



MONDAY MANNA
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CREATING A WINNING CORPORATE CULTURE

By Robert J. Tamasy

Have you ever visited different businesses and noticed the considerable differences in employees' attitudes and behaviors? Last week I went to a health supplements store to replenish some of the vitamins I use each day. I was greeted with a smile the moment I walked in the door, then another staff person was more than happy to assist me in locating the items I was looking for. I made my purchase and left feeling like a valued customer.

Many of us have experienced similar interactions when going to the Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurants. I've been to a number of them in different states, but at each I have had the same experience: The employees make you feel welcome, seem pleased to see you, and when you complete your transaction, they always close by saying, "My pleasure."

On the other hand, I have also gone to other businesses where employees seem disinterested, even rude. They act as if your arrival has become an interruption, a great inconvenience, rather than an opportunity to be of service to a customer who plans to spend money with them.

What is the difference? Corporate culture. It involves hiring and retaining the right kinds of people, giving them proper training, clearly communicating expectations for how they are to interact with customers, clients and suppliers, and ensuring the company's clearly thought-out and communicated mission and values are consistently maintained.

This does not happen by accident. It must be intentional. We cannot expect that staff people and team members will instinctively understand how they are to relate with people that do business with us. And it must start at the top – it is up to the CEO, other executives and managers to set the example.

Establishing a strong, customer-centered corporate culture is not as difficult as it might seem, especially if we use some simple, foundational principles as guidelines. Here are some that we find in the Scriptures:

Casting clear vision. There is a saying that if you do not know where you are going, any road will get you there. Every member of the business team should have a good understanding of where the company wants to go and how they intend to get there. *"Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained"* (Proverbs 29:18). Another translation states, *"the people perish."*

Setting the example. We cannot expect those who report to us to live and work according to a higher standard than we demonstrate. Live up to the standard, then communicate that others should strive for the same. *"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master"* (Matthew 10:24).

Showing value by serving. Customers and clients are not luxuries; they are essential for a business or organization to survive and thrive. They should be served in a manner that affirms how important and valued they are. We have no better example of this than Jesus Christ. *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45).

Treating others well. If you were the customer rather than the executive or staff member, how would you want to be treated? Determine that – and then train all members of the team to treat others the same way. *"Do to others as you would have them do to you"* (Luke 6:31).

Shepherd's Heart, *coauthored with Ken Johnson*; and The Heart of Mentoring, *coauthored with David A. Stoddard*, and numerous other books and magazine articles. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Christopher Simpson, President csimpson@cbmcint.org

P.O. Box 182078 ▪ Shelby Township, Michigan 48318 ▪ U.S.A.

TEL.: 1-888-581-1736 ▪ E-MAIL: mmanna@cbmcint.org

Website: www.cbmcint.com Please direct any requests or change of address to: amacri@cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Think of a company or store that you enjoy patronizing again and again. What is it about that business that makes you want to be a repeat customer or client?
2. Now, think of another company or store that you no longer want to do business with. What happened that made you unwilling to go there anymore?
3. What is your approach to dealing with the “customers” you have – clients, suppliers, people that report to you, fellow team members? Are you helping to establish and maintain a winning, successful corporate culture where you work? Explain your answer.
4. Looking at the list of biblical guidelines for building a strong, healthy corporate culture, can you think of any other principles that could have been included?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read, consider the following passages: Proverbs 10:9, 11:1, 15:33, 16:11; 28:2; Acts 20:35; Colossians 3:17, 23-24

Challenge for This Week

Take some time to think about a company, business or store that makes you feel valued every time you go there. After evaluating why that is, consider your own attitude and behavior toward those you work for and work with. How does it compare?

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, your foremost responsibility at work – as well as in your private life – is to serve as an “ambassador for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Consider how effectively you are doing this. It might be helpful to discuss this with others who know you and have your best interests at heart.