

CHAPTER 1

LEADING THE TEAM

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent. – Douglas MacArthur

HELLO FROM LAS VEGAS

Every April I leave the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas a bit lighter in the wallet but heavier with knowledge. Being an early adoption tech geek, it's a lot of fun for me to learn about recent technology breakthroughs like 4k UHD TV, 8k Super Hi-Vision, ATSC 3.0 and miniature drone advancements.

But that's not the purpose of my trip. In fact, most years the convention floor eludes me. Instead, the days are filled with conversations wherever there is an available chair to catch up with current and prospective clients and industry friends. Inevitably, a few themes or concerns will bubble up from these meetings providing great insight as to the topics that are keeping the TV group c-suites awake at night.

This year, the usual concerns of sales metrics and sustained post-political performance kicked off a lot of discussions. After all, we are in the revenue business. However, there was another topic expressed in quiet whispers - futures; specifically, the impact of the spectrum auction (and what will the real valuations bring) and speculation on who is acquiring properties and who may sell. Given the no-one-could-have-guessed transactions that have taken place in our industry the last few years, it's unlikely that any short-term ownership change of hands will be a surprise.

As industry players speculate, so does the industry press. Chances are, a great number of your employees read this press, where the mere mention of your employer's name can send dedicated employees into a "what if" frenzy. Supposed "in the know" individuals stir the pot at the water cooler and soon you have a staff concerned about trying to piece together buy and sale scenarios which results in a loss of focus on the

media outlet sales and operational priorities at hand.

The best way to minimize staff concern is to gather the team to make a statement and to be available to field answers on the topic as soon as possible. Honesty is definitely the best policy in this scenario but it should also be common sense that there will likely be information that you simply cannot release to the team.

So what do you tell the staff?

Encourage them to do their absolute best work. There is no better moment to shine than when a company is in transition. The most valuable assets to any company are competent and high-performing personnel. If your sellers are identified as such, whether the company is being bought or sold, they will likely prosper through the change.

What about managers? To you, and your leadership team I would say the same thing. Now is the moment for your absolute best work. There was a time when the acquiring company held all the cards and populated their new acquisitions with their own talent. However, today's companies are getting so big that they don't have enough of their own managers to transition to the new properties. This situation creates opportunity for managers of the acquired outlets.

It's an exciting time for our business. And unlike the roulette wheel losses I experienced this trip in Las Vegas, the return of TV industry mergers and acquisitions to our industry headlines is a safe bet.

IT'S TIME FOR A SALES MEETING WITHOUT A MANAGER

Often, new sales managers want so desperately to prove themselves worthy of their new title that they have trouble saying "no." They eagerly welcome delegation from their superiors and are as equally eager to accept tasks from AE's who delegate tasks up. Long term, the eagerness turns to resentment because the manager is spending so much time working "in" the business that he or she has little time to work "on" the business. It's a never-ending treadmill, causing the manager to wish for more hours in the day or daydreaming of the good times on the street, when they were helping clients exceed their marketing goals.

This topic came up in a conversation with a less-than-six-months-minted sales manager, who was not only burning the candle at both ends, but also feeling underappreciated by a sales team that had grown a bit apathetic to the importance of making budget. His team had missed the total revenue target the last four consecutive months.

My suggestion was to host a sales meeting without the sales manager present. You can imagine his look of confusion in response to my suggestion.

It was apparent to me that the sales team lacked "skin" in the game and the sales manager was carrying an almost unbearable load. It was time to shift some of that

load back to the sales team.

I asked the manager to pick two mature leaders on his sales team, whom he could trust and who had the respect of their sales peers. Next, he should express to the sales leaders his concern(s) over the team's lack of drive, which is directly related to the team's lackluster revenue performance, and ask them to host a sales meeting, without any sales managers present.

The goal of the meeting would be for the team to walk away with very specific expectations for each individual on the staff. Each category—for example, number of calls, new business volume, special projects, digital revenue, existing client increases, etc.—should have very specific time and number bound expectations for every individual on the team. Each goal should be attainable, and when combined, should exceed the revenue needed to get the team over the budget number.

The team leaders are then responsible for covering the plan with the sales manager. The role of the sales manager in this exercise is to ensure the goals are realistic so the plan isn't doomed from the start. In an effort to please, teams given this opportunity may sometimes be too aggressive with their goals. Believe it or not, a manager may need to correct a daily call goal of something like 12 appointments a day down to something more manageable, like 5.

Many positives come out of this exercise. First, the sales team tends to be more enthusiastic in their effort since they created the plan. In reality, they have unknowingly created accountability for themselves. Second, a manager is able to build a bench of potential future managers, based upon their acceptance and fulfillment of the delegated responsibilities. Lastly, a sales manager frees up much needed time, and through delegation, builds cheerleaders who are, in effect, unpaid sales management assistants, encouraging the team to execute by the plan.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE COMMENTS

Yesterday I went to the grocery store for a “staples” trip. It was one of those days where I wasn't really paying attention to anyone, didn't really want to talk to anyone - just wanted to get the groceries and go home.

The lady at the meat counter changed my attitude. She greeted me with a smile and asked how she could be of service. She sliced the first cut of turkey, came back to the counter showing me the cut and asked if it was the right thickness. Then she proceeded to hand me the slice of lunch meat to enjoy while she continued to complete my order (wow, there is a customer service tip for other grocery stores.)

It was at the end of the transaction when my attitude took a turn for the better as the worker offered a sincere smile and told me to, “Enjoy the rest of your day.” The message was conveyed in such a way that I didn't just hear the words. I felt them.

The wish resonated so much that I caught myself smiling while walking the aisle to the check out and decided to pass my smile along to someone else.

While stepping into the cash register lane I commented, to the lady in front of me, on the lovely color of her blouse. She responded, “Thank you so much. You know, my granddaughter doesn’t like this thing. I’ll have to tell her someone else agrees with me!”

The next positive deposit victim was the bagger. When he asked if he could carry the bags to my car, I replied that he was working entirely too hard in this hot weather. He should stay inside in the air conditioning while I carry the bags to my car. He thanked me profusely and still had a smile across his face when I exited the store.

Years ago, when in your chair, I used to walk the office consciously on the lookout for sincere deposits to employees. The comments generally centered on whatever hit me at the time; the color of a tie, new glasses or shiny shoes, or maybe extra work like shoveling snow in the entry was noted. Any topic that created smiles and showed appreciation was game.

Selfishly, offering these comments always provided a lift for me. It’s fun to make people feel good. But the bonus is, when done sincerely, these comments provide a lift to the receiver that, just like my encounter at the grocery store, tends to get shared. This positive momentum is key in establishing environments and cultures where people *want* to work.

Once a manager asked me, “What can I do to let an employee know how much I appreciate them?” My response? When you are at a loss as to what to say to a star, or complimenting them on the color of their tie doesn’t seem like enough, simply tell them what is in your heart. Try something like, “Hey, Sheryl. I was just thinking of your work a few days ago and wanted to tell you how much you are appreciated around here. We are only as good as we are because of your dedication, hard work and effort. So, thank you, thank you, thank you.” Then, as you are feeling good about making someone else feel good, get out of the way and let Sheryl deliver her smile to her coworkers!

THE QUICK EXECUTION OF KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

As I write this, I am still coming down from the euphoria of sharing, interacting, listening and networking at our biennial Sales Manager’s High Performance Boot Camp.

Imagine if you will, spending almost three days with nearly 200 of some of the smartest and most optimistic management minds in the broadcasting business. Add to that opportunity, incredible presentations from *four* Hall Of Fame speakers. Kick

in a healthy dose of laughs and some pretty good food in sunny Tampa, Florida; far away from the January snow and cold in the rest of the country. The result is an incredibly productive event where ideas are shared, challenged and captured. The event becomes an opportunity for recharging career batteries, resetting business practices and revamping cultures.

If you have ever attended our Sales Manager's High Performance Boot Camp, thank you so much for your confidence in our company, Jim Doyle & Associates. And congratulations for taking the initiative to "better" yourself. The fact that you sacrificed a weekend away from your family to attend this event speaks volumes of your dedication.

You may have previously heard the quote, "Knowledge is power." There was a day, in our world of television, when that quote may have held some legitimacy. But today, our industry continues a cycle of tremendous change and the challenges presented to managers and leaders are almost overwhelming.

Ruper Murdoch stated, "*The world is changing very fast. Big will not beat small anymore; it will be the fast beating the slow.*" It would stand to reason then, that knowledge is *not* power. The *quick execution* of knowledge is power.

The star television managers that convened in Tampa understand that concept and I cannot wait to hear of their success stories.

In a phone call this morning, one of those managers asked me if I was tired. Admittedly, yes, I am *physically* tired. Three days of little sleep, platform speaking and running microphones around a ball room can have that affect on a body. However, thanks to multiple hours of interaction with managers eagerly seeking new levels of performance, my *mental energy* is peaking, so much so, that I had trouble sleeping in anticipation of getting to the office to put my new-found knowledge to work!