higher on the pay? That's kind of where we have ... I think there's a lot of people that have talked about this, but having other reasons outside of that.

**Mike:**

Yeah. You tied that all together very nicely. I think one of the key words that you used, and I subscribe to, is you were talking about how it's empowering to them, which empowering, that really infers growth. It infers progress. It infers that now they are becoming more. Maybe talk about that a little bit.

**Cody:**

Right. I think this goes for anyone who has a super ... If you have a super ... To replace me, this often happens with people, and in construction in a lot of companies, but to replace me, I need someone so qualified that I need to pay them a lot of money in order for them to not go out on their own, but I don't know that that's necessarily true. We tend to try to hire ourselves. I think there's a lot of people out there that are more than happy being a number two, because at the end of the day, they can leave the stress at work and go home. That's one of the hard parts about being an owner is that we have to take that stress home.

When you hire a super, or hire a superintendent, or someone at that top level, oftentimes we're only looking at pay, but what happens, in my opinion, I think if you can give them that drive, that purpose, and that meaning in what they're doing, and having like, "Okay, hey I'm important," as stupid as that sounds, like being important matters to most humans. You can write that off, but it's very well documented that being, or having importance, or feeling needed in something bigger than yourself is like that's not nothing. It's worth something. I think it becomes very, very important in that role.

If you're like bottom of the barrel of having importance, maybe that's something that you look to strive to, but I don't know that you have to have perfect importance for every single person you hire. I think it becomes more important as that tier goes up.

**Mike:**

Yeah. That's great. Are there certain things that you look for in employees to attract the right type of people? Are there filters that you run them through. Even mentally, before you even consider hiring certain people?

**Cody:**

As silly as it sounds, I go off a lot of gut instinct. I would rather have the right person, and I'm always looking at people when I meet people, when I'm talking to people, whether it's a networking, or a barbecue, or something, I tend to look at those people's traits, and not necessarily what their skillset is. I would hire, for me, I hire for a personality trait, or over, I would say, specific, "Oh, are they the best at email marketing? Are they the best at this or that?"

I feel like I can train those pieces, the tactical pieces, but I can't train that personality trait. If I was looking for a number two, I'm looking for that pleasing type personality that's like they want to do well, they want to be a part of something, and not that ultra alpha. The ultra alpha is probably going to go out on its own, and try to butt heads with you, where it's like the pleasing personality, that's the type of person that is a great number two. I think if you give them what they need, then they'll give you what you need, and that makes a good partnership in that capacity.

**Mike:**

I love that. Speaking of that longer-term, you're talking about number two, what can you do to help a number two stay interested, and plugged in on what you're doing, and helping the business grow without getting bored, or burnt out, or moving on to somebody else before you have a chance to really ...

**Cody:**

I think number twos usually stick around for a couple reasons. Usually pay is there, but I don't think it's the number one. I think they stick around for their purpose as a whole. What is the company doing? How is it cool? Do they enjoy what they do? Do they feel security? I think security is a big one. If they feel like they're secure, and they're in a company that's growing, and going somewhere, then they'll stick around. If they feel like the company's floundering, obviously, they're going to jump ship, and go onto a ship that's feels like it's excelling, or at least has security.

Those are just personality traits within those types of people that I think they're looking for. They're not looking to maybe they want to make more money, or a certain income, but they're looking for security, right?

the best number twos, that's what they want. They want to feel like, "Oh man, I got a great job, and it's going places. It's going things, or it's doing really cool stuff. The projects we're working on, I enjoy." If I'm in a number two and I'm like, "Man, I really hate doing this project, but I love the fact that here's what we're building, here's the cool things we're doing."

You can kind of encourage that. I'm trying to think of a good project, but if you're working on a project that, I don't know, your grandkids are going to see, and it's to be a big piece of something. That's cool. Whereas the guy, like if you're trying to hire a number two, and you're trying to pay him almost nothing, and he's doing nothing, but moving toilets around, then he's probably not going to stick around very long.

His project doesn't feel cool. Those are aspects to it. If you don't have the cool factor, you're going to have to pay a lot more. That's the reality of the situation. I think those are just pieces of it. It's just looking at human traits, but also looking at those people and saying, "Okay hey, what are your end goals? What do you want? How can I help you reach your goals? Not everyone has the same goals as you, right? My goals may be to be gone all the time.

It's probably not wise for me to hire someone whose goals are the same. They're just going to be going all the time, but if my goals are, or if the person I hire, the number two I hire, if their goals are like, "Man, I want a fancy house, and fancy truck, and I don't want to have to worry where my next paycheck's coming from, then I know like, "Oh yeah, I got you. We can do that." "I want to work on cool stuff. I want to build cool things." "Yeah, let's do you that. That's cool. We can do that."

Just meeting that person in the middle, and figuring out what their goals are. You'd be amazed how many people assume goals, and/or don't ask. It's as simple as that.

### **Mike:**

That's a great point. As employers, it's critical to ask your employees, even in the hiring and interview process, and then going back and reviewing regularly, "What are your goals? What do you want? What do you expect out of this? Yeah, you're going to get the paycheck as long as you're here, and working hard, but

outside of that, like what are your long term goals and plans as an employee of this company?"

### **Cody:**

Right. I think you have to have the reality that if their goal is to use you as a stepping stone, that's fine. That's fine. It may be a five year relationship. I think it's easy to get frustrated. I have employees like that, that I know that their goals are bigger than what we're going to have to offer, but I want to be the best stepping stone for them as we can, and hopefully I get a good five years out of that relationship. We're not turning and burning, but I think you'd be surprised, you'd be really surprised, at how many people say, "Here's my end goal. and this is where I want to be."

A lot of people really like security, and they have a hard time stepping away from it. If you offer a really good environment, then you can usually keep them longer than they really wanted to, which I'm not saying that's a good thing or a bad thing. I think it's best to try to help them move to where they want to be, and I think you're going to get the best out of their relationship. Then, just find the next one like that. I've gone through a number of those.

### **Mike:**

Yeah. I love that. It's funny, my experience here in About Time Technologies is very interesting because I started in my early 20s, started a construction company, and the very first employee that I hired was a good friend of mine. Well, he's my partner and the CEO of this software company.

### **Cody:**

Right. Right.

### **Mike:**

He was one of my best subcontractors once he went on his own. We did joint venture projects together. You're not necessarily losing staff to competition. They might be your partner, literally.

**Cody:**

Right. Literally, literally, and I'm that way. I could think of like the last five, at least five people that have kind used our company as a stepping stone. Still great relationships. I mean you know Jayden. Jayden and I are really close, and Jayden still does work for me and stuff. Jayden and I, he was like my number two for a long time, and now it's like, he's looking at projects, and he is like, "Hey, do you want to be partners on this?" Those type of things. That's just, I think, doing right by people always pans out in the end, but who am I?

**Mike:**

Love that? Well, no, again, those relationships, those opportunities to pull that favor card when really need some help, or to step in. I don't have it up today, but one of our customers, they're called Yeti Welding, and he was a guest on the podcast. Well, I had him make a podcast sign for us. Didn't have time to mount it this morning, so it's not in the background right now, but anyway, he was telling me all these cool stories, how our product is helping his business, and how they've increased productivity, and they're finishing jobs quicker, and they're making more money.

It's doing everything it was designed to do. He's a small company, but he's getting great benefits. I said, "Hey, give me the bill for the podcast sign." He's like, "Oh no. No, no, no, that's free." Thank you WorkMax," is what he said. It's like, "Wow, that's really cool." Now that relationship is more than just, "Oh, he's our customer, or I'm his customer." It's like, "We're working together to try and ... He said, "Just put an Instagram post up with my sign, and tag me on it, and I'm good."

**Cody:**

That's awesome. Well, even better, we just talked about him on the podcast, so that's awesome.

**Mike:**

Yeah. There you go. Yeah.

**Cody:**

I think to circle it back to like practical steps to where to get started, because like I've been there. I know exactly how it is. It can feel like, "Oh, where do I even start? I

can't afford to hire \$100,000 employee, and start all these things." I always say, "For me it was a no work September." It started as litmus test to see if I could do it, and to take September off essentially. I think that's a great litmus test. If you have a different month, or a different ... If it's two weeks, to take two weeks off, I think, is a big hurdle for a lot of people. I would suggest a month because I feel like you can neglect for two weeks, and get away with it.

You can't neglect for a month and get away with it maybe. I do think there's some merit in making it more than four weeks, or at least four weeks, but I would say start with like a four-week sabbatical, whatever you want to call it. See if you can get to there. Schedule it for a year out, and say, "Okay, what things do I need to have in place to make this work?"

If it's, it's a matter of not scheduling a job, that's, that's an option, but you should be able to run those things without you. It's like for four weeks, I am not going to be involved. What would have to happen in those four weeks for everything to go smoothly without me there? Then start basically breaking it down by category, and saying, "Okay, from the admin perspective, what would need to happen?"

"How is payroll going to work? How is invoicing going to work, and all those things? Those are super easy. The tools today are just so much better than they used to be, and I think from the admin perspective, that's just a great start, and all of those tool tools are readily available to replace you from the admin perspective. That's an easy one to start with. Then, let's say, I say product fulfillment, and so whether you are a service industry, whether you're whatever, whether you have a product you actually deliver or whatever, how do we take care of product fulfillment? That's the next most important thing is we have to actually get our product, or our service, executed well. What would it?

Then, as you break down these categories, let's say it takes you two months for each category to really get them figured out. Now, at the end of 12 months, you're like, "Okay, I'm ready to go on my first four-week litmus test, and see if it works. News flash, it won't. There's going to be problems, and then you go back, and readjust. That was me for a lot of years. It was like, "Okay, I'm leaving for September," and I'd get two weeks in, and then I'd be on the phone, and dealing with

problems, or Melissa would call me, and be like, "Oh, the world's on fire. You need to come back."

That's just the way it goes, but it becomes a constant, "How do I keep making this a little bit better, and a little bit better each year?" If you really wanted to push it, you could say every six months. I got six months, I'm going to go on a three week vacation, and in six months, I'll go on another three week vacation. That's a good time to like, "Okay, how do I get there? How do I align these pieces to make that possible?"

### **Mike:**

I love that you're talking about going back, and measuring that thing, wherever that breakdown was, okay, now I can solidify that, and sure that up. Now you're one step closer to having that three weeks or four weeks off next time without a problem.

### **Cody:**

Right, and I like scheduled tests because what it does is gives you a timeline. I don't think it's ... It's not as responsible to say, "Okay, I'm just going to leave and see what happens, and then I'll fix it when it gets back." There's a lot of truth to that. One of my good friends, I might have told you this the last time, but he was a plumber, and I remember we went to Alaska, and I was like super stressed about stuff that was going on. I still had a job at the time, and he's like, "Ah, all the problems will be there when you get back. You got to just leave sometimes." There's some merit to that.

There's the right mindset behind that, but to me, it's like, "Okay, how do we prep for these things, and make sure we're going in the right direction? That creates sustainability. That's something we can do more often, whether it's twice a year, or once a year. That's something can actually do, you can only neglect for so long before those things start building up. A on the mindset. Maybe a C- on execution. That's why I try to like plan them out, and say, "Okay, I'm gone this time. What needs to happen for me to be able to be gone?"

### **Mike:**

I love that. I think one of the other things too, is what steps and processes, or systems, are unnecessary? what are extra? What's fat, you can trim off of what

you're doing today to maybe alleviate some of those things? Do you have any examples or thoughts on that?

### **Cody:**

Right. I mean, that's getting into like the 80/20 principle, and I think everyone could sit down and run through their own 80/20, and there's a great book on this if you wanted to read The 80.20 principle, but sit down and say, "Okay, what 20% of clients or products are we producing that's creating 80% of our revenue? Oftentimes this is what it is. 20% of your clientele is producing 80% of your revenue. How do we go and flush out the 80% that's kind of wasted, right?"

How do we start firing clients? That sounds really hard to do, but instead, let's fire one client, and add one more that looks a lot more like our 20%. Now it's like, instead of like, "Oh, we got all these clients, and they're ..." There's 20% of your clients that are eating up 80% of your time. Start firing those clients, and start adding clients that are in the 20 category where they're the 20% that make up 80% of your revenue.

They're the ones that don't have questions, that don't ask for custom. They're the ones that just pay their bills on time. They're the ones that aren't eating up most of your time.

### **Mike:**

Yeah. They're not your headache, right?

### **Cody:**

Right. That's really hard to do, to be honest. You try to keep everyone happy, but not everyone's the same. Not every customer's the same. Not every client's the same. I think it's really important to kind of reevaluate your 80/20, and even for us, in product businesses, we could easily say, "Okay, what 80% of our products, or what products in our line, are creating more hassle than they're worth, or creating more customer service things?"

This often happens. You'll have a product, and you never really notice it, but a product is creating more customer service issues than any other product. You're like, "Yeah, it's making a good portion of revenue, but it's also creating as much work, so is it worth it?" Re-

pivoting and pivoting your business until you kind of fine tune that.

### **Mike:**

I'm glad you brought that up because it made me think too, it's the same with your staff. There are people within your organization, I don't care if you got 10 guys or 100, or 1,000, there's a percentage of people that are actually holding your business back, and slowing you down, and getting in the way, and muddying up the water for the other 90%.

### **Cody:**

Right, and a lot of times you may have one person that man, they work really, really hard, but culturally maybe they're not even like hurting the culture, but they're not moving the culture to the culture you want. Maybe they're the ones that give you a hard time for being gone all the time, and yeah, they get stuff done, but they're the guy that's always like, "Oh yeah, the boss is always gone. Oh, he's off playing or whatever." Maybe that's just not a good culture fit.

That's hard to say, but maybe that's the 80/20 we need to look at reevaluating is like, what's our culture look like? Do we have people that are willing to come to work and are excited about the things we're doing? Maybe that's on ... I don't want to put it all on employees because maybe it's on the founder. Maybe, It's on my shoes to say, "Maybe we're not working on important enough stuff, or cool enough stuff, to really inspire our employees." That's a reality.

These things all have secondary and tertiary effects of like, "Okay. Yeah, maybe I'm cutting this 20% because it's trimming the fat, and these are the products that are really making money," but if I cut the products that the team loves, am I really doing myself a favor because now I'm like cutting all this why for most of our employees. You got to be cognizant of these things. This is why it's not that simple. It's never black and white. It's gray.

It's important to like, "Okay, trim the fat. What products are working well? It's also important to have a whole picture that inspires our employees, and makes them excited to come to work.

### **Mike:**

Yeah, I think we were kind of joking before we started recording, and I made the comment that bosses are people too. I think that's a two-way street. I mean, we are human. We do make mistakes. We don't always have the best ideas. In fact, if we do, we need better employees, right?

### **Cody:**

Right, 100%. That's kind of my mentality when it comes to even being able to do things, right? If I'm the best in our company, we got a problem. I should have a grasp on everything, but if I'm the best at something, we've got a problem.

### **Mike:**

It's a team sport, right? This is not Brazilian jiu-jitsu, or karate.

### **Cody:**

I think it's easy to say all this when you're starting a new company. If you can build culture around that, I think the hardest, absolute hardest, thing to do is change a culture. That's the real struggle is like, if you've been there, if you've been the guy on the ground, if you were the boss, your identity is outworking every one of your employees, how do you go from that to nowhere in September? That can be tough. I don't think they're mutually exclusive.

I, for a long time, was a workaholic. I took pride in being the first one there, the last one to leave. That was who I was, it was an identity thing. I think that's a ... That's what I say, "Mindset is the hardest thing to shift." I think that's the part in you that you have to shift, is that identity of being the hardest worker on the team to being able to take time off.

Again, I think you can be both. I think you can be the hardest worker on the team. I'm a huge fan of that. As much as people will be like, "Oh, this guy's just lazy. He goes hunting all the time." Trust me, I outwork everyone when I'm here. Just not here very much, but when I'm here, it's like how do I ... To me, I'd rather work 68 hour, 60 or 80 hours a week while I'm here, and then leave for three months, or a month, or whatever it may be.

That's just kind the mentality or the culture you kind of have to set is like, "Hey, I'm still going to outwork everyone. I'm still going to be the guy that jokes with the crowd, but it's like, 'Hey, when hunting season comes, I'm out, I'm gone.'" It's not something a lot of people can just do overnight. I think it's something you kind of have to work towards, but like any goal, or any vision of what your company ... For most guys who are employers, they had this idea for the company. It's not like they created it overnight. It was a slow evolve. It chipped away. You chip away.

I think most of us are still doing that. I'm not where I want to be. I'm still chipping away and evolving, but that's a part of enjoying the process, and not just the end game. That was a huge thing for me was like, "Okay, here's where I want to be. Well, I could work my face off, and try to get there, but it may not ever happen." Part of enjoying the process is like, how do we create a company that I want to be a part of, so that when we get there, I'm still happy and if we don't get there, I'm still happy either way.

### **Mike:**

You said something there, and I know we're running short on time, but it really just hit me. We need to create a culture, as business owners and entrepreneurs, that we want to be a part of too.

### **Cody:**

100%. 100%. Most businesses fail within five years. I don't believe that's because ... There's some run out of money, but I don't believe it's because they've run out of money. It's because they've run out of like why. They run out of give a damn, right? For the most part, you get to a point, as a founder, where you're like, "Why am I doing this? This isn't even worth it anymore. I'm just going to hang it up." A lot of businesses are successful, but you just get burnt out.

I think the best way to avoid burnout is to create a company that isn't focused on the angle, but it's focused on the journey. To me, that's a part of like no-work September. If I am in a company that's a no-work September, I'll gladly work my face off for 11 months out of the year.

### **Mike:**

Yeah. You might get more than a year's production out of that 11 months, because you're so driven to get to that time off, right?

### **Cody:**

Right. Employees are the same way. I'm more than happy to let whoever take a couple weeks off, and go do what they want to do. I just feel like for me, if I'm going to do that, then I would rather provide that too, and just build that culture around that.

### **Mike:**

Yeah. That's back to you're eating your own dog food there. You're you're setting the culture bar, and then you're also supporting your staff to have some of those same outside pursuits and enjoyments. That's awesome. Well man, such a fun conversation. Hell, we're going to have to have you back on again down the road. We did. We did, but it was good. It's a deep scratch. I guess just to wrap up, if there was one parting word, I mean, we talked about a lot of great things, so many nuggets here, but to summarize, what would you recommend?

I mean we're in a new year. Hopefully we're really poised, and ready for busyness, and growth that we haven't seen in a while. A lot of pent-up projects, and pent-up people. What advice would you give?

### **Cody:**

My advice? This may be against New Year's resolutions, but my advice for New Year's resolutions, new year, new you type stuff is that start smaller than you think, and accomplish first because so many of us are like, "You know what, this year I'm going to drop 100 pounds. I'm going to grow my income by \$100,000," and when it doesn't seem like it's on track, we give up, and we fall back. Start smaller than you think, and just execute well on the small things.

### **Mike:**

Oh, fantastic. Well, you're stud Cody. Thanks for coming on again. Look forward to doing it again down the road.