

## NEWS & NOTES

Issue 4

### ENABLE YOU INC.

Enable You Inc. provides the resources to complete the ongoing work or special project you haven't the time or staff expertise to address. Our services include a comprehensive range of business planning, human resources, marketing and communications support. Ask about our complimentary Opportunity Audit (with recommended action plan). Contact us at:

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### TRUE OR NOT TRUE?

**Test your knowledge. The first person to email the correct response wins a Starbucks Coffee Card.**

Someone who is bitten by a poisonous snake should be given an anecdote immediately.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York City hung 'Le Bateau' by Matisse upside down for 47 days before an art student noticed the error.

*Congratulations to last month's winner, Melanie Gibson of Rainbow Mississauga Ltd.*

### MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES: THE "NO-COST" MEANS TO INCREASED PROFITS (PART 1)

Really? If creating more motivated employees can be achieved at "no cost", and if a more motivated workforce inevitably leads to a more profitable company, why isn't this the #1 focus of every CEO?

The short answer is, motivation may be free but it's not easy to achieve. In fact, taking the steps to create motivated employees often goes against traditional (hierarchical) corporate culture. Because **the only sustained, real productivity increases are self-generated**, a company's leader actually has to be able to build individual employees' personal self esteem and goals and link them to the organization's self-esteem (corporate identity) and goals.

Since a typical "command-and-control" environment doesn't interest itself in the individual opinions and needs of most employees, only short-term increases in productivity can be achieved through carrot-and-stick methods. In fact, **a company where people get the message, overtly or subtly, that their ideas and opinions don't matter**, where there is no interest or empathy in their personal lives, where their role is to conform and "do", **is a company that will have a huge struggle to sustain competitiveness and long term financial viability.**

**As an entrepreneur or executive, then, where do you start to identify the changes needed to truly improve motivation and profits?** According to one visionary leader, the first step is to make a genuine commitment to, "rigid respect for the individual as key to corporate success." Respect helps you get back to basic values like common sense, good listening, and helping people to work together rather than just for themselves.

This was the simple vision that drove William Arnold when he took the helm as President of Centennial Medical Centre in Nashville, Tennessee. As described in "**The Human Touch**", **a book coauthored by Arnold and Jeanne Plas in 1993**, no one was buying the open-door, person-centered leadership message Arnold was repeating when he initially took over the large facility. After a few frustrating weeks, he had his office door taken off its hinges and hung in the front lobby of the hospital complex as a clear message that he did mean it when he said he wanted to hear from everyone about their problems and ideas.

With tenacity, total sincerity and conviction, Arnold made himself personally available and accountable to all his staff. That level of

attention and respect, not surprisingly, made people feel better about themselves, and prouder of their employer. Over a 4 year period, this collective, enhanced sense of respect and ownership **ultimately lead to these results:**

- increased cash flow (from \$11 to \$30 million)
- decreased bad debt (to 0.4%)
- decreased accounts receivable days from 78 to 44
- decreased staff turnover by more than 50%
- decreased supply expense as a percentage of revenue from 15% to 12.5%.

The book provides a starting point to inspire, as well as to entertain and warn, with specific examples of what worked and what didn't in Arnold's quest to "risk humanness" to build an exemplary organization.

In the next issue of Enable's e-bulletin, we'll look at **some of the latest Canadian survey findings re employee motivation.**

## **B2B SEMINAR RECAP**

On September 10, 2006, Enable You Inc. held its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual business-to-business seminar, "What Can Kill Or Secure Reputation & Profits".

Co-presenter Winston Mattis, a lawyer, author and lecturer, offered tips for litigation-proofing business contracts, discussed various sources of financing, and reminded attendees, "The law is not about truth, it's about proof."

Barbara O'Neil provided advice on how to build a competitive employee base, and highlighted related compliance considerations. Meriel Simpson's presentation focused on meaningful communication and employee "morale busters."

For information on future seminars, contact us at [enableyouinc@rogers.com](mailto:enableyouinc@rogers.com)

## **BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS (PART 1)**

Effective teams don't just happen, they are built along the path to completing an assignment. While there is a very solid argument for creating the team before the project is set up, the reverse is usually true in real life. In the corporate world, while dysfunctional teams seem common, it doesn't have to be that way. In this series of articles, we'll discuss the attributes of an ideal team, the journey from initial stages to cohesive group, and how to build the team's cohesion and effective performance.

What is the definition of an effective team? A team:

- understands that both personal and team goals are best achieved through mutual support
- comprises people who feel ownership for their jobs and are committed to the common goals they help to establish
- contributes to the business by applying its collective talents and knowledge to the team goal
- trusts its members and encourages them to express themselves openly
- welcomes questions and opposing opinions
- continually develops its skills and applies them to the project
- helps team members to learn about themselves and each other
- allows its members to participate in team decisions, understanding that the team leader has the final say.

Some of you may be asking, who has ever been on a team like that? These teams are usually developed over time. Whether you hire all the right attributes and skills for the project or use existing resources, a team of people still has learn to work together.

This became evident when I was hired as part of a team to create a national help desk for a large financial institution. We were consolidating 28 small help functions from across the country into one large call centre. Not a happy situation, as many of the people currently in the help functions did not want to move to Toronto. The day came when we had everyone under one roof. All the equipment and workstations were set up and all the people who decided to move to do the job were present. Of course, that didn't make us a team.

Each person had a different way of handling the customer. Some felt knowledge was more important than making the customer feel good. Others made the customer happy, but didn't always impart the knowledge. People from different parts of the country doing the same job wouldn't work with each other. Resistance to the whole concept of centralization was high.

At the same time, the senior management team was having challenges. We had two business managers and a technical manager making their own decisions without consulting or sharing with the other senior team members. We all appeared to be getting along famously, however, we weren't really a team. Learning to work together can take as little as 3 months or as long as a year. The journey can be made easier by specific teambuilding programs scheduled along the way. It took the help desk a year to become a team. More on the evolution in our next article in the series.