

THE ACADEMY OF ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

Paper presented by

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The Death of a Contractor  
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The ride down from the peak has started.

An illness causes a further need to use his energy judiciously. The slide down gains momentum.

A further delegation of powers, some successful and some not.

The failure of one delegation creates failures in others. No longer is our contractor capable of hurling himself into the breach.

The climb to success has a magnetic attraction. The fall from success causes the magnet to turn. Employees are repelled and look for another rising personality to secure their future.

Our contractor with greying hair and furrowed brow has decided the reins belong in the hands of a younger man. The choice of selection is difficult for the pickings are now much slimmer.

There is no time now for training in banking, union relations, insurance, cash flow, tax deferments, job control, personnel relations, construction law, accounting, engineering and other courses that are necessary in order to keep a substantial business in line. Failure now feeds on failure like a fire in the wind. It is not necessary for us to view the end. All or part turns to ashes. The death of a contractor is now a foregone conclusion.

Let us not brood, let us not lament, let us install a warning signal on this cycle in life.

A successful coach provides a capable back up player for his star from the beginning not when he is ready to retire. Replacement weapons are being planned even as the latest wonder missile is being launched.

Commitments to others to insure the continuity and continuing success of our contracting firms should be made while we are soaring to our zenith. Then we are in demand. Ironically, this is when we feel the least need for sharing our years of effort.

The recognition of this may well insure us our happy ending; a golden state of euphoria, green fields to stroll in, grandchildren to romp with, a large puddle to splash in, time uncommitted but to your whims. A state of such security that security never need be thought of.

Thus as it was in the beginning it should so be the ending.

As with all things there is a beginning, so let us start from there.

There are those carefree days of innocent childhood. There, life was for the enjoyment of the moment; a constant state of euphoria. Green grass to roll in, a dog to hug, a puddle to splash in; a world so secure that there is no thought of security.

These are important moments in ones life. As we outgrow them we will spend the rest of our lives trying to re-achieve them. Some will, through happenstance, planning or by the good graces of the Lord, in their golden years, be successful in their quest; others will not.

Let us look at the successful ones. This is the pleasant way but it has been done so often that like an overused commercial it has lost its impact. Failure too has its impact, the fear of failure. Fear, man's greatest motivating force.

We started with a child and find he has grown to manhood. Sound of mind and body, confident in his own ability, tenaciously working towards his goal. Not only from sunrise to sunset but long past the hours when others have extinguished their lights to receive much needed rest.

Through ability and tremendous physical effort he has met every challenge. Adversity is nought but a problem to be solved. He now becomes recognized as a leader, one who has the knack for being able to overcome insurmountable obstacles. He is elected, appointed and nominated to positions of leadership in business and community. Workers are attracted to him due to his ability to soar high. They grasp firmly, the ride is exhilarating. Some employees have many of the attributes of the man we are studying. They too have their adrenalin pounding through their veins. They too wish to become the ultimate leader. The realization that the total excellence and physical ability of the man at the top of this firm will preclude them for many, many years of obtaining or sharing the leadership of this firm is a detriment. Thus, the same ability that attracted them will cause them to leave.

Our contractor easily fills every void with eager replacements or through his own time and effort. Problem after problem is solved. Time continues to march on.

Every hill has a peak. The span of every man's life contains one. The view is majestic, the adoration of his fellow man bathes him in his moment of glory. A benevolent God gives him this moment to luxuriate. Let us spend this moment with him, breathe the air, enjoy the view from the top. There is a twinge of sadness for we know this man shall never enjoy this moment again.

A slight twinge, a yawn, a startling realization that his body like others needs rest. Taper off on the extra activities and let one of the boys put the job to bed. Oh! dear God, how did we ever get so far off on that one. He will never get taken in on a job like that again. Obstacles become accepted as hazards and wisdom and experience dictate that he respect them.