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EDPA's Taylor shares his leadership insights

Birmingham Business Journal - by Brent Godwin

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Sweat the small stuff.

That was one of the messages **Bill Taylor**, president of the **Economic Development Partnership of Alabama**, shared on Thursday night as the keynote speaker at the Birmingham Business Journal's second annual CEO Awards.

Taylor, who formerly served as CEO of **Mercedes Benz U.S. International Inc.**, shared a few of his personal experiences with 250 attendees.

The underlying theme of much of Taylor's speech was how even the smallest details can play large roles in how a CEO runs a company.

Taylor recalled walking through the Mercedes factory and picking up scraps of paper or tiny screws off the floor.

"You might not think that picking up a screw off the floor would matter, but something as small as that could be a safety hazard," Taylor said.

"It's the littlest things, like that screw, that can sometimes count the most."

Taylor, who led several major expansions at the Mercedes plant in Vance, made the point that employees are always watching and emulating what the CEO does.

He said things such as word choice or facial expressions can have a tremendous effect on the morale of employees.

Taylor also spoke about the value of problems in a business.

"If you're open to talking about problems and dealing with problems, guess what? You're not going to have as many problems," Taylor said.

Taylor summed up his address Thursday by saying, "If your business set a goal and achieved it, that's great. But that's only 50 percent of it. Did you engage others along the way? Did you make an impact in your community?"

According to Taylor, that's what leading an organization is all about.