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encounter candidates or new hires who on the surface appear disciplined and solution-focused but in the end lack the fortitude to survive — let alone thrive — in a ...

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With the critical pursuit of talent in the accounting industry, firms will likely encounter candidates or new hires who on the surface appear disciplined and solution-focused but in the end lack the fortitude to survive — let alone thrive — in a changing environment that requires mental toughness.

Dr. Jason Selk, former director of mental training for the St. Louis Cardinals and one of the country's premier performance coaches, outlined his method of mental toughness as keynote speaker at the BKR International Worldwide Meeting in San Francisco late last year. His Relentless Solution Focus (RSF) provides several tips for

accounting firms and their teams to adopt when managing people and the pace of

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seems simple, but they should also set a deadline on the actions that will move them toward the improvement,” Kraft added.

2. Negative thinking expands.

Continuous negative thinking — in a person or organization — is a red flag that nothing will improve. The best way to stop thinking about negative things is to ask and answer this question: *What is one thing I can do differently that could improve my situation?* “Forcing yourself to answer this question makes your mind shift from problems to solutions,” said Dave Davis, managing partner at Johanson & Yau Accountancy Corporation in San Jose, Calif.

3. A focus on solutions leads to solutions.

Selk advises that people are not allowed to say, “I don’t know.” Instead, they can say, “That’s an issue we need to address. Let’s talk about what could solve this. In 60 seconds, everyone can think more positively about what is actually in their control to change.”

4. Any improvement is beneficial.

Some issues are not solvable in one meeting or in one week. However, any improvement is the start of a solution. “Your ultimate goal and destination as a team should be clear,” said Frank Schettino, managing partner at Anchin, Block & Anchin LLP in New York. “Once everyone agrees on the goal, then any disagreements or problems along the way are more easily managed.”

5. Knowledge is not a solution. Action is required.

Accountants can get stuck too long in research about a firm problem — or procrastinate by focusing on client work. Firm leaders need to change the

conversation to what actions their team can take in the next 24 hours, weeks and

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mindset is a distinct advantage for client service, talent recruitment and *growth*,” notes Maureen Schwartz, executive director of BKR International. “Dr. Selk’s presentation at BKR International’s recent meeting helped us realize the folly of harping on problems rather than finding solutions.”

Firm Management • Staffing

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