

'Raving fan' employees spark raving customers



People Sense

Lorinzo Foxworth

Companies are moving up, companies are going down.

Companies are achieving record profit earnings and have "raving fan" employees!

Does this description resemble anything about your company?

If not, get with the program.

Organizations that have been around for years and continue to

meet customer demands are building the "intrapreneurial" spirit.

They are modeling attitudes and behaviors from within to capture the essence of employee ownership.

I remember going out with my dad when I was young. He would always go to the same service station to get some gas. The gentleman would rush out of the office to the car, and automatically open the gas cap and begin to pump gas.

His first question was, "Fill 'er up Cicero?" My dad would answer yes. The man would then check the oil, tires and antifreeze, and make any recommendations he felt appropriate. My dad would get out of the car and talk to him like they were friends forever.

Your organizations can become an intrapreneurial spirited "service station" by following simple guidelines of intrapreneurial savvy.

Instill a mission and spirit of serving. Use the "service station" approach. Train employees to focus on your customers' needs, talk and establish relationships.

Have a sense of urgency. Run out to meet, call or e-mail your customers. They'll think you're nuts (because no one else does that), but they'll love you for it. Customers like attention.

Train on entrepreneurship. Thirty-five percent of businesses are employing strate-

gies with their staff, in building "intrapreneurial" attitudes and behaviors. These organizations are reaping the benefits of increased retention rates and profits.

Tell the company story. When you visit Wal-Mart, you can see the history of Sam Walton everywhere. The smile from an employee, the customer-friendly attitude, a clean store with quality and value. Sell your employees on the value and history of "Your Co. Inc."

Establish processes. Along with a mission statement, you just have to implement effective processes for your team to serve.

Is there a policy and procedures manual? Are teams in place? Is customer contact management in place? Do information systems support the processes? All should be considered.

Management buy-in. Are the big boys and girls sold on the passion to serve? If they aren't, then don't expect the craft to take care of customers. Managers should feel open in exposing end-users to the intrapreneurial spirit and higher profits.

Use customer complaints. We use customers concerns as a vehicle to improve service and retain business. Organizations that have high customer service ratings use evaluations to assess growth and ownership.

Appoint an intrapreneur manager. If you're serious about seizing the moment to serve, then appoint someone as the watchdog. Accountability and empowerment is key.

Building and maintaining a high-performing team with entrepreneurial spirit demands that an organization's culture embody the spirit.

When your team achieves the attitude and behavior, then you'll know you have created raving employees and customers. ■

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