

Personnel – The Hidden Wealth

By John Vamos

Fact: Your staff knows a lot about your business, knowledge that helps you while they remain employed.

Fact: You rarely seize the opportunity to trap this information.

Why don't you? Maybe (probably) you don't know how! Maybe you don't think they will share it with you. Maybe, just maybe, you don't believe me.

The Background

I worked with a high profile business. This business is the largest in its industry (that remain privately owned) in the world! They had six people supervising the 60 or so outlets the company held. Each supervisor visited these outlets on a regular basis. Questions arose about these.

The Issue was identified as:

How objective are those visits in helping to:

1. Coach the store manager on key staff management issues
2. Maintain quality standards
3. Deal with catastrophes or the odd disputes.

Basically doing what a supervisor is supposed to do.

The Challenge then was to:

- Collect all the information that can be gleaned from the supervisors. Trap all the knowledge that helps maximise the value of the supervisors visit to the store.
- Develop a protocol that ensures that every visit by a supervisor to a store without exception achieves everything that is intended.

The Obstacle found was:

The supervisors didn't see the need:

"We've been doing this for years..."

"We all have our own style..."

"We don't want the visit to be stale and clinical..."

The Obstacle blown out of the water

We challenged the supervisors:

"Have you ever left a store and realised you forgot to discuss or deal with an issue?"

Answer: Yes

"Have you ever wondered how your colleagues manage this process?"

Answer: Yes

"Do you feel there is nothing left in the world for you to learn about your job?"

Answer: No

"Is there any piece of paper ever going to be strong enough to cramp your style?"

Answer: No

"Is there any group in the world, better qualified than the six of you to develop these protocols?"

Answer: No

"Are you prepared to give it a shot?"

Answer: Yes



The Result:

Using the following tools, the workgroup developed a store visit checklist.

Feedback (only a sample!)

"We learnt so much from each other"

"The store managers are now prepared for our visits..."

"The visits are faster and more objective..."

"We don't have to think about what we are going to do ... we can just focus our energy on doing it..."

"We feel so much more in control..."

"We can never forget things on a visit..."

"We can make sensible notes reflecting the outcome of the visit..."

Bonus Points

The owner now owns the recipe

New store managers learn faster

New supervisors learn faster

The owner can get reports on store performance

(not KPIs...that are done by Finance, but real issues on performance).

Want to trap some more hidden wealth?**The Market**

Any business that has a number of people doing the same job in isolation

The Objective

- Trap their knowledge
- Improve their performance (really fast!)

The Tools

- The questionnaire
- A "facilitator" - someone to conduct the session who has little or nothing to do with the assembled group

The Method

1. Set a date
 2. Circulate the questionnaire
 3. Appoint the facilitator
 4. Schedule the meeting
 5. Facilitate the discussion (see brainstorming booster)
 6. Collect the feedback from the group.
 7. Draft any checklists or tips into procedures
 8. Include in your training program and orientation file
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Brainstorming Booster

1. What are the key characteristics that make someone good at our job?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.



2. In the day to day challenge of meeting your job goals, what are the five 'not negotiable' tasks?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
3. If you were coaching someone new to your position, how would you complete these sentences?
 - "The most important thing to remember is..."
 - "The best habit you could develop is..."
 - "Despite what other people tell you, don't..."
 - "Despite what other people tell you, always..."
 - "The one thing I wish someone would have told me earlier is..."
4. Describe the most recent initiative you have embarked on to improve your performance.
5. Describe one characteristic you have observed in a colleague that you wish you could emulate or copy
6. What is one question you would add to this Booster, a question you would like to hear answered by your colleagues?

