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**Chapter
Two**

Survival of the Fittest and WIFY

(What's In It For You?)

WIIFY

Maybe you're thinking, who cares about change or being *The Fittest*? You're happy just being in the game. You're making decent bucks. You don't need to kill yourself, so why should you?

It's a valid point. Nobody does anything unless it's in their best interests, and you shouldn't be any different. It's how every one of us is wired. Bottom line: if we're going to act on something, there'd better be a payoff.

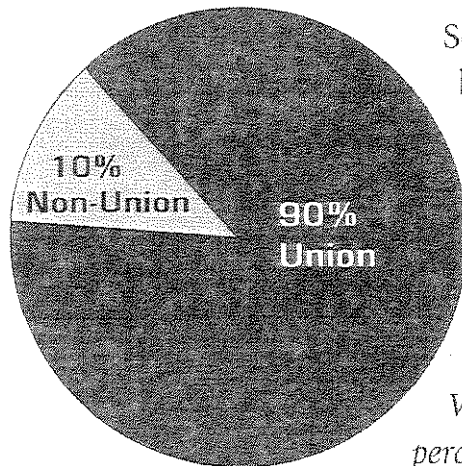
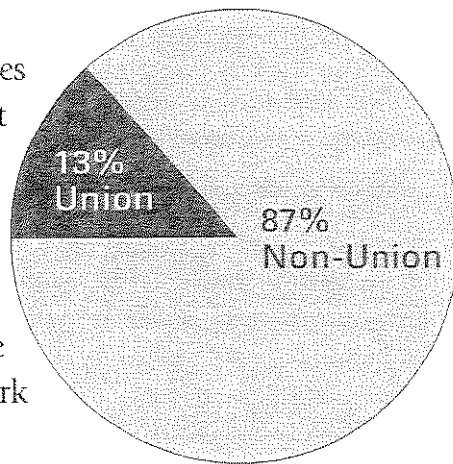
OK, then let's look at the payoff *for you*:

- Are you making all the money you want? Could you use a little more?
- Are your benefits as good as they could be? Want them to be better?
- Are your conditions on the job ideal?
- Would you like a shorter commute?
- Are you getting satisfaction from your work, or just putting in your hours?
- Are you really proud of who you are and what you do?
- Do you get all the hours you want every year?
- If you're an apprentice, are you worried about your future work prospects?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, keep reading.

Ninety Percent of the Pie: What's In It For You?

We've got different percentages of the market in different places. And the reality in New York or Chicago is not the same as it is in Dallas or Phoenix. But when you average it out, we still only have around 13 percent of the work nationwide.



So let's wish a little. What would be different for you if we had 90 percent of the pie? What would it be like if we had 90 percent of the market and non-union workers had to get by on the other 10 percent? Who would benefit? Lets start with you. *What would be in it for you at 90 percent market share?*

-
- Higher wages
 - Better health and welfare benefits
 - Full employment
 - More political influence
 - Better pension benefits
 - Better working conditions
 - More bargaining power
 - More money for training
 - Lower dues per month per member, but more union dues overall
 - More community support
 - Less commute travel to job sites
 - More even playing field for your contractors
 - Stable profits for your contractors
 - Control of the marketplace
 - More respect

You see why it's worth working on? We can have all these things if we work together to *grow the pie*. At less than 15 percent of the market, there's nothing left to give away. Every day, on every job site, we are either growing the pie or watching it shrink even more. And the pie grows or shrinks based on our skills, our attitudes, and our behaviors.

And by the way, there's one more thing you should know about the fight for survival: there's no tie game. We either win or lose.

Let's win.

What **ELSE** is in it for **YOU**? Ten New Pickups, or a Cabin, or an RV, a Boat, and four ATVs

In the construction industry, you're kind of in business for yourself. It might not seem that way, but it's true. Even if most people in the craft get paid the same hourly wages, you can bet that not everybody takes the same amount home at the end of each year.

Over 15 to 20 years, the way you work will determine your jobs, hours, and earnings. Is it a big deal? You bet it is. If you're really aiming to be the best craftsman at your hall, it'll come back in ways that you might not have thought about.

Let's just say that, because you have a great attitude and top skills, you end up getting an extra couple hundred hours a year—compared to the average guy—over your whole career. With a total hourly pay package of, say, \$50, it adds up fast. If you figure 200 extra hours per year, times \$50 per hour, times 30 years, that's a lot of extra cash right in your pocket.

**200 hours x \$50 per hour total package
x 30 years = \$300,000 in extra earnings**

So in case you were wondering what the difference is between a top hand and an average one, it's about three hundred grand. That's 10 new custom pick-ups, or a nice vacation cabin, or a custom RV, hot bass boat, and four ATVs. That's what is in it for you.

Winning: There's Nothing Like It

Have you ever competed in anything? Basketball? Baseball? Softball? Fishing? Racing? Skiing? Boxing? Martial arts? Poker? No matter what the game is, you probably like to compete. And if you like to compete, it goes without saying that you like to win. We humans are just competitive animals. It's in our nature to hunger to win.

Personally, I love to win. I want to win all the time. I hate losing. Losing sucks. Losing feels bad. Forget all that "it's how you play the game" stuff. That's bullshit. Whoever said that probably never won anything in his whole life. When you ask about last week's game, what's the first thing you want to know? You want to know who won, right? Even on my 11-year-old daughter's basketball team, they get pumped when they win. The reward of winning is what makes playing the game hard worth the effort in the first place.

Do you watch sports? Eighty million people watch the Super Bowl every year. More than a billion watch the Olympics. And about three billion people around the world are obsessed with soccer. What's it all about? Winning and losing. Competition. People driven to excel. People willing to train their entire lives, sometimes for a single shot at winning. Sweat, blood, pain, tears, joy, anger, and despair. Dreams made. Dreams crushed. Whether it's on an Olympic podium or on your job site, there's nothing in the world like the feeling of *winning*.

Team Performance Profile: Navy Seals

Title of Profile: The Elite Warriors

Name: U.S. NAVY SEALS

Profile: Premier special operations and counter-terrorism military organization in the world.

Key to Success: Only the elite belong on the team. Eighty percent dropout rate during training. They call it Hell Week for a reason. Setting the bar for the team as high as it can go. Total team commitment to the most lethal missions on earth.

Backed it up: First ones in, last ones out, on the most dangerous assignments around the globe.

Lesson: An elite team performs to where the bar is set—everyone, all the time. There is no compromise. Either you belong or you don't.

Navy SEALs, Setting the Bar, and You

Winning teams come in all different stripes. And uniforms. For example, let's look at the Navy SEALs and the National Guard. Both are branches of our country's military. So what's the difference? Only this: the skills, attitudes, and behavior required for success. Both require discipline, focus, and commitment, but for the SEALs the bar is set high. Very, very, high.

More than 80 percent of the guys that apply to become SEALs quit during training. That's because that ultra-high performance bar is out of their reach. They don't kick you out of SEAL training. You ring a bell, take off your helmet and walk away. You quit, because you found out that you don't belong. The bar was set for the organization, and you could not reach it. And let's face it; even the guys who wash out are probably hardcore to begin with. But even that's not enough. The ones who make it are totally committed to being the best of the best. They want to be something special. They want the pride that comes from being the most elite warriors in the world.

So what does this have to do with your job? Let's ask the hard questions:

- How high is the performance bar set for you?
- How high is it set for your fellow workers on the job site?
- How many guys on the job aren't reaching that performance bar?
- How many in your union aren't reaching it?

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- Do you put up with weak performers on the job?
- Is the bar adjustable in the fight for Survival of the Fittest?

Being the best is not for everybody, and that's OK. But if you're not sure about the level of commitment you're willing to make, you should think about it long and hard. Union construction is supposed to be the best in the world. Not "good," not "above average," but *the best*. The thing is, the height of the bar is not just up to your foreman or superintendent; it's up to you. If you want to be an elite warrior in the fight for our marketplace, you need to set your own bar very high and expect it from everyone around you.