THOROUGHNESS

CHARACTER
CORE
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Great accomplishments do not happen by chance. Mind the details, and let the results take care of themselves.

What is Thoroughness?

Taking care of necessary details

Develop a plan or checklist that addresses the relevant details of what you need to do. Communicate with everyone involved so nothing falls through the cracks. Remember that everything usually takes longer and costs more than you expect. A woman touring Europe cabled her husband: "Have found wonderful bracelet. Price seventy-five thousand dollars. May I buy it?" Her husband in America responded: "No, price too high." However, the telegraph operator left out the comma, and the woman received the message: "No price too high." The husband eventually won a lawsuit against the telegraph company, and after that, telegraph operators were required to spell out punctuation rather than use symbols. If you are careful and thorough in your work you can avoid costly and embarrassing mistakes.

Opposite: sloppy, not careful, ignores details, laziness, careless, thoughtless, incomplete, unfinished

Related Concepts: meticulousness, carefulness, conscientious, awareness, accurate, complete, comprehensive, detailed, exhaustive

Summary: Working carefully and accurately.
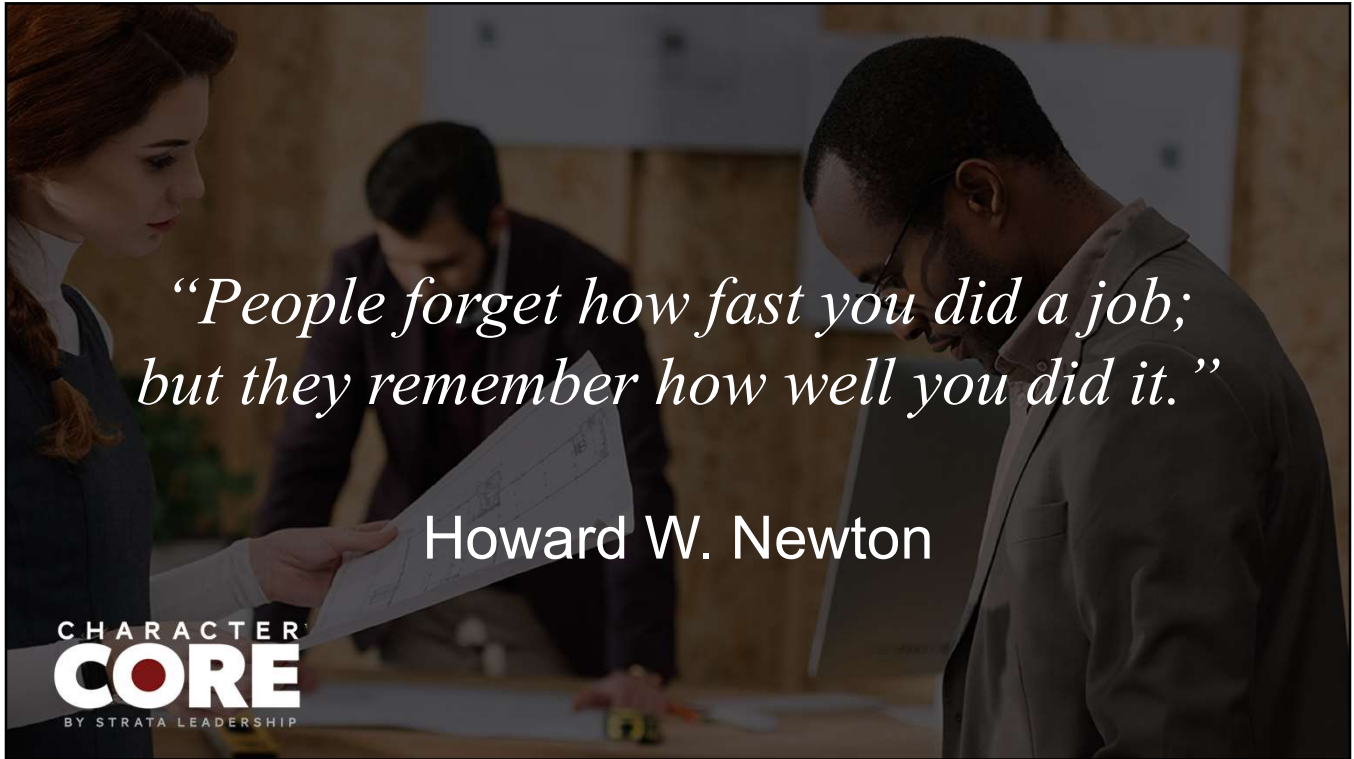
"People forget how fast you did a job; but they remember how well you did it."

Howard W. Newton

Howard W. Newton (1903 – 1951). Howard W. Newton was an American advertising executive and author.
Other Thoroughness Quotes:

"Employ every economy consistent with thoroughness, accuracy and reliability."
– Arthur C. Nielsen

"Accept business only at a price permitting thoroughness. Then do a thorough job, regardless of cost to us."
– Arthur C. Nielsen

"The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail."
– Charles R. Swindoll

"It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen."
– John Wooden

"The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life."
– William Morris

"The details are not the details. They make the design."
– Charles Eames

"Discipline is based on pride, on meticulous attention to details, and on mutual respect and confidence. Discipline must be a habit so ingrained that it is stronger than the excitement of the goal or the fear of failure."
– Gary Ryan Blair

"Details create the big picture."
– Sanford I. Weill

"Never neglect details, even to the point of being a pest. Moments of stress, confusion, and fatigue are exactly when mistakes happen. And when everyone else's mind is dulled or distracted the leader must be doubly vigilant."
– Colin Powell

"Success is the sum of details."
– Harvey S. Firestone

"It is the harmony of the diverse parts, their symmetry, their happy balance; in a word it is all that introduces order, all that gives unity, that permits us to see clearly and to comprehend at once both the ensemble and the details."
– Henri Poincare

"Men who wish to know about the world must learn about it in its particular details."
– Heraclitus

1. Plan Ahead

If you plan ahead, you will reduce the amount of surprises you will encounter.
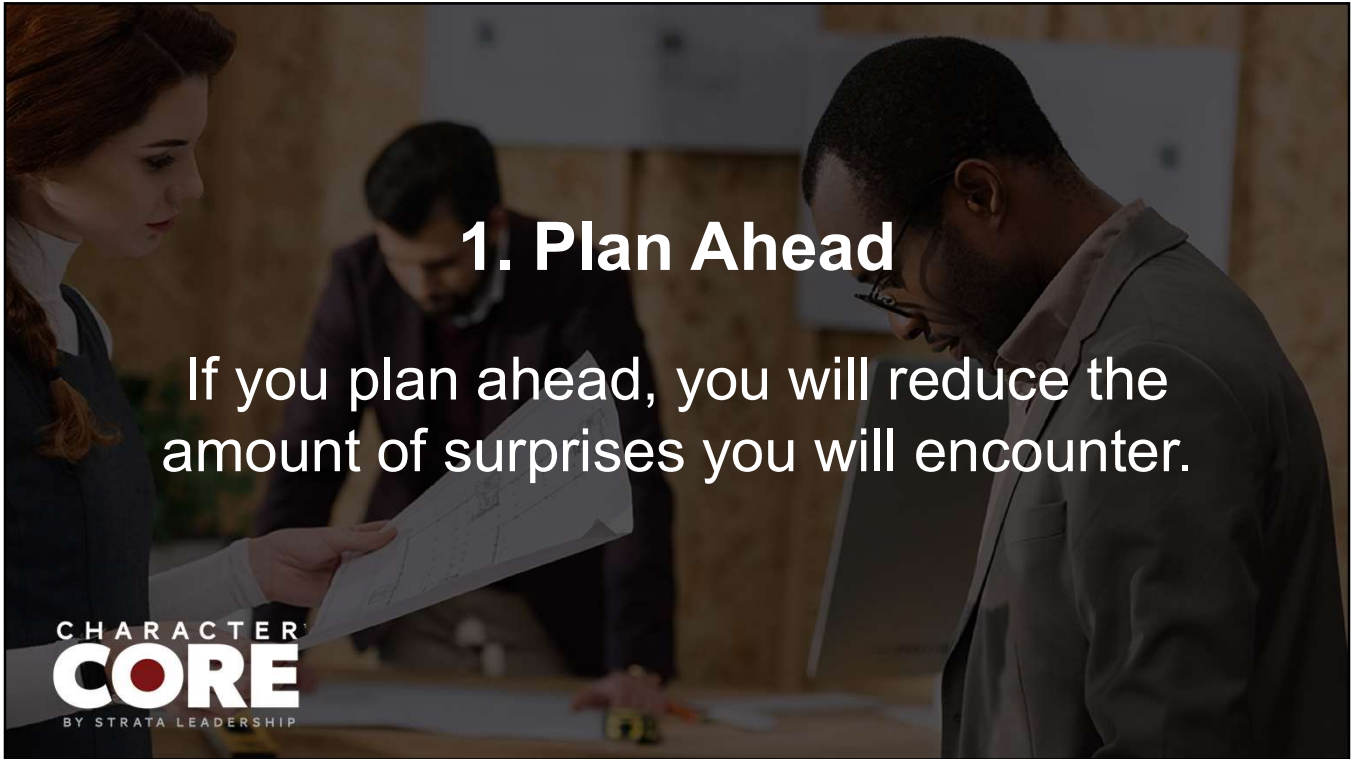
Planning ahead reduces the number of surprises later. Think through each project, including the time it will take, the materials you need, the people involved, and how much it will cost. Try to anticipate challenges that may arise and potential roadblocks you may encounter. If you are prepared to deal with these issues, delays and mistakes will be minimal.

2. Pursue Excellence

Take responsibility and
don't settle for second best.

"Quality Control" is everyone's priority. Pay attention to details and take responsibility to make sure things go right. Don't slack off or expect that someone else will catch and correct mistakes or problems. Communicate effectively with everyone involved so that nothing falls through the cracks. Don't settle for second best – commit yourself to doing your very best and then follow through on that commitment.

3. Finish Strong

Don't give up before you
reach the finish line.
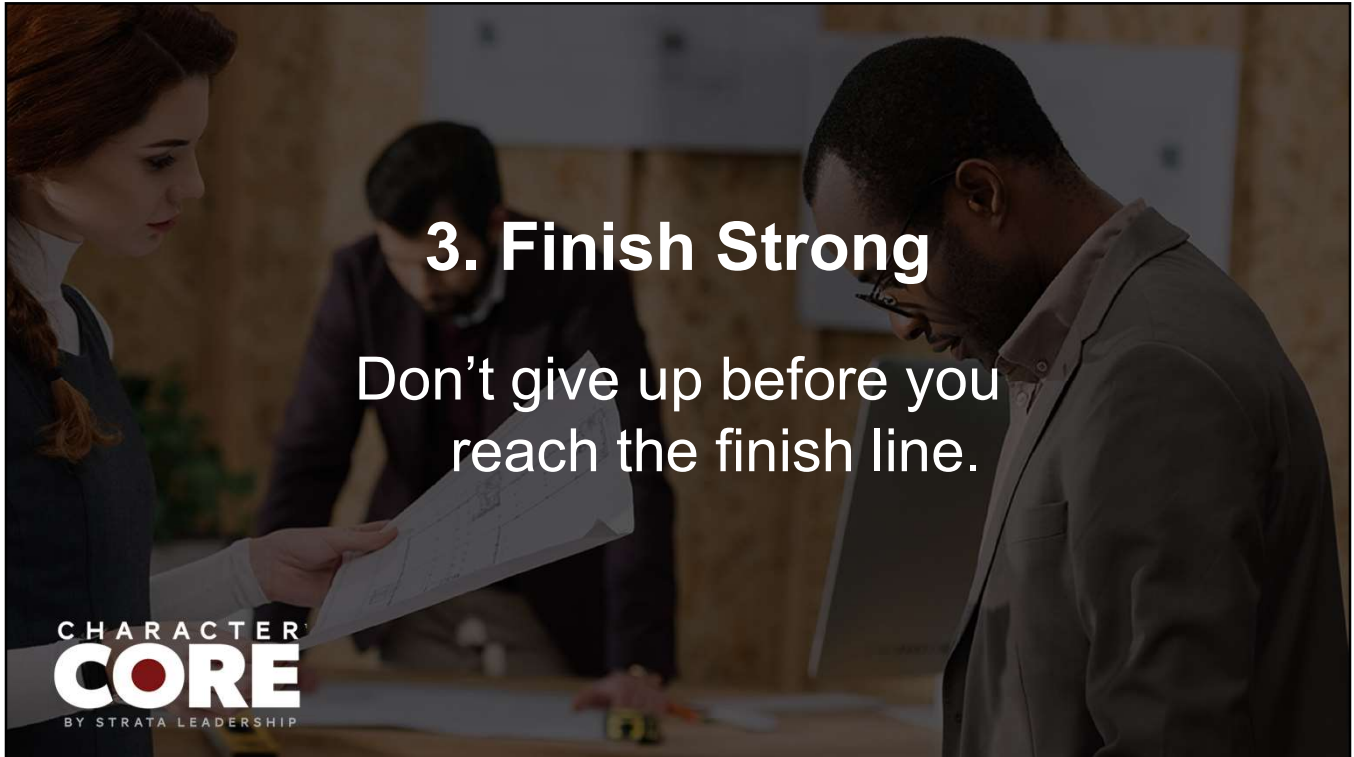
Take care of the details and work until you are finished with the project. Many times projects start strong only to die on the vine because no one committed to finishing. Know what details are the most important so that you don't get sidetracked with the unimportant or insignificant. Look for improvement. Finishing strong requires constant effort and then evaluation of the process to see what can be better next time.

Discussion Starters

1. How does planning ahead help you deal with problems when they arise?

2. How is catching and correcting a mistake more difficult and costly than doing things right the first time?

3. What does it mean to "finish strong?"

Additional Thoroughness Discussion Starters:

What are some things you do to plan ahead?

Do you work with someone who is thorough? How does this build your trust in their work?

If someone on your team never pays attention to details, how does this impact the rest of the team?

What are some things that you need to think about on your job in order to make sure you are able to complete your tasks and meet expectations?

What can happen if you don't plan ahead?

What can happen if someone on the job slacks off and makes a lot of mistakes? How does that affect others?

What does the phrase "Quality control is everyone's job" mean to you? How does having a workplace culture of thoroughness impact quality?

What are some of the details you have to take care of at your job?

What was a time when you caught a mistake that could have been challenging or costly? How did that help your coworkers and the business?

What are some practical ways you can get yourself back on track if you become derailed by the details of a project or task?

Why is it important to finish strong when working on a project?

How can you encourage others to keep up strong effort when a project gets long or problems are encountered?

When was a time when you were able to change a process for the better?

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