



Bergstrom-Elder Consulting Group

Say Yes! to Success

A few Sundays ago, one of our teaching pastors, Tim Elmore, gave a talk on dealing with difficult people in our lives. I was very impressed with the insight to everyday people and to the people we must deal with in our businesses. Tim mentioned 8 traits of people and how, as caring people, we can effectively deal with those traits. I'll cover several of them here and additional ones in e-newsletters to follow. I want to put them into our relationships with our employees, since I see the opportunity for bettering the employee and improving profits.

First, people are insecure. We are born needing nurturing, love and attention from our parents. Some youngsters seem to need more, some less. Some never get enough and are insecure about themselves and their worth. Some are beautiful, some not so beautiful and most average, but teen years can be very trying if you are picked on by your peers. Of course there are many other reasons for insecurity and I'm sure you can think of many. So you have a technician or office employee who was not tops in his or her class, so they became a technician or office worker (another cause of insecurity). They just feel they are not as good or as smart, or as blessed as others. The world continues to tell them this by always showing the perfect, the wealthy, the smartest, and the one with the most toys as the norm. Just listen to commercials as you drive, or watch TV or pick up a magazine, and you are bombarded with those stereo-types as the norm. These insecurities, you may find in an employee, result in less than stellar job performance and cost your company thousands of dollars a year in lost opportunities, poor performance, and attitude issues. So how can you coach your people to be more secure in their own skin? How can you improve their performance? How can you effect your bottom line with the people you already have working for you?

The most important thing you can do as a business owner or manager is to give them confidence. How do you do that? It starts with a commitment by you catch them doing the right thing. You can bolster their self confidence by praising them in public and private when they are doing the right thing. Typically we are fast to criticize and often in public. Change your thinking. Think of yourself as a coach for your team, a coach that desires to get the maximum out of each player. Those coaches that scream, holler and throw stuff are rarely respected and normally don't move up the ladder in the coaching world. Of course there are exceptions. Don't try to succeed by being an exception, but by following the path that has led the best to success. Start your day with the attitude you are going to find the best in each one of your employees today. Yes, it is hard at times, but with practice you will change your way of dealing with your employees. When they error, as they certainly will, sit down with them and coach them to the proper behavior and actions you need in your business. Most small business people just never seem to have time for this extremely important step in their business. Therefore they lose performance and dollars that could have been adding to the bottom line (profit).

Second, People love to feel Special. Have you noticed the very bright faces of the athletes as they receive their medals at the Olympic Games? The glow of feeling special as their national anthem is played. Can you remember the excitement of your favorite team after winning a game especially when betting a difficult opponent? They have worked very hard over many years to make it to the top in their sport. They want to feel special and rightly so. Your team needs to feel that way too. They have worked hard, many of them for a lot of years to gain the expertise and confidence needed to be a winner. When a customer calls or writes to tell you what a great job your employee did for them, share it with your employee but particularly in front of his or her peers. If you give spiffs for selling maintenance agreements, or add on sales don't just put it into their normal paycheck. Pay it in cash (don't forget to pay the taxes) or a separate check. Give that money to them at a meeting and make it into something special. Send a note home to their spouse says what a

great job they have done to receive that money. Post the winners of contests and praise the winners. Give technicians patches when they have special training or have become a journeyman, or NATE certified.

Third, people look for a better tomorrow. These past few weeks have been a real ride. The reason most of us have been on the ride is we, like all people, look for a better tomorrow. With the housing crisis, with the banking crisis, and with all the other issues of the day, how do we as owners and managers help our employees get through this? How do we show them a “better tomorrow”? Well that’s a major part of our job of managing people. We need to daily show our employees the bright side of issues, the glass more than half full, the positives. Let them know what is happening and how they can help make tomorrow better. Is it easy? No way! Changing people’s attitude is one of the most difficult things you have to do. It rarely happens the first time you speak with them. It’s a process, an on-going forever process. If you can’t come to work 95% of the time with an upbeat attitude how do you expect to instill that in your people? It all starts with you! I know, “Thanks Dan, for putting another brick on my already heavy load.” There is a key reason for doing this. Your employees will be more productive, they will be more loyal, and you will be more profitable. Attitude is contagious! You are one of the main influences on your people. You can over time help them have hope even in this difficult time.

Fourth, people need to be understood. Now let’s go another side of the story. Your employees have a need to be understood. They want someone to listen to them when they have ideas, problems, or concerns. Of course there are a few employees who seem to constantly have ideas, problems or concerns. These folks need to be tempered but still heard. If they don’t change, then it’s time to change them. Way back when, we used a consultant, Don Kardux, who had a system for our employees and their ideas, problems, and concerns addressed it a way that made them feel heard and managers not feel threatened. Action on the input of the employee and listening were the backbone of this program. Give them an ear and your company will flourish.

Fifth, People lack Direction. Your employees lack direction in their lives. Many of them wonder aimlessly without goals or direction. As a leader of your business you need to help them find direction at your company. They need a purpose in getting up every morning, in taking that late call, in servicing Mrs. Jones at 2 AM. Give them a clear concise career path with regular coaching. Show them how they can grow and improve themselves. Show them the importance of the service they provide each day. Show them how they contribute to society. Show them why they are important to you. Make them feel they are on this earth for a purpose.

Sixth, People are Selfish. Your employees may enjoy hard rock music, or oldies, or country, but the station they are most tuned into is WIIFM Radio. Don’t know what that is? Well, it’s What’s In It For Me Radio. Each time you communicate with them, they are tuned to that station. So what do you do to have them listen and follow your direction with the business? You MUST always think through what you are communicating and express it in a way that speaks to their needs first. You can’t always give them what they want, but you can show them how the new rule, the new insurance, the new..., is important to them personally. Maybe it isn’t directly but in some way it is important to them and it can show them “What’s in it for me.”

Seventh, People get emotionally Low. Boy does this one speak to everyone in these trying financial times. All one has to do is listen to the news and it’s just about impossible not to come away feeling down. As the leader of your company, you MUST encourage your employees. It may be hard, but come into the office with an attitude that is truly upbeat and full of encouragement. If you must, encourage yourself all the way into the office. Don’t listen to those down news reports, listen to motivational cds, read upbeat books or listen to the latest message from your pastor, priest or rabbi. You set the tone for your company. If you are down, you will bring down the employees and eventually the growth and profit of the company. Give your team the halftime encouragement they need.

Finally, People seek Models to Follow. People do what they see. Show them the model to follow. First, don't be a guest at your business, be an excellent host. A host sets the tone of a gathering. They mingle with their guests. They serve their guests. They honor their guests. Are you doing this for your employees? Second, be a counselor. A counselor is an active listener. They give their patients their full attention as they communicate. They don't become distracted by a cell phone, a computer or other tasks. They make their patients feel important and set a model for them. Third, be a doctor. Poke and prod your employees to find symptoms of discontent or problems. Look for a diagnosis to the ills of your people. And lastly, be a tour guide. Take your employees on a tour they would not take on their own. Show them the opportunities within your business for their growth. Not just financial or technical growth, but growth as a person. Grow as a very important part of society, a significant piece in the puzzle of humanity, and someone you truly appreciate as part of your business.

Need help with any of these points? Contact me.

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