

Guest Author Bob Cooper

“Balancing Two Sides of Work”

✘ I would like you to think about a great boss or mentor you had sometime in your career. *What made them great?* When I ask this question to seminar participants or during an executive coaching session I get responses such as “Gives me excellent ongoing feedback”, “Has a vision and knows how to execute the strategy”, “Builds an excellent and supportive team”, “Took the time to teach me the business”, and “Is supportive, respectful and compassionate.”

As you look at the above responses, what comes to mind? In asking this question to hundreds of people in many settings it has led me to one conclusion – great leaders know how to drive business results, and inspire others to want to follow.

When teaching service excellence workshops I often discuss the two-sided service coin. One side represents the “technical” side of service, the other the “human” side. The technical side of service represents the day to day responsibilities of one’s job (e.g. assisting customers, completing reports, etc.). The human side involves building the relationship with all internal and external customers (e.g. acknowledging the customer, following-through on customer commitments, demonstrating kindness and respect, etc.)

Great organizations recognize that everyone needs to pay close attention to both the technical and human sides of the customer experience. So what does this have to do with leadership. In short – everything!

If you develop a sound business strategy, but fail to build the human experience, bad things can and will happen. Think about the restaurant which serves outstanding food, but delivers poor service. Will you return? I suspect you probably

will not. Top performers will leave your organization if you fail to treat them with complete and total respect. Increased turnover means increased costs to your business. Performance and morale will suffer, and trust can erode.

The following are suggestions for all leaders to develop a culture that addresses both sides of the coin:

1) Look in the Mirror – Do you effectively balance the coin? If you focus only on the day to day technical side of the business, and fail to address the human side, you may fall short. For example, if you are running a meeting and do not engage others through effective collaboration, you may not attain true consensus. The group might not achieve the best decision for the business, and some team members might feel that you do not value them or their ideas. If you walk by the receptionist and do not say good morning, how might he or she feel? Acknowledging others and showing respect helps to keep your team's head in the game. The last thing we want is a receptionist who feels under appreciated. After all, who makes the first impression for the business?

2) Teach Business Strategy & Customer Relations Skills – Starting with senior leadership, every executive must be on the same page relative to business strategy. If we are going left, everyone should know why we are going left and how this compares to our competitors, and grows market share. Every executive must model excellent interpersonal skills by showing respect at all times, thanking others for their contributions, acknowledging everyone they meet throughout the day (this means everyone – no exceptions). Great leaders also take the time to engage other members of their team in strategy development, and mentor others to think strategically. They see themselves as mentors, and take great pride in helping others to learn and grow. They are also patient with team members, recognizing that every individual is unique and learns differently. They turn mistakes into opportunities for learning and growth.

3) Lead with Your Heart – In writing “Heart and Soul in the Boardroom” – my objective was to get current and future leaders to test their assumptions about leadership. My goal is to create a dialogue about this most important issue – leaders who lead with integrity and compassion are models of excellence. Doing the small things such as showing a member of your staff that you are concerned about their sick spouse or their career aspirations forms a powerful bond. This facilitates the building of trust and mutual understanding. Your people want to know you care. They want to know that the project they just handed to you is as important as their personal struggle.

You see – we bring both our hearts and our minds to work every day. People don’t lock their hearts up in the car before they walk in the door. Authentic work cultures have individuals working hard to achieve excellence, and at the same time show caring toward their fellow colleagues.

The best leaders I have worked with understand this topic very well. They are the individuals who were my greatest mentors. People like Bill, Susan, Warren, and a few others whom I have discussed over many years with you. It’s been a long time since I have seen any of them, but I remember them like it was yesterday. The reason why I have such fond memories is because they were brilliant business people who achieved excellent results, and most important, they were and are great people!

I ask that you commit to balancing the two-sided coin. Bring your “A” game when it comes to leading the business and building outstanding business relationships. You will achieve great business results, and you will have a lasting impression on your most important asset – your loyal followers.

For a complete listing of our services, please visit us at www.rlcooperassoc.com or call (845) 639-1741.

RL Cooper Associates’ book “Heart and Soul in the Boardroom”

*outlines suggestions for leaders to develop highly respectful and ethical work cultures and is available in the **Manage My Practice Store**. For additional information about their services, please visit www.rlcooperassoc.com.*

