

[Manufacturing Leadership]

[Time Management with Brian Brandt, CEO at Core Insights]

Intro: Welcome to manufacturing leadership, a podcast for young professionals in and out of the oil and gas industry. And now here's your host, [Energy WeldFab's](#) Michael Clements.

Michael C.: Hello listeners, welcome to manufacturing leadership, I'm your host [Michael Clements](#) and I'd like to introduce our guest. He is a successful entrepreneur, proven leader to other leaders, husband and father, welcome to the show speaker Brian Brandt.

Brian Brandt: Hello there, thanks for having me on.

Michael C.: Yes sir, we're excited to have you all with us and looking forward to learning more about you and your thoughts on time management in our podcast today.

Brian Brandt: All right.

Michael C.: Let's get started. All right, so a little bit about yourself Brian, what do you do for fun; tell us a little bit about your family.

Brian Brandt: Yes, well I've been married 25 years, I have three kids, two of them have birthday's this week. One will be 22 he's a senior in college, I've got another one that's starting college this semester, and then I've got a freshman in high school. So for the last 22 years they have been a lot of my investment of time and energy, and have loved every minute of it.

And then I like to mountain bike when it's not a hundred degrees, when it's not a hundred degrees it's a little more fun, but otherwise I like to hit the gym, I like to play

tennis, to swim, I like to do a lot outdoors and recreational. I like to fish, especially fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, that's kind of one of my favorites and I like to read too both fiction and nonfiction.

Michael C.: I guess what type of books?

Brian Brandt: Well about six years ago I was on a beach trip, and I had a stack of leadership books about a foot tall, and my son leans over to me says dad have you ever read a book that doesn't have leadership in the title or subtitle, and it's like point well-taken there and so I started reading more fiction. So I read a lot of books on leadership and business type stuff, but starting about six years ago I started reading more fiction as well.

Michael C.: Okay, so this is a great opportunity for this question here. If for a leader out there that is getting books and saying hey want to become a better leader and they're saying hey, I have this book and it says this about leadership, I have this one over here, what's a good fiction book that we could read?

Brian Brandt: A good fiction? I personally read a lot of like CIA kind of stuff. So Lee Child's is one of my favorite authors, he's written the Jack Reacher novels and so I read a quite a bit of, well no I read every one of his. So basically around every November he puts a book out I read it in three days, and then I wait 362 days for the next.

Michael C.: All right, so you really do like to read?

Brian Brandt: I do, yes.

Michael C.: Great. What was your first job?

Brian Brandt: My first job, well I think I did a few things entrepreneurially in elementary school, but after that I distinctly remember I swept floors at an elementary school. So once I was in seventh grade I would finish school, finish practice and then I would head over to an elementary school and for two hours I would sweep every floor in that building, and did that for four years.

And looking back pretty phenomenal amount of responsibility that they put on a pretty young kid, you know I locked down the building and all of that. And so that was my first real job, the one where you knew a paycheck was coming.

Michael C.: What kind of entrepreneurial things did you do before your first job?

Brian Brandt: I picked up cans and newspapers at different people's homes, not just off the street, not that there'd be anything wrong with that. But I picked those up and then we took them to a plant where they would pay us for those, and I would recycle them.

A little bit older around when I was fifteen I taught tennis lessons, so I discovered that the one tennis pro we had in our town of a hundred thousand people she was pregnant and wasn't going to teach tennis for a while, and I said looks like an opportunity so I started teaching tennis to both kids and adults at age 15, those were kind of some of the primary things I did.

Michael C.: You still play tennis today?

Brian Brandt: I do, yes.

Michael C.: That's great, so I guess all these things added up. Where'd you go to college?

Brian Brandt: I went to the University of Oklahoma for my undergrad.

Michael C.: Boomer sooner.

Brian Brandt: Amen, and got an accounting degree and then really didn't use it a whole lot, but the business sense was really nice to have. And then about 20 years later I got a master's in global leadership, and that was kind of a turning point in my life where I really took a lot of the leadership lessons that had really been poured into me, I'd gone through leadership Tyler and then with this master's in global leadership I really decided that I really want to create an organization that goes out and helps companies, nonprofits and individuals really become more than what they are right now.

Michael C.: That's wonderful, and I guess in those 20 years between college and getting your master's, were there some things you learned along the way in that 20 years that really sparked that and compound it?

Brian Brandt: It really did, my first 10 years of my career I just had some fantastic leaders that really invested in me, really taught me a lot about caring for people, about creating an organization of integrity, of having a strong faith, of communicating incredibly well both interpersonally but also how to get up in front of a group and present effectively.

Those were just you know planning all of those kinds of things, you know some of the just more tactical things like budgeting and things like that. But there were just some great

leaders that poured into me and that really kind of in hindsight created an incredible foundation that made me want to make that kind of culture in other organizations.

Michael C.: Did you find yourself constantly looking and seeking out of the leaders, or were these just situations that kind of evolved?

Brian Brandt: The first place I worked right out of college for ten years was Kanaka camps up in Branson Missouri, and just had a very strong legacy, a strong culture and some really strong leaders that those men and women they were willing and I was in a position to kind of be a sponge and take it all in.

Michael C.: Well it sounds like your 20 years before your masters you got to learn a lot and came across some wonderful people that compounded and led you into getting your master's in global leadership. And whenever you got your masters, I guess what was the next step?

Brian Brandt: You know the next step for me career-wise was I started a company that did a lot of what we do now with core insights, but it was a different company. But we also did some marketing type stuff and advisement there, but we also did a lot of employee training and leadership training and some strategic planning.

And then at the same time I started as executive pastor of a church, the multi-site church, and so I did those two things simultaneously for about seven years, and then there were some weeks where it was two very full-time jobs and it came to a point where I went you know what I can have a greater impact and influence by going out and starting core insights.

Michael C.: So that's going to lead me into the next question here, what is time management?

Brian Brandt: So it probably ought to be called time juggling you know, because we're all juggling. You know rarely do you find anybody that just you know hey I've got more time than I know what to do with, I mean even retired people tend to say how busy they are.

So really it's managing tasks, it's managing your calendar, it's managing yourself, it's managing others, so time management is really kind of just taking all of that on and really going am I going to make sure that I've got the time to do what's most important.

Michael C.: And so whenever you're laying the foundation for time management, what are some of the key aspects of that?

Brian Brandt: I think there's two primary aspects that I would look at, first of all you've got to understand who you are, you've got to understand how you're wired, what the strengths are, what your weaknesses are, what you really care about and that's really I think the heartbeat of it. And really closely tied to that is where are you going, you know first of all you got to know where you are and who you are, but then you've got to really understand and think through where do you want to go.

It's kind of like a vacation, you talked about recently going on vacation you knew where you wanted to go, otherwise if you didn't you would have maybe packed the wrong things, you would have headed in the wrong direction there's a lot of analogies you could make there. But really understanding clearly where do you want life to go, and I would say life meaning more than just your career but just your entire life, where do you want it to go.

Michael C.: More times than not do individuals and leaders have the answer to that question when you ask that?

Brian Brandt: 98% of the time no and the 2% you would know and you would recognize that they've got a clear purpose and a clear path. But it's something that through some really good questions you can quickly, and I mean you don't want to rush it, but you can quickly get to the place where you go okay I've got a vision for where I want things to go in my life, and what I want life to look like. And so a lot of times all like in a coaching session or even occasionally in some of the courses that we teach, we really help people think through what do you want life to look like, ideally I like people to look at what do I want life to look like ten years from now and I press them on that.

But if they really can't five years will work, anything less than five years is just too short. And so if you can really articulate what you want life to look like, then you really can start to move in that direction and either be purposeful about creating situations that get you closer to that, or you can answer situations and questions and really make decisions based on where you want to go.

Michael C.: How important do you think it is for a leader to have confidence when they're starting that journey of better time management, because something that sparked in my mind just now was when I'm thinking about that and you're saying you know have a clear cut, you want to know what direction you're headed.

For an individual or for a leader that may lacks a little bit of confidence in says well I really don't know if I should reach that high, maybe I should reach a little bit lower. What can you do to combat that when you're getting started on your journey?

Brian Brandt: Yes, and I will say depending upon where you are, somebody that's 23 years old and fresh out of college I wouldn't really expect them to have it 10 years, 10 years would be pretty challenging because a lot of what needs to happen in these next few years for that person is experience.

They need to experience things that are either in a specialty that they really care about, or they need to get a lot of different experiences so they can really see hey where do you shine, what are you passionate about, what are you great at those kinds of things. So I really do think the quicker you can get to the point where you know yourself and know and understand really what you're passionate about what you're great at the better, but it's not odd for that to take quite a few years in a career path.

Michael C.: In gauging your timeline and your professional journey, how far along were you on your path before you really were able to say maybe get that 10-year goal in your mind?

Brian Brandt: Oh I think I understood the importance of it as I worked on my Master's. Yes, so I was in my late 30s at that point, because I really do think I think the future is really understood best by looking at your past, and understanding what experiences you have, what spiritual gifts you have, what natural abilities you have, what acquired skills I really do think that God uses those to give you a clear path on where you're going.

I mean right now I wouldn't go I really think I'm going to be a surgeon, because for one I have no medical background, I'm not that good with small precision those kinds of things, it'd be pretty goofy for me to do that at this point. But on my tenure path is writing books, speaking increasingly, I mean I speak a lot but increasingly speaking at national or international conferences those kinds of things, because that's where my history takes me.

Michael C.: How important, so like let's flashback to ten years before you got your masters. If you were setting up your goals ten years before that, how much would it look like what actually came out, I guess did you have that in mind back then.

And what I'm trying to get to here is how important was it to actually get some experience under your belt as a leader to be able to even formulate that plan and kind of where you want to take your life?

Brian Brandt: Yes, and so I would say those first ten years of my career is pretty incredibly important to get those varied experiences. But I would say that somewhat again knowing myself, knowing that I like variety, if I would have gone into accounting where I actually practiced accounting and was in an office looking at spreadsheets and things like that that would not have been good. But having that accounting degree, and having that as a part of my overall makeup, that was really good, but I like variety, and so having a career in camping for the first ten years really gave me a lot of varied experiences. There were seasons where I would recruit, there were season I would travel the country and literally do three or four hundred interviews in a year.

So at 26 to have interviewed 1,500 people that's pretty unique, so that really was part of my foundation. But it also I had a lot of opportunities to speak in front of groups, kind of a different city every night for about three months. The camp experience where you're on property serving families and helping kids and doing athletics, and being on the lake and those kinds of things, those were great too. And even an internship that I did there, where wow some of it was marketing some of it was recruiting, some of it was physical labor going through a covert, I mean character building.

Michael C.: Yes, I think a lot of the challenges facing especially younger leaders today is like we're talking about how do I spend my time and also my spending time on something that's going to benefit my future, how important though is it and we'll get back on the time management. But how important is all of this to be thinking of others and not necessarily yourself?

Brian Brandt: Well personally I think that's why we're here, and so I very much have a servant leadership mindset to both my own life and I'm sure one could find flaws in that, but certainly that's the way I have the mindset. But also then to really have that ingested into all of the trainings that we do, and the culture of our company.

So absolutely I think that should drive us, I think that we should make the world a better place, leave it better than we found it and that comes into our families and that comes into the organizations that we work with, work for and then our volunteer opportunities as well.

Michael C.: Wonderful. So as we're getting back onto time management, you've said you'd like to whenever you're starting down that journey you'd like to start the a 10-year goal, have a 10-year goal in mind, but what are some other good starting points as it relates to time management?

Brian Brandt: I think clear goals, so playing off of that hey where do you want to be, well what are the things that are going to get you into the into that area and get you further along. I think a lot of times we find that if we can start to break some of that down and go you know what if in 2019 I do X, then I will be closer to achieving my 10 year plan. And sometimes that's with education, sometimes that's with experience, sometimes that's with relationships those are the kinds of things that typically help move us to our greater goals, but breaking those down by year is really important.

And so from there really looking at different seasons that's okay by the end of the fall I really want to make sure that I moved the ball down the field in some different areas, maybe it's that you have a better understanding of something or you have more knowledge or maybe you've tried it three different ways to see really what works well, but really starting to kind of break down some of those long term goals into short term goals is really important.

Michael C.: So on a day-to-day basis, as far as time management goes, how effective have you seen some of the tools that are out there that we can use as far as planners, phones, tablets, computers now I have outlooks tied to my phone, my laptop, my computer I get 14 notifications every time something's happening. How effective are these tools?

Brian Brandt: I think they can be incredibly effective, but there are so many tools out there I think you've got to find what works for you. Some people really like to measure and evaluate every single day minute by minute, and I don't typically think that's a great way to go on a real regular basis, I am a big believer by the way. There's some different ways that you can track, and I think I really encourage everybody once or twice a year really track every 15 minute segment for a one-week period. I've consistently done that over the last six or eight years, and what I find is there's always some kind of insight to be had and so it may be that I tend to take a little bit more time.

So for example, one year I found that some of my informal coaching sessions that I would do those really went a lot longer than they needed to, and I could have shaved and made those more like an hour to an hour and 15 minutes but on this one time when I did some evaluation, they tended to be an hour and 45 minutes and I went you know what I really think I can trim those down and gain some time. And then sometimes it's things that you can either multitask and do, or just make more effective of your time, so I am a big believer in finding out okay based on how you're wired, what's going to work for you.

Michael C.: So yes the same thing is not going to work for everybody, that's so true. And whenever we're looking at tools, I can go on and I can read reviews and everything else, but I've tried some different tools myself like online project management tools and those things, and I found some work and some just don't.

And then also if you're working in a team, you have to find something that's going to work for everybody and we've tried to work with project management tools especially across different generation gaps and different generations here. We've seen you have to find time management tools that work for multiple people and not just maybe yourself, but...

Brian Brandt: Well into I'd add to that Michael that really it's just like a lot of tools, it's how well do you use it and there's a lot of great tools out there, but if you only use it half the way it was

designed or you're not very consistent of entering things, and it's not really going to work that well.

Michael C.: Yes, one thing that I found a challenge with is okay I'm very motivated for good time management, I'm motivated to have all my ducks in a row, but I'm not very motivated to put this in a calendar every single time I'm walking out of my office it needs to be in the calendar. I think trying to find that good balance of time management is something that's important, but like you said it's different for everybody.

Brian Brandt: It really is.

Michael C.: How important is it to just do something as simple as planning your day?

Brian Brandt: I'm a big believer in really planning the most important things of your day. So I typically walk into the office and I have a mindset and sometimes I will write it down, but today will be a great day if I fill in the blank. And so there's typically a couple of different aspects, a couple of issues, a couple of items that if I do those things on that day, if I get that accomplished it's going to be a great day and everything else is just a bonus.

And so that's kind of my mindset, and most of the time you'll find that those items are on my calendar. So while certainly I calendar like this appointment with you, I'm also going to calendar big significant items that make it where oh this is a great day, this will be a great week if I accomplish those things, so I block out those most important things. Now if I get interrupted, I don't freak out about that, I just move it to another segment in my week. And so I've got flexibility, I'm comfortable with that flexibility because certainly when we're in leadership roles there's almost always going to be some interruptions, and so how we deal with those interruptions and some of those are very useful, purposeful interruptions.

We need to engage with people at that time, and we'll probably talk about it later, but there are also some interruptions that aren't effective and we can train people to not do those or to do those less.

Michael C.: So planning your day out at the night and the morning are these things you go back through, do you review that I guess before your day starts?

Brian Brandt: Yes, and research has shown this is, we really should have written down everything that needs to get done. So right now if you and I were talking and you sparked a thought that made me go oh what I need to do this, I should write it down and then I should translate it to whatever form that I use and I use outlook as well. And so yes I can find it on my phone, I can find it on my laptop if I'm away I can even log in and get that information. But some people work better, because they're in an office, 1 office a lot, they may have a wall, and they may use post-it notes, not posted ad. But write down everything because what the research has shown is when we think of something and we don't write it down, then we start to wonder about it at different times and it becomes an interruption.

And so a perfect example is as Gabby had emailed me about some things that she wanted in advance of this show, and I put it down, I wrote it on my to-do list but what I found was knowing what my schedule was between the time that she communicated and then the time that I'm here with you, I knew that I had a really busy couple of weeks.

And so in the back of my mind I was concerned about it, and I went what I'm going to move that up on the priority list and turn it in to her quite a bit in advance of what I normally would have, just because I knew what my schedule was and I knew that it was going to cause me some angst, and it was going to be a distraction to some of the projects that I was working on. And so by getting things down and then addressing them at the right time, even if we put them on a calendar then we can kind of forget about it until the right time.

Michael C.: So just a couple of examples of things that we may put on a calendar, haircut would that go on there?

Brian Brandt: Sure, yes. Haircut, I think things like make sales calls, depending upon a person's role. There are some of the people that I coach that don't naturally get out and about with their people, they're leaders but that just doesn't come natural, they like being in their office, they're perfectly content to sit there for three hours.

I tell them put on your calendar, get up and walk around the building, because they need to get up and they need to manage by walking around, they need to interact, they need to walk into some of their people's office and talk about hey how did that go, how was your weekend those kinds of things, and so it's really whatever is important.

Michael C.: So it sounds like self-improvement can definitely be a part of time management.

Brian Brandt: It absolutely should be, I mean I feel like all of us need to be lifelong learners, there's always changes in culture and technology, in our industries and so absolutely. But if you talk to people at the end of the year and ask them how much time they committed to some of the things that they said were really valuable, a lot of times we leave them out and so if we don't get it on the calendar and ultimately before that get it on a to-do list, most of the time it won't get done.

Michael C.: How much time do you think we spend just thinking and worrying about things that are really probably at the end of the day not as important to our goals as the things that I guess some things we could probably replace that time with?

Brian Brandt: I think it's a pretty wide continuum, I think there are people that are more on that realistic side, and again it goes back to really knowing yourself. I think there's people that

tend to be warriors, tend to be more mindful and reflective of things and then there's people that are just goers. And so some of those people probably need to reflect more on some of those things, and some of those people need to reflect less, so I think it really depends.

Michael C.: So we've got our day started and we're moving through our calendar, kind of what's the middle of the day look like?

Brian Brandt: A short answer it ends upon the person, but I do think they're understanding when you're at your best and what kind of projects work well for different people at different times. For example I'm an early bird, and so I can wake up and get after it and really be productive on some creative items and on like developing future trainings or developing keynotes and things like that, those are good tasks for me to do right off the bat in the morning.

In the afternoon I tend to do more phone calls, I tend to do some more of the kind of rote activities that might be necessary, following up on email and things like that. So in my experience both me personally but also in the coaching, as well as in the training it really depends upon the person, finding their right rhythm and again looking back at what really matters and what's the priorities for them.

Michael C.: Okay, and as you're setting those priorities and those things say it's Sunday night or Wednesday night in the middle of the week, how much time do you actually devote to your planning?

Brian Brandt: Because I put everything on a list and I can do a pretty quick scan of that list and identified my priorities. And then some of it is I've got priorities made for it, if I have a speaking engagement that's lined up 18 months in advance and it's going to take travel time, and then delivery time at the event and all of that that's clearly needs to be my

priority and my focus. But some of those down times, like the travel time and things like that I'll really look at and plan and look at a couple of weeks out and go okay what can I do to maximize that time, what do I have that's coming up that I need to be mindful of.

So for example this week I'm flying to Washington DC on Thursday, and I will have some things actually already printed and in a folder that I'll kind of have and it'll say DC on the outside, and I'll just be putting some things in there so that I can read those things and prepare for some of the future weeks.

Michael C.: Okay, and then you'll have that folder ready to go?

Brian Brandt: Yes, and so I'll have some kind of different ones. But I won't do things that are maybe six months out, but I'll be doing the things that are more six weeks out.

Michael C.: Because I take it that you're not looking at a calendar at 8:30 on Sunday night saying oh what I need to do Monday morning, I'm guessing you probably have these things it's like you said you already know what's coming up ahead of time.

And I think that would be something that we would encourage our listeners, and even myself to be doing a better job of is staying on top of your planning for your time management, versus letting your time management also include your planning process.

Brian Brandt: Yes, I think so. So normally on Friday I'm looking at a few weeks out, and I'm pretty aware of what's coming, what's going to take extra time, what's kind of just I need to tweak a little bit and things like that. But I will say Michael I mean there are times where I fail on that and things sneak up on me, and I'm like oh wow.

Last week, there was a time where I went you know what I'm a little behind and I had an 8:30 event in town that night, and the day before I talked to my wife and kids and found out what they were doing, and I'd stayed at work from 5:00 to 8:00 and then left for that

event. That extra three hours got me to a place where I was really in good shape, and was able to enjoy the weekend with them and things like that. But it kind of snuck up on me a little bit where I felt like I was a little behind, so yes I do well but I'm not perfect.

Michael C.: Well and also you fit in time to do your physical activities as well and spend time with your family, are those things that you block off in your calendar or do you just as your weeks go and you say okay it looks like I have dinner available on Tuesday night?

Brian Brandt: Well I as much as possible make the evenings and most of the weekend is pretty focused on family, unless there is some special event. And I will say there are some events where I will take my kids, and take them with me and man they've learned some great skills on how to interact and communicate because of taking them to those events.

So if it's a Chamber of Commerce event and I've got a table, then I'm probably going to take a kid with me and they learn how to do all that and you see some real benefits to that. So my kids know that I love spending time with them, so there's a lot of things that I do with them and if I'm running some errands whether it's work or as a family I'll try to get them to go with me and spend time, and then - we really block out some time for just some one-on-one and do trips with them and things like that.

Michael C.: So what have people shared with you is their biggest challenges from a time management perspective?

Brian Brandt: The one I get every time that I teach at time management course is email, a lot of people will talk about it in the training but most of the time people don't have as one of their success factors or priorities or something that somebody's really excited about, nobody says I'm really fired up to go to the office and return email today. So making sure that you kind of manage that email to a point where you really understand what do I need to

address, what can I delegate, what do I need to take care of right now, what should I calendar those kinds of things.

So just even in the last year I've got a new system, because I didn't really like the way I was handling email and after I came back from delivering a time management course and when I've got to tackle this for me. And so what I have done it's not odd because I travel quite a bit, so I'll go through my email and things that I need to address in a pretty timely way I put in a specific folder, and that's the first place I go every day is I go to that folder to address the big items, the priority items and then I'll go through and check the incoming email from the last 12 hours or whatever that is.

And then I'll look at that. But that's one where I think it can eat a lot of people's time, and to try to figure out how do I make that work and work well, because it's going to match up with my priorities, that's really important.

Michael C.: So if I'm understanding that correct like saying outlook you have a folder that maybe we'll just call it priorities or priority.

Brian Brandt: Well I'll tell you what I call it, I call it A space emails and the reason I did that is because that way it stays up at the top.

Brian Brandt: Yes. So A space emails you get an email at 3 o'clock, another one at 3:02 and then another one at 3:10 all of them are fairly important, but you're busy you drop all of them in your priority folder?

Brian Brandt: Yes.

Michael C.: You just move them over there?

Brian Brandt: I just move them over there.

Michael C.: Okay.

Brian Brandt: And so then for example then I might head off or I might have a coaching session, well when I get into the office the next morning I go straight to those A emails and I look at what do I need to address right then. Or if I'm flying then I'll go through those at that point, and then I'll look over.

If something's going to take 10 seconds to give a response, then I don't move it to A emails and then then respond, I just respond right away. But it's really helped me again with that angst and that wandering in the back of your mind; it really makes me go I know where to go to find the emails that I really need to address.

Michael C.: I really like that, and that could be very helpful.

Brian Brandt: It's been one of the most helpful things that I've done. And that's part of the beauty of getting to teach these courses is sometimes I go oh yes I used to do this, or what should I do and they're good reminders for me.

Michael C.: This kind of goes back to what we were talking about earlier, and that experience is just so important for all of this especially leadership. I think a young leader can overlook at some times and think that they got to be in a certain place, but I look back on my career and just look back over the last five years the things I've learned and still the mistakes I make, but had I not made those mistakes or not continuing to make them I feel like I do

get a little bit better after each one or at least I learned something I don't need to do again.

Brian Brandt: Yes.

Michael C.: Same thing with I mean just like this email, that's a great example of experience coming up with a better system.

Brian Brandt: Right, and its trial and error and sometimes you can learn just some great tips from different people and pick them up and they work perfectly for you or it's just one of those aha moments for sure. But yes to relate it back to the leadership point that you're making, I had a an older gentleman I was CEO of an organization and he was the chairman of the board, and as a young leader there were several times where I thought something was just really serious and really a big deal, and he would say to me Brian it looks like a mountain, but it's probably a speed bump, Brian it looks like a mountain but it's probably a speed bump.

And sure enough as I looked back at my time there, there were no things that came back and they were just gigantic mountains, they were just more speed bumps. But as a young leader I felt like they were just gigantic or they were going to be devastating to the organization if we didn't address them just exactly right, and it's sure we needed to give them the proper attention, but none of them were as bad as we as I thought.

Michael C.: Have you read the book The Alchemist?

Brian Brandt: No.

Michael C.: It's very good, just kind of about of a boy's journey and how he comes across what appeared to be mountains, but had he not gone through that mountain he wouldn't be able to get into his next mountain, and so it's a really interesting, really good read.

Brian Brandt: It sounds like.

Michael C.: So you've given us some tips for time management, especially in regards to a difficulty and a challenge that we all face in email. Kind of what should we all do is our next step after this podcast, what are some maybe some action on them so we can take away?

Brian Brandt: More than anything I think it's clarity on where you're going, clarity on your goals and some of those might be goals that have been given to you, some of them might be goals that you've created, they may be goals towards your own development all of those can play in, but some of it may be just really having clarity, maybe spending some time with your boss and really talking about okay this is what I see as my priorities for the next six months, how do you see it? And really getting some clarity on that and then maybe do the same thing with your home life fitness goals, personal goals, growth goals whatever that might be, but really have clarity and then to say okay in light of that what do I need to do to move towards those and am I doing the right things.

For example if you have a significant goal, really be mindful of what are the most important or impacting things you can do towards your goal. So there might be 20 different things, but what's the one or two or three things that is most likely to have the most profound impact and focus on that.

And again go back and calendar them, put them on the calendar and say you know what I'm going to commit three hours to that. Because most of the time we can find the time to do what really matters to us, but if we're not clear on what our goals are or where we're going then just our time can kind of get eaten up and taken away.

Michael C.: Yes, I've seen time just go by from sitting here saying okay I have a challenge in front of me and I'll start to work on that challenge, and if you don't make a whole lot of headway you're still in the same place you were, and you just spend a bunch of time focusing on something that maybe I didn't have a clear-cut goal or a clear-cut plan before I previously started that task.

For myself that can be a challenge at times, as well as just really just pre-planning. A lot of times we'll come up right on something or the day before and it's saying hey okay this going on tomorrow I have this going on this afternoon, I got to get prepared for it. Are those kinds of things always going to really just be there though for someone that's busy, or do you think there is a way to really kind of start working those things out over time?

Brian Brandt: I think we can get better and better on that, I mean for example just with the story you just shared one of the things that I've learned over time is instead of waiting closer to the end to start something, starting sooner because what happens is then when I'm driving somewhere, I can be giving some thought or attention to that. Or maybe I can listen to a podcast about a specific subject or a TED talk where I can gain some, and so I'm just getting, I'm adding little different components along the way and then when I get closer to the deadline I've got a lot of different input on that, and whereas if I would have waited till the very end then it's whatever I can kind of grab at the last minute to impact that project.

So I do think that, I think learning to say no can be a big one, if we always say yes to everything and there aren't things that really move us towards what we want to accomplish with our lives, then we can be very distracted. There are a lot of people that are typically trying to get some of our time, and some of those are very important and I'm sure not saying say no to everything, but say yes to the things that really matter and really work for you, and are in your wheelhouse.

Michael C.: And that immediately just makes me think of what we were talking about earlier having your goals, knowing what you're going after and whenever your goals and what you want to accomplish you can start asking yourself is this contributing to that or is it not contributing to it. And whenever you get it clear-cut, a lot of times your answers will be clear-cut as well from what I've seen.

Brian Brandt: Absolutely.

Michael C.: It's not easy though, time management can be a challenge for all of us, I've had seasons in my life where time management has been very good and I've had seasons in my life when time management has just been an afterthought. I will take top management and good time management those seasons of my life over the other all the time, but I do believe there's challenges that face all of us. And kind of ending with this, well we as leaders sometimes try to a lot too much on our abilities instead of planning and making sure that we have all the T's crossed and I's dotted, because I mean I've seen good leaders, what kind of comes to mind for me is maybe even an athlete, maybe not being as prepared as they should have been for starting a game, or not being and maybe staying out late than out before a big ball game or something.

Those are the kind of things that come into my mind, and that sometimes I think especially leaders that are blessed with a lot of abilities, I guess how can we in a sense get over yourself or get over ourselves and say hey I don't need to lean so much of my abilities, but focus more on the planning and preparation and that way my abilities can then flourish in that moment?

Brian Brandt: Yes, absolutely. I don't know if you ever read the checklist manifesto by Atul Gawande, but his premise is that even when we are very skilled in specific areas, if we will have a checklist then it allows us the flexibility to handle the situations that come up. And he uses a lot of examples from surgery, a lot of examples from aeronautics, and then some examples from the business world. And so for example with every training, I've been

training for a lot of years I have a checklist that I go through before I leave the office for every training.

And what that does is it makes sure that when I arrive I've got everything I need for a successful training, and then I can purely focus on the environment, the people, delivering that message powerfully because I'm not wondering did we bring the right pins or markers or the handouts and things like that, there's a hundred definiteness that that is already done and so absolutely. But really what we're talking about there is no one thing; I mean it is truly a series of things. So things as simple as a few years ago I started putting my keys in the exact same spot at my house as I walk in the door every single day, and similarly in my office because what I found is I was wasting some time and getting frustrated going around trying to find my keys, that's a very simple step that makes me a little bit more effective, a little bit sharper.

Things like rewarding myself, I mean there's times where I've got a big project that I need to really focus six or twelve hours on in a given week, and I'll reward myself. If I will sit in there not take any phone calls, not check my email and work on that solid for three hours, I might take myself to my favorite barbeque restaurant for lunch. So there's a lot of different things that we can do that will really help us to be more effective, and just live a more fulfilled life and a more effective life.

Michael C.: It sounds like discipline is a big word in all of this.

Brian Brandt: That's a great word, yes.

Michael C.: So and we'll finish out with this, what can leaders be doing not only for themselves but you and I are both talking about time management today, but we both work with others that listen to us and look for us for guidance. So what are some things that maybe we could take back to our people, and say hey this can help you with your time management, how can you do that with a group of five to ten people?

Brian Brandt: Right, well I think first of all have that mindset, that mindset right there and not everybody does or they don't think they have the time for it, so that's important so put it down on your calendar. I mean that's the simplest aspect of it is really investing your people is important, and it will return great rewards so put it on the calendar. But then think about what does that look like, what does look like for you that's really genuine, it may be bringing in training, it may be going through a book together, it may be sitting down one-on-one with them and saying hey explain to me what your overall priorities are and I mean which may take them outside your organization, and hopefully you've developed a culture where they feel the freedom to do that.

And then really to understand and then making sure are you clear what your goals are for this season, the number of times where I asked that when I walk into an organization and I kind of get blank stares is quite often. And so making sure that our people really know what success looks like for them, and how that contributes to the overall success of the organization, that I think right there is really incredibly vital and then it sets the stage for our people to manage their time well and give them those tips, and share with them things that work, and ask really good open-ended questions of them so that they can really have that self-discovery themselves.

Michael C.: Man that's awesome, I think that's a great way to I guess look at this with your team, look at it with multiple individuals and then try to get everybody on the same page as far as time management, but also working towards common goals and everybody pulling the wagon.

Brian Brandt: Absolutely.

Michael C.: So I guess this pretty much concludes our show here, and one thing since we've been talking about time management I think Brian will agree with me is don't give up on it, it's

very important to stick with it. I know that just using a calendar it may take you three weeks before you actually figure out what you're doing.

Start light, get used to it, don't feel like you let yourself down because you've missed something by an hour or you put work out in your calendar and you didn't get it done that day, don't give up on this whole time management thing maybe you set for yourself after this podcast, stick with it and stay positive because I think there will be some encouraging results in your future if you do stick with this, and find what works for you.

Brian Brandt: Absolutely.

Michael C.: So Brian how can our listeners get in contact with you?

Brian Brandt: There's a few different ways, the core insights Facebook page is a good way, our website is Coreinsightsleadership.com they can do that. My email is Brian@coreinsightsleadership.com and then my phone number is 903-534-1525 so any of those ways are pretty good ways to get in touch with us and see what we're doing.

Michael C.: Is there anything you have coming up where maybe we can learn more about you or some of the things that you're trying to teach?

Brian Brandt: For sure, most of the time those are posted on our Facebook page, and so that's a good place to look the core insights Facebook page. But we have two Dale Carnegie courses, so we're the East Texas representative for Dale Carnegie, and Dale Carnegie does a lot of great programs on leadership and communication, really helps people gain self-confidence, emotional intelligence and things like that. We have one coming up, a

nine week course starting on September 11th in Longview, and then we've got another nine week course starting in Tyler on January 31st of 2019.

So those are some good opportunities as well, we're consistently about once a month we're doing a program with work hub which is new co-working space in Tyler, two locations and so WorkhubTyler.com would be a good place to look and see, I know we've got a time management course that we're going to do in conjunction with them coming up, but we'll usually do at least one monthly program with them. And usually those are just about one hour, and so it's kind of a nice way to come in and kind of be refueled in-flight if you will.

Michael C.: Well so if you live in the area, you live in the East Texas area and you're wanting to maybe brush up or even sharpen those leadership skills, it sounds like there's some great ways we're going to be able to do that here coming up in the near future.

Brian Brandt: Absolutely, those are all open to the public, but yes we travel all over the country doing trainings inside organizations. So if you're in Timbuktu and you need us to come your way, we'll do that as well.

Michael C.: Awesome. Well Brian it was wonderful having you on the show today, and hopefully we can have you back at some point, maybe you talk about another topic or even double down on time management, this has been a really good time today.

Brian Brandt: Well I've appreciated the opportunity and good to be with you Michael, and yes there's a myriad of topics that I think we would both enjoy discussing.

Michael C.: Yes sir. I'll tell you folks we have some wonderful leadership here in East Texas, thank you for listening to our show. We appreciate the comments and the feedback we're getting,

and if you ever have any comments or would like to let us know, maybe something you'd like to hear in the show or something you would like to even have make mention in the show send us a email to Podcast@EnergyWeldFab.com you can find our show at EnergyWeldFab.com/podcast as well as on all the major podcast outlets.

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