



The Power of Discernment in Relationships

Travelling, consulting and creating over the last few years have allowed me the opportunity to have some very interesting experiences with individuals in the Spa/Salon business. The business owners and their new/existing staff that I have worked with never cease to amaze me. As a personal service industry, this business and the industry itself is built on the relationships and services that employees offer guests/clients.



As an owner, leader, director or manager; your main goal in this service industry is to ensure that guests/clients receive excellent treatments –if you desire to retain your guests/clients. With the demand for staff in this personal service industry owners and managers tend to hire individuals which I consider less than desirable just to have “a body in the business.”

A lot of owners and managers have said, “I do not know who the person has become, it is definitely not the person who we hired!” So how do you discern and give your trust to someone you hire who is ultimately an expression of your business, an ambassador who is to be an excellent service provider? The term

discernment is what it is really about- to perceive; see clearly and/or the act or process of exhibiting keen insight and good judgment. I know that a lot of individuals I have worked with have been shocked when the staff member’s true colors show.

Some of the challenges I have observed involve:

recruiting and retaining employees

employees telling you when they can and cannot work

employees that come late

employees that do not like feedback

employees that will only use a certain product line

employees that refuse to retail

employees that do not cleanup or disinfect equipment

employees that are negative or defensive

employees that do not keep up on education

because they know it all

employees that prefer to do only services/treatments they like

employees that won't go the extra mile

employees that are reluctant to be personally groomed when they come to work

employees that gossip all the time

A lot of these challenges stem from a very informal interview process and improper orientation and education. You have to remember that these individuals have all been educated/trained at various educational institutions with various educators. So these individuals believe that since they have a certificate - they know what they are supposed to do. Well. It just doesn't work out! You the owner/manager have to be real clear with your Performance-Based Job descriptions and thoroughly explain your Performance

-Based Evaluations; then have the new recruit demonstrate their skills before you allow them to work with a guest/client. Yes, you are thinking -that takes time; exactly! A lot of people “talk a good talk and cannot walk their talk!”

Rather than being in crisis management, selecting great staff will allow you to effectively run the business. I believe all employees are hired on probation and need to prove themselves if you are to trust them with your clients/guests. You as an owner/manager are looking for results which are very easy to measure- what is the client base they are building and what is their service-to retail sales ratio.

At the first evaluation which should be within the 1st-3rd month you will be able to have a good picture of who this person really is- you can evaluate the actions-forget about their words! I hear people saying “you can trust me”. And my response is “trust is earned-not given”.



Being really honest is probably one of the most difficult things to do.....and I mean honest, with one self and honest with others. We have been taught not to hurt anyone’s feelings; however, true coaching is about being real and truthful.

Trust forms the foundation of all authentic communication and relationships:

When trust is present everything seems to be able to be handled. In order to build a strong team you need to have the wisdom of how to develop the team which is based on developing each employee. You need to have people that are willing to listen and that are coachable; only hire individuals that you feel fit that profile. Skills can be taught...attitudes are hard to change.

A systematic approach starts with clear verbal and written communication which is the key to leading, managing, coaching and mentoring.

The top driver of retention is employee engagement, which is driven above by senior management’s sincere interest in their employees.

As a leader, you are a coach who provides direction and concentration for the team players’ energy by helping channel their energy and effort toward a single desired outcome.

Respect is earned. People have to see you doing things, time after time, that make sense to them in a larger way. They need to recognize that your actions are motivated, not by your ego, but by your desire for them to be the best they can be. If you need to be popular when pushing people, your effectiveness goes and so



The four fatal assumptions that owners, managers, leaders and sometimes coaches make are to:

assume the employee has understood the message

assume the employee agreed with the message

assume the employee cared about the message

assume the employee will act accordingly

My belief is that if you are the owner of the business, you are the leader, and you could use total quality management principles and systems to develop, manage and coach your staff, which means leading, coaching and managing your spa director/manager.

Whenever I work with individuals I explain my basic premise or fundamental philosophy in life which is, "See a person for who they really are as opposed to someone you want them to be and see a situation for what it really is as opposed to how you want it to be."

I also explain to individuals not to take anything personally- I am simply discerning relationships to ensure effectiveness in building successful businesses- I am not here to make everyone my friend. ■

