

Are You Serious?  
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When business owners or executives first meet me, their ears perk up after I tell them my company helps businesses develop loyal employees. More often than not they want to know how I accomplish that because they have employees who either lack motivation, need constant supervision, are lazy, don't care or have no loyalty to their company. Some relate how they have attempted to motivate their employees by increasing their pay, extending benefit plans and creating retirement packages, all to no avail.

As they finish talking, I ask them a question, "Are you truly serious about developing loyal employees?"

"What do you mean by that?" they retort, "Of course I'm serious."

"By that, I mean if you're truly serious about developing loyal employees, are you willing to give up some of your responsibilities and share your strategies with them?"

The owner usually provides me with a nebulous response that indicates yes. I continue to explore his or her seriousness by asking a series of questions:

- Are you willing to listen to your employees, even if it is to criticize you?
- Are you willing to make changes that your employees suggest?
- Are you willing to give up some decision making to your employees?
- Are you willing to pay your employees what they are really worth?
- Are you willing to open your books to loyal employees?
- Are you willing to grant long-term, loyal employees equity in your company?

If the owner is hesitant when answering the questions or if the answer is "No", to most of the questions, I end the conversation on a positive note by leaving my card and asking him/her to call me in the future if circumstances change in the company.

Conversely, if the owner answers affirmatively to at least the first three questions, then I feel confident that we can move the discussion to the next level of commitment.

I propose that we meet at the owner's business for a free consultation in which I will find out what he or she wants from the business, from the employees and from his/her life. I explain that after our discussion I will meet with those employees who possess the potential to become loyal. If the owner is receptive to my ideas, I congratulate him/her for being serious about developing loyal employees and promise to call tomorrow to set up an appointment. This is the first step I use to develop loyal employees: finding owners and executives who are truly serious about it.