

Title:

How To Get Your Staff To Bend Over Backwards For You No Matter What

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Summary:

The constant struggle to get people to want to work for you is an enigma most business owners wrestle with. I have isolated successful methods through growing my multi-million dollar company from the ground up. In my experience it all comes down to how you want to be treated. I was raised in a lovey-dovey family where my parents wanted me to feel great about myself. Maybe it is because I was raised Jewish and all Jewish mothers think their children are superior - who knows.....

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Article Body:

The constant struggle to get people to want to work for you is an enigma most business owners wrestle with. I have isolated successful methods through growing my multi-million dollar company from the ground up. In my experience it all comes down to how you want to be treated. I was raised in a lovey-dovey family where my parents wanted me to feel great about myself. Maybe it is because I was raised Jewish and all Jewish mothers think their children are superior - who knows... Whatever the reason, I grew up hearing and believing I could do anything.

That kind of confidence instilled in me led me to believe that I could instill that confidence in others. When I first started out I could not afford to hire expensive help and found the most successful type of personnel for my business were young, inexperienced adults in their late teens that had an abundance of willingness. And I do mean an abundance of it - in my viewpoint, there is no better commodity.

A Little Bit Goes a Long Way

My Senior Vice President over Operations and Quality Control who now manages six other executives and a colossal number of employees was only 19 years old when she started with me. Now she is 27. She had that willingness, but virtually no experience. I recall then that she wanted \$10.00 per hour. I would only give her

\$9.00 but I gave her an incentive - to prove to me she was worth it before I consented to that kind of pay (which was a lot of money to me at the time). She did so well that I gave her \$11.50 per hour within two weeks of her hire date.

That little bit extra that I did went a long way. She took notice and she consistently proved to me that she could do even more. That was the first time I noticed that rewarding your employees for hard work really paid off. Today, she makes a six-figure income and earns every penny.

I love to validate and reward the staff - it is a driving force of mine in my company. We have an "employee of the month" that gets company recognition and a designated parking space as well as an "employee of the year" that gets a three-day trip to the Big Apple, plus spending money. Not to mention the runner up gets no short shrift. And my employees work their tails off for those coveted prizes, but mainly for the pride they feel after doing so well. The stipulations are that they go above and beyond the call of duty and really set great examples for the rest of the group. I've never seen such stellar work from staff at other companies that don't acknowledge and don't reward - I know because I used to work at them.

More Freedom = More Responsibility

A major factor in increasing the responsibility level of the employees is giving them more freedom and responsibility. If you do, they will own their position. The best employees are those that really take ownership of their position and run it like it was their very own company. You may think that it is a bit precarious to let someone run their area like it was their own company because what if they took it way off course from what you had designed where that organization would go? Well, I found that the more freedom I gave my executives to do the job the way they thought it should be done based on their understanding of the company's goals, they became even better at what they did. That really opened my eyes. It was like the circle of life - they would do better and better to warrant the responsibility I had given them.

Another manager of mine is a great example of this. When she first came to work for me, she didn't necessarily make me feel confident that she could do the job - but she sure was willing. And I have a philosophy about just throwing them in and seeing if they can make it go right or die trying.

She impressed me. She did a great job over and over again. I couldn't help but acknowledge and validate her. She was only 18 years old when she started working for me and I was so amazed how well she did her job - she was neat, tidy, systematic and never made mistakes - so I told her how great she was all the

time. The end result? This shy girl just blossomed into one of my fifteen executives who has several subordinates and runs a tight ship.

So, I learned that the way I should treat people is the way I like being and have been treated. I know it's the Golden Rule that many of us have heard or read, but I learned to apply this in regards to staff and it works well for me. I grew up knowing that it works from the recipient end. I used it later in business and learned how much it really empowers others when you tell them they can - it becomes instinctive. Application of that in the corporate world brings out the natural abilities of the people you bestow that confidence in. Their abilities really start to shine through.

I remember another girl that worked in my company in the early days. We'll call her "American Mary" (she chose that nickname herself) even though that's not her name. She wasn't a real fast duplicator or speedy at comprehending; but I learned that if I wanted to work with her, I had to, in essence, "Be" her. Incidentally, a marketing principle that helps a graphic designer attain a better idea of what kind of design will "pull" (get responses) for a totally alien industry to that said designer is to learn to "Be" the recipient of the direct mail piece. Once someone learns to assume the views and ideas of the recipient, then he can design something that will elicit a reach - a call or an order, etc. This principle also applies to employees. "American Mary" could not work with a certain person in my company because he would not tolerate her slowness. He couldn't or wouldn't understand what it was like to be her. So, he barked his orders as fast as he usually did and he got nowhere. On the other hand, I would just "Be" her. I'd slow it down, be really kind, maybe draw a map for her even if she had been there five times before...and she would do anything for me. And she'd make sure she'd do a perfect job if she knew it was for me. Even today, she still calls me from Europe every now and then just to say hello.

Ask Not What I Can Do For You...

It all comes down to the point of exchanging properly with an employee; and that's a tough one to balance. The person has to bring in a return to the company. With my employees and my executives, I start at what I can afford to pay them. I provide them an atmosphere where they can prosper by giving them the freedom to do the job themselves - always observing that they have the willingness as the biggest factor. In the initial interview process, I tell them the truth: "I expect the world. You are expected to give 110% and take pride in a job well done. You give to me first and then I'll exchange back with you." And I do. I demand a lot. And when they deliver and go above and beyond what I expect, I give back to them over and above what they expect. It's that circle of life concept I was talking about earlier.

Another example of how to apply this is to spread their accolades through word of mouth. I don't ever plan this; I just may be talking to my PR about one of my designers and I just say how great that designer is doing - and guess what? Next thing you know that designer has heard about it. That really does something for the person you are praising. They know you think they are great at their job and that really makes them want to work even harder for you.

Loyalty Pays Off

The President of my company, Jennifer Custer, is a gem. I recall one day her mother asking me what the gross income was for the week. She said she wanted to know so she could predict what kind of weekend she was going to have. I didn't understand - what did this have to do with her weekend? I found out; Jenn was not fun to be around when the company's revenue was down. I learned from her mother that she wanted so badly to make it, for me and the company, that when she did not, she really felt down. I never thought that she wore her duties that personally.

To instill that kind of loyalty you have to be loyal. When somebody flows me a lot of help in a particular area, I never forget it, I never disconnect from that. I have someone that was with me that has been with me from the beginning. She was a "Doubting Thomas" and would comment behind my back that I "sure had a big pipe dream in regards to growing the company." But she was really good at her post - her division does a lot of production in that area and she runs it well. They are result driven and have deadlines that would even try the patience of Job. It would have been hard to replace her, plus she had been with me so long. Once my President found out that she was negating my dreams to others, she addressed it and that person never did it again. But I never held onto that as a grudge. In fact, I ended up giving her a raise above what her position was worth in our geographical area. In my opinion, she had warranted it - the good she constantly did surely outweighed her verbal negativity. She was with me a long time and truly developed her area. I never disconnected from her because she helped me, despite her verbal transgression. Not only did she make amends for what she has ever said about me, she would never naysay me or my company again, and now she'll probably never leave me. So always take a look at what the staff member DOES (as opposed to says), regardless of the apparency.

Lastly, I think it's important and warrants mentioning that I want my employees to enjoy their time here at work. I've had a few jobs where I hated going in to work in the morning and couldn't wait until the end of the day. Although I've learned that ultimately I am responsible for my condition in life - at work and at home - I could also notice things that existed in the workplace that were

surely less than optimum. I wished that there was some person to tell, someone that would listen and be able to do something about it. You need to make sure that your executives and employees know you are their friend and know that you genuinely care about them. You will build a juggernaut like I have and your executives will carry forward your ideals to the rest of your crew.