

Everyone Is Essential: Guest Author Bob Cooper

❌ Some organizations will use the terms essential and non-essential workers as a way to distinguish between who needs to be on site in the event of an emergency, and who does not. I do understand the purpose of this distinction, however, **it's very important that businesses not give the impression that some employees are more important or valuable than others.**

Have you ever thought about the importance of the Bank Teller's role? Is this individual given the requisite respect they deserve? I once overheard a bank manager say the following – “She's only a teller, you can't expect her to know better.” Think about the responsibility of this role. The Teller helps to build the customer experience and is responsible for very important transactions. I don't know about you, but I want the Tellers in my bank to be satisfied and maintain a good focus on their work.

How do you view each and every member of your team? Do you respect everyone as an important member of the team? How does each person on your team impact the internal and external customer experience?

Your employees are your most important asset, and you need to serve them. If you expect them to deliver exceptional service to others, you need to serve them first.

The following are a few suggestions to **demonstrate** that you view **every** member of your team as **essential**:

1) Show Respect at all Times – Never make the same mistake that the Bank Manager made by saying “She's only a Teller, or clerk, or aide, or any other position. Sometimes the best ideas come from your front-line staff. They have dreams and aspirations and want to know that you value them for their

contributions. They have feelings and want to know that you value them as professionals.

2) Engage their Hearts and Minds – Give every member of your team the opportunity to become involved in all aspects of the business. Show your staff how their work is integrated with other members of the team and is critical to the organization's success. Find out what motivates team members, and wherever possible, allow them to become involved in initiatives that ignite their passion. They should become engaged in offering ideas to build the business and drive strategy.

3) Say Thank You – Show your gratitude for individual efforts by expressing sincere thanks for a job well done. The key is your sincerity. If your thank you is half-hearted, don't be shocked when one of your best performers leaves the organization because they don't feel appreciated. You can't fake sincerity.

4) Care About Them – Have you ever experienced a personal problem only to find your boss is only concerned with the project you are working on? I have heard bosses say – “Leave your personal issues at home.” Oh really? What if a staff member has a loved one who is very ill? Should this not matter? I have witnessed throughout my career many top performers change jobs because they felt their boss was totally insensitive to their personal concerns. When people come to work, they bring their whole selves to the office. Of course they need to perform their duties responsibly. As a leader, part of your job is to help staff keep their head in the game. You need to show empathy and assist the employee to effectively deal with their issues.

5) Bring Them Coffee – In my book “Heart and Soul in the Boardroom” I discuss a former boss named Warren. Although I have not seen Warren in over 25 years, I remember him as if it was yesterday. Warren would say – “Bob, can I bring you a cup

of coffee back from the cafeteria?” He would make the same offer to every member of the team. Warren treated every member of the team with respect. What about the boss who asks his or her assistant to bring back a cup of coffee and never offers to do the same? What’s the message? This individual believes that others are there to serve them – WRONG! You are there to serve others. In turn, they will reciprocate and go the extra yard to help you win.

6) Care About Their Careers – Take the time to listen and understand your employee’s goals. Make every effort to help them to achieve their goals. The key here is to show the effort and desire to assist them to reach their full potential.

Great leaders treat every member of the team as essential. They realize that the receptionist or janitor make a huge impact on the customer experience. I will never forget what a former boss named Harry said many years ago during a meeting. Harry said – **“Remember, the janitor may be at the bottom of our organization’s hierarchy, but is the CEO to his family.”** I can still hear Harry’s voice. He was so right. Every human being deserves to be respected.

If you treat every member of your team as essential, and truly care about them, they will perform beyond your expectations. We must make sure the financial compensation is fair and competitive, but the differentiating factor is that staff know you care, and see them as essential to the organization’s success.

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.

