

Growth Experts Podcast

What do your employees have to do with growing your business?

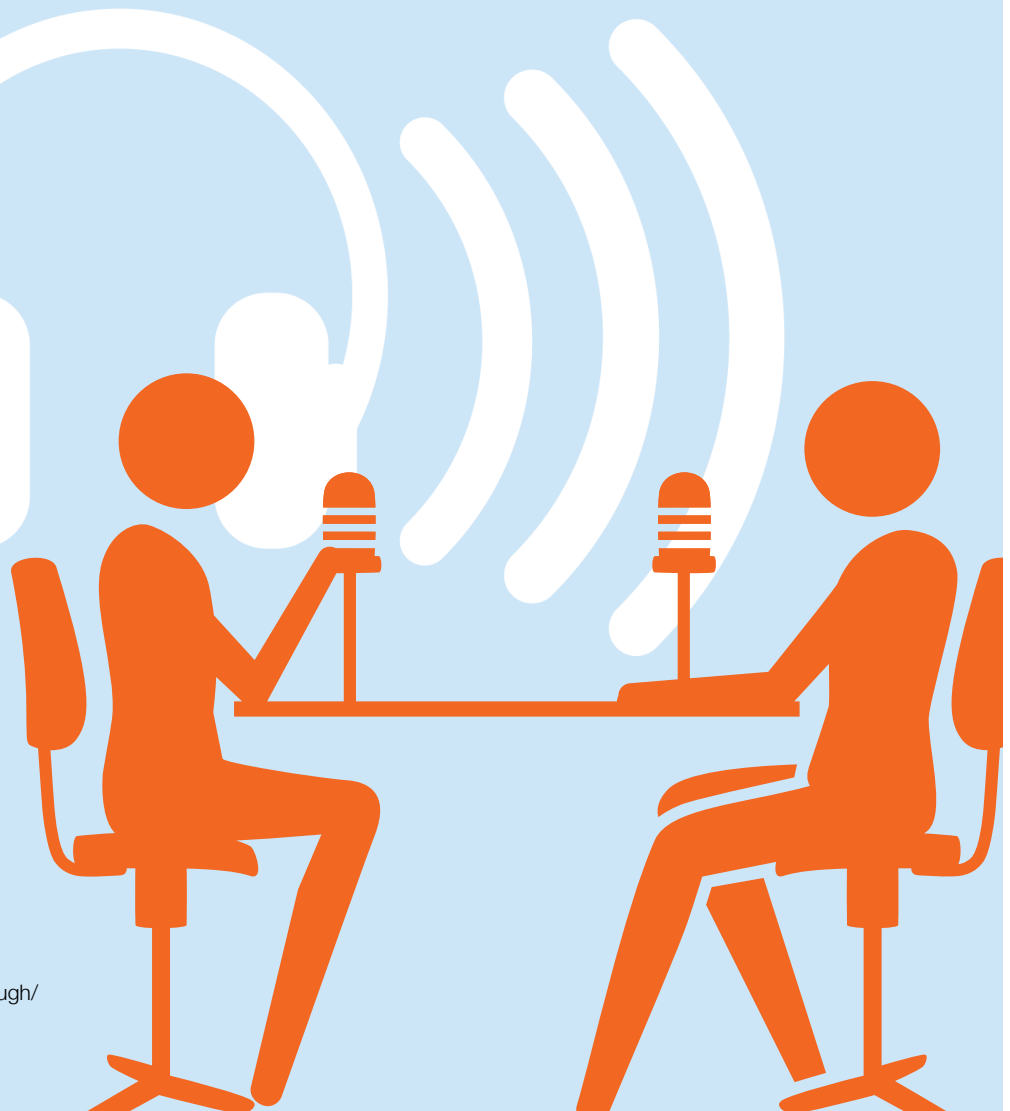
Just about everything. Listen to Growth Experts' Dennis Brown and John Fairclough of The Resicom Group as they discuss unlocking the potential of your company's biggest assets, your employees.

About the Host

"My name is Dennis Brown and I am what some people call, a serial entrepreneur. I like to call it hard headed because I refuse to quit even in the face of extreme adversity! I am also the author of "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful LinkedIn Users", which has been downloaded by thousands of people around the world and has had rave reviews. In the past 20 odd years I have been extremely blessed to build 3 multi million dollar companies. One of which has been ranked six time by Inc. Magazine on their coveted Inc. 500 fastest growing company list. Most people would never admit this but I also have numerous failures under my belt...but we'll save that for another day."

Link to the podcast:

www.askdennisbrown.com/podcast/e67-john-fairclough/



John Fairclough on the Growth Experts Podcast

Dennis Brown: *You're listening to the Growth Experts Podcast. So if you're looking to 10X your business by learning proven growth strategies, you're in the right place. During my interviews with top CEO's, entrepreneurs, and marketers, I dig deep to uncover the real strategies, hacks, and tools to help you achieve your goals. I'm your host, Dennis Brown.*

*Hey everybody. If you're interested in learning how to leverage LinkedIn for your business, this episode is sponsored by my book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful LinkedIn Users*. If you'd like to get a free copy just send a text to 33444 with the word 7habits. That's the number seven, to 33444. Let's get on with the show.*

Hey, welcome back everybody. Today we have yet another amazing guest. His name is, John Fairclough. John, founded the Resicom group to help retailers optimize the way they improve and maintain their store environment. Under his leadership, the company has evolved from a local construction company, into an international provider of facility maintenance and construction services. Now, John enjoys sharing his story to inspire others. He owns a variety of different businesses, so I'm very interested to dig into this episode. So, welcome to the show, John.

John Fairclough: Thank you for having me, Dennis.

Dennis Brown: *Yeah, it's great. So, we were talking a little bit beforehand, and today we're going to talk about something that we've never talked about here on growth experts, which gets me very excited. That is, unlocking the potential of any company's biggest assets. As you, and I, and everybody should know, that is their employees. But before we dive into that today, I want you to do us a favor and give us a quick backstory. Tell us a little bit about you and kind of how you got here, in a minute or two and that'd be great. Then we'll dig right in.*

John Fairclough: Okay, great. Well, thanks for asking me. I grew up in a really tough environment, and grew up extremely poor. I mean, I even lived in a car. So I mean, I had a lot of very difficult things to endure. Through that, I built a bunch of resilience and perseverance to handle whatever problems came my way.

So, in my late teens, I joined a family business and worked for a family member for a little while, and bounced around a little bit before I finally found my home in my uncle's painting company. In my first year I didn't really make much money, but I worked my tail off. Second year, I'd doubled his business. From there we just grew for a handful of years. After a couple of years of doing well in the company, we decided to part ways. I started my own company, 18-months later I had 80 employees and we were off to the races.

Dennis Brown: *So, was that a painting company, or was that a different business?*

John Fairclough: That was painting and maintenance, facilities maintenance.

Dennis Brown: *Then that since, has kind of evolved into your Resicom group.*

John Fairclough: Exactly.

Dennis Brown: *Perfect. Okay, great. So today, tell us a little bit about what Resicom does?*

John Fairclough: So, we provide facility services, construction services to retailers across the U.S. and Canada. So, there's three basic types of service. One is general construction, or remodeling. So, we renovate stores. The second one is repair and maintenance. So as things break, we go out and fix them. The last service is kind of a blend of those two, which is called special projects. That's anyway



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that the retailer dreams up that they could better connect with their customers, we execute. So, if they want to change paint colors, change their flooring, renovate, redo their fitting rooms, change out their cash raps, install visual marketing in their windows, we handle all these different types of projects for them.

Dennis Brown: *Oh, interesting. Okay, great. So, if you could do us a favor in any format that you want, how big is the business? Whether you want to go into revenue, employees, growth, however you want to frame it. Give us a sense of how big Resicom is today.*

John Fairclough: We handle about 3,000 projects a month.

Dennis Brown: *3,000 projects a month. Wow. So, if you had to put that ... You don't need to give me an exact number, but if you had to put that in terms than less than 10 million, or over 10 million, where does your business fit?*

John Fairclough: Larger than 10 million.

Dennis Brown: *Oh, great. Okay. Awesome. Perfect. All right, so that's awesome because obviously you have a thriving business. That's what we really try to focus in on here on Growth Experts, is to bring real entrepreneurs, who have real background in building real, high growth businesses. So again, we're going to talk a little bit about that. We're going to dive into that unlocking the potential of any company's biggest assets, but before we do that, I'm curious.*

So, you have 3,000 different projects per month, now that's probably spread across the whole variety of different clients, and customers, retail type clients. But I'm curious, trying to get a little micro into your business, what's the number one strategy that you guys are using today to get new clients for Resicom?

John Fairclough: Zeroing in on what they really need. So, we believe that we can help them better use their budget, and we guarantee it.

Dennis Brown: *Okay. So, you zero in. But how do you start those conversations? How do those leads come in? How do those relationships evolve? I'm sure you have long standing relationships with your existing clientele, but as far as new clients, new business, new opportunities, where do those come from? What channel do you use to generate that new business today?*

John Fairclough: Got it. So, we identify who our target market is, and then from the target market we go even deeper to identify who our ideal fit is. With the ideal fit, we print the materials, we have electronic materials, we have video, we started putting together animated info graphics, all kinds of different kinetic typography. We use a bunch of different methods to convey our message.

Dennis Brown: *So, would it be more like a specific offline, or a specific online marketing strategy? Or is it much more of a sales type organization where you guys are doing a lot of cold outreach via cold calling, or cold emailing. Are you doing speaking, or events? I mean, I don't mean to belabor the issue or beat the horse, but I really want to hone in on this because you've got an eight figure business. That means you're doing something right on the customer acquisition side. Right? Obviously, you're taking care of your clients, but you're doing something on the customer acquisition side. So if you think about it, how did the last handful of big clients come in for your business?*

John Fairclough: We've been able to acquire our top clients by being present in the sandbox that they play in. So, there's trade shows, trade associations, things like that, that we participate in, that we're active



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in. Then all the basic outreach that anyone would want to do. Some people on our team have wanted to abandon some of that, but I'm afraid to do that, maybe it shows my age. Some of the younger guys have more aggressive, or more digital ways that they want to go about things.

But to us, it's pretty simple. We have an ongoing campaign. We only send out information that we believe is relevant to the people. If you think about marketing in terms of sending something out one to many, we believe that relationships are built more one on one, or one on small group. So, we don't have a problem spending hundreds of dollars on putting together individual email, video, for just that one prospect. Because, if we're able to secure the work it could be a significant amount of work. So rather than doing a lot of throwing a lot of things to the wall to see what sticks, I like very, very focused messages that connect to what that buyers real needs are.

So, our clients are retailers, so we go visit their locations. We get an idea of what their facing. We ask around the industry to see what we can learn, and then we look at the people that have been there, and where they've worked prior so we have some insight on that buyer. Then we go out and build a message that we believe is going to resonate with them.

Often times, the way to get into the opportunity is, we have a couple of burdens. One is to show that we have buyable. Number two is to show that we can solve whatever challenge they have. We like to sell ourselves on the ability to solve the challenges that they don't give us. So, to do all of these, we have to be dependable. Those are the things ... That's the burden of our initial push of information. We want to make sure that they see that we're buyable, we can do what we want, and we can solve all the challenges they haven't figured out, and they can count on us.

Dennis Brown: *Perfect. That's a great framework. I appreciate you digging into that, because that's exactly what I think my audience needs to hear.*

So, we're going to pivot a little bit. You've been an entrepreneur, when did you start your first business? How long ago was that?

John Fairclough: Out of fear of sounding old ... about 25 years ago.

Dennis Brown: *Okay. So we're in the same boat, so don't worry, you're not alone. So, what has been your experience? What has been the biggest challenge that you've faced in growing Resicom to the eight figure business that it is today? If you had to pick one, and I'm going to tighten you up here and make you only pick one, what's been the biggest individual challenge that you've faced in building Resicom?*

John Fairclough: Unifying the leadership team.

Dennis Brown: *Can you expand on that a little bit?*

John Fairclough: Well, as the company grows, you add people. The people that you bring on that have experience and talent, they're bringing that to the table. It's difficult sometimes to harness all of that, because people want to apply their experience to the challenge, because they've had favorable results, or what they've determined as being favorable. So, when you get five or six of them in a room together and they all of varied experience, it's tough to get them all aligned, especially when so many of them are so opinionated. Heavily opinionated people tend to have leadership roles, because they're willing to put their neck out there. So, to reconcile all of that, you need to have a shared unified vision. We haven't always had that, so that's been a struggle that's kept us away from being anywhere near our potential.



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Dennis Brown: *Yeah. No. I think that's a really great point. Thanks for digging into that. I think we're probably going to talk a little bit ... we're going to peel that onion back a little bit further. The people part of the business. Right? Because as promised, we're going to talk today about unlocking the potential of any company's biggest assets, which is obviously their employees. John has done a great job of that in his various businesses. So, I'm going to ask him to share maybe some tips, or strategy, or a basic framework of how he does that within his organizations, so that everybody that's listening to this podcast can learn from John ahead of time, and try not to make the mistakes that we've all made throughout this process of trying to grow our business.*

So, where do you want to start with that John?

John Fairclough: I think maybe the first piece would be to recognize the position that people are in. If someone's in an operational role, typically their vision is just a couple of days in front of them. Right? They're very, very short term thinking. The people that are maybe the visionaries, the visionary of the business, or someone that's in sales, or in taking on new initiatives that maybe doesn't bear fruit right away, they have a longer horizon. So, I believe that if we can look at what someone's time horizon is, the way that they're looking at the work, that, that would make an impact too on how we deal with them. Because, it's not necessarily sabotage because the short term guy isn't applying the longterm goals to what he's doing, he just might not be thinking of that in that moment, because he's got that immediate need.

So, it's around not demonizing people because of their point of view, because that short term outlook is essential to performing well on each individual project. Ultimately, we're not going to get more business from our clients if we don't perform on each project. So, the people with the longer term horizon, or work that doesn't bear fruit for a long time, what they're doing is very important and should basically lead the way for the manner in which the short term people make their decisions. But, it doesn't always happen that way. That I believe, is the first item to consider.

So, if your audience ... If they're leading businesses and their feeling some frustration with folks, I would say, take a look at what the peoples' horizons are, and then look at the way that they're responding to what's going on. You might find that it really has to do with a point of view. Then bring those together to modify the short term method to match the long term objective, is where the gold is.

Dennis Brown: *Okay. Great. Perfect. So, that makes sense, step number one. Where would you go next?*

John Fairclough: I think if you're trying to get the business to perform better, too many decisions get made top down. So, that whole servant leader mentality should really kick in that says, "What is it they really need?" And going down there. What happens is, when you do that you're able to learn what they're really facing because a lot of people's solutions really aren't well thought through, and they don't look at the unintended consequences of their decision, but they know that it makes it easier in that moment. So, it's shutting those band-aid's on that will really help the business heal, modify itself, and then operate at a higher level. So, I would say engaging the team that is responsible for the tasks in it. Just because they're the ones doing it, does not mean that they have the authority to change the way that it's done. They have a seat at the table, but often times those folks that are doing the work don't have the creativity that's needed.

So, the first thing I would do above all else, is to recognize that people are people. We need to respect that they're people. We certainly have to earn trust, but we have to see the good in them. If we don't see the good in them, it's going to be hard to help them remedy any short comings.



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Dennis Brown: *Okay. That makes total sense. You were talking about servant leadership. Just in my experience, entrepreneurial, you've said a couple of things that have really resonated with me. Number one, when you get a bunch of alpha males together, they all want to have that voice. It's hard for them to all see the same vision. They want to have their own interpretation of it. I definitely see that as an issue.*

In the servant leadership side, can you expand on that a little bit? Because I think that, that's a term that a lot of people don't fully understand. I think that entrepreneurs have this tendency to believe that they are the leader in the business, and that everything they say goes, that they have the last say. I think that, that obviously causes a major issue, and a ripple effect throughout the organization. Could you talk a little bit about maybe what you've done from a leadership perspective, to promote that type of culture, that servant leadership type of culture, in your organization?

John Fairclough: Sure. Just address the point about the dictator style. It's actually effective. Whether it's micro-managing or whatever, even though these are not popular or well regarded terms, or reviewed as being negative. They're not always negative. Sometimes, it does take micro management to get something done. Sometimes, it does take someone to just say, "This is exactly what I want you to do with no variations." So, I don't want to just through that out as if that's just bad management, because it can be effective. I do believe that it has a much lower ceiling then the servant side.

So, the way that we approach that is say, micro-management is a very effective tool. That's why it's used. But it has an expiration date usually much earlier, or much sooner, then the person who's doing the micro-managing. If you think it's going to take two weeks of micro-managing, you probably have about four days before you start driving the people crazy.

So, just wanted to put that out there, because I believe it's a misnomer to brand it as something that should be avoided.

On the servant side, it really talks about ... the way I understand it is ... I shouldn't say the way I understand it is, if it's an outside concept. What I mean by servant leadership, is to appreciate the people that are on the team. To look at them and see the good in them. I use my children as an example here. What impact would it have on my daughter if I didn't see the good in her? Right? What impact would it have on her if I didn't want her to obtain the [inaudible 00:15:47]? What impact would it have on my daughter if she didn't believe that I believe in here, that I was hopeful for her, that I was there to cheer her on?

So, you know if somebody sees the good in you, because they ask your opinion. Right? They compliment you on your work. You know somebody is hopeful, or somebody has the desire for you to obtain your [inaudible 00:16:06], when they take the time to teach you, or they point you in a direction of someone else that might be able to help you. You know someone is hopeful for you, because they cheer you one. They're there. They personally accompany you on that.

So, we know what the impact to my daughter would be if one of those things wasn't present. Well, business is really the same thing. A manager has that kind of responsibility. So, if the manager doesn't see the good in that person, or doesn't want the other person to learn, or isn't hopeful for them, my goodness. What kind of impact does that have on that person's performance, or on their tenure of their time with you? It can have a devastating impact, just like with my daughter.



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So the way that I would describe that is, that manager has disqualified himself or herself, from being able to manage that other person. I don't believe that the person that's being managed, is the one that's being disqualified from the job.

Dennis Brown: *So, there's that saying that you hear from time to time, "People don't leave bad jobs, they leave bad managers." Do you believe that to be true, and has that been part of what you've witnessed in the growth of your businesses?*

John Fairclough: Sure. I mean, sometimes people leave for other reasons, and other opportunities. There's an entrepreneurial spirit that's inside of some that maybe isn't allowed to come out. But if you truly believe in looking for what's best for the person, and if the person ... if that's why they're leaving, often times there's an opportunity within the organization to have them basically satisfied, that hunger. You're never going to get to that if you're not personally accompanying the person. So, that's the manager's responsibility to help all of the good come out of that person.

Dennis Brown: *Yeah. That makes sense. That's perfect. No, I appreciate that. I think that makes a ton of sense. I think, when you think about that, it's really a cultural shift. Right? A lot of ... When you start a business, and it's just you, and you're the chief cook and bottle washer, then you add your first employee, and your second employee. You're creating that culture, and you're creating that servant leadership. It starts from the top down, right? So, I think that basic framework that you shared with us, can be really, really valuable. Particularly people that are early in the growth of their business.*

So, we're going to take a quick shift. The next couple questions we're going to do, are going to be rapid fires. So, the next question is, what is your favorite growth tool, or software today, that you're using in your business?

John Fairclough: A video camera.

Dennis Brown: *So, you're just doing a lot of video. So, it's really video that's a big push for you guys right now.*

John Fairclough: Well, people describe me as a bear. I take on a challenge, and I get it done. It's not always super appealing to read it, but if someone is able to see me live, and they see the passion that I have. For whatever reason, it transcend whatever someones views might be on a matter. I'm able to connect with people, much like a movie is able to connect with a wide demographic audience. So, video, I believe, it's more entertaining, but it's also more full of communication rather than just the written word or just the [crosstalk 00:19:01].

Dennis Brown: *Yeah, for sure. Totally agree. That makes total sense. Especially, if you're doing kind of what you talked about earlier, which is personalized marketing. Where you're putting these very personalize marketing messages, and proposals, and content in front of them. If it's in a video format, you're obviously going to be able to get their attention a lot more, so that's perfect.*

All right. So, what's one book that you've read in the recent past that you would recommend to my audience?

John Fairclough: Go-Givers.

Dennis Brown: *Bob Burg.*

John Fairclough: Yeah. Go-Givers Sell More, Go-Givers, and then anything by Patrick Lencioni.



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Dennis Brown: *Perfect. All right. Listen, awesome. This has been great John. I really appreciate it. So, before we close out, let everybody know how they can connect with you, learn more about what you're doing, and we'll wrap it up for today.*

John Fairclough: Best thing would be to email me directly, john@resicomonline.com. I'm happy to share further, anything that anyone would need.

Dennis Brown: *Good. So, I'll put that in there. If you want, I'll add your website as well if you'd like. I'll make sure I add those links to the show notes. Listen, I really appreciate you being on the show. I'm sure we'll chat again soon.*

John Fairclough: Likewise. Thank you, Dennis.

Dennis Brown: *Thanks, John.*

Listeners, I want to thank you for tuning in. I truly appreciate your time. If you're enjoying the podcast then do me a huge favor. Click the subscribe button now, and please leave me a review. It would mean a lot to me.

