

What Do You Need?

Frank Settineri

Veracorp LLC

November 26, 2006

Not too long ago I was with a business owner explaining my services regarding employee loyalty and business growth. While escorting me out of the building at the end of our meeting he stopped, turned to me, looked me directly in the eyes and said, “Frank, as a new businessman there’s one thing you should know. When I first started out in this business I had salesman calling on me all the time to buy this newest piece of equipment and that redesigned system and the latest devices to make me successful. I got pretty tired of them always trying to sell me something. One day this salesman Ralph called on me. He was all dressed up in a nice suit, he had a briefcase full of marketing brochures and catalogs and I figured that he was going to try to sell me whatever he could.

“Just as I thought, once we sat down in my office, he took out a huge presentation binder, opened it and was ready to make his sales pitch. Quite surprisingly, however, he looked up at me and closed the binder. He then spoke these words, ‘Herb, I’m not going to sell you anything here. All I want to know is, what do you need?’ I was pretty shocked at his honesty and I told him that I needed 500 plastic plates for our testing. He wrote up the order and has been my main salesman for the past twenty-five years. I want you to remember this story because that’s all you need to do, find out what your customer needs, give him that and you will have a loyal customer forever”.

What better advice could I have received? Here I was attempting to impress Herb by offering him my services and all I had to do was listen to what he was telling me he needed. Subsequently I have made this advice the essence of my business: I find out what owners need either personally or for their business and develop programs based upon those needs. Usually an owner will have a needs list that is one part personal, one part business and one part employee related. The following is a compilation of what they have told me they need:

- Better cash flow
- Faster growth

- Increased revenue
- Higher profits
- Time to plan for future growth
- Time to take a vacation or be with the family
- A succession plan
- Less paperwork
- An insurance plan and 401K for their employees
- No personnel problems (i.e. no headaches)
- Happy employees
- Workers who don't leave at 5 PM on the dot
- A legacy to leave behind to their children

Once we elucidate his or her individual list I make it very clear that I will not be able to deliver all the items on the list. However, I can give them what they need in terms of employee loyalty (i.e. no headaches, happy employees, voluntarily staying beyond 5 PM) by developing individualized plans for those employees who are ready to accept the challenge of becoming passionate about their jobs. Why passion? Because passionate employees stop thinking like workers and start thinking like owners, thereby creating the solid foundation for the business to be successful. Additionally passionate employees are the ones who ultimately become loyal and they are the ones who allow the company to achieve lasting endurance. By working with owners who are serious about developing loyal employees I find out the needs of the owner and use those needs to build individualized plans that meet the needs of the employees as well. Everybody, especially the business itself, wins.