

Happy Holidays – Bah Humbug!

Bob Cratchit – “One minute less than 12 hours a day and your wages will be docked 50% - NOW GET TO WORK!!!”

Work life balance – my work life is leaning so far to the starboard side I’m taking on water – HELP!!!

We just completed an employee engagement survey for one of our national clients. They’ve got operations in 26 different cities across the country. It’s amazing what you can learn statistically about a company from the way employees respond. To one of the questions it was pretty apparent that the average work week for this company – across the entire country – was just about 50 hours. That’s 10 hours a day Monday through Friday or five 9 hour days and an additional 5 hours on the weekend! Yet the overall job satisfaction, management ratings, supervisory scores, and overall workplace ratings were at almost 85%+ respectively. That’s unheard of in most companies today! Yet this company, in spite of the high demand for work output, maintains a very positive workforce. How do they do it?

When meeting with the Chairman and CEO a few weeks ago to discuss the results of their survey he told me a couple of very interesting things that make a difference. He stated that 15 years ago when he took over as CEO the results were completely opposite where they are today. High turnover, poor morale, major client facing issues, and on and on. He decided to start conducting an employee survey every other year and would attempt to improve at least two major things that they discovered with each survey. Aha! The secret to change – listen – adjust current conditions to positive – listen again – adjust again and continue in that manner until the change is palpable. It’s Deming’s Quality theory applied to Human Capital Management – GENIUS!!! And here are the things that made the difference according to the CEO:

Care. He cares about each employee – and the loss of any one of his employees for any reason is a failure of him and his management team to take care of their employees. As such he holds each accountable for retention of their staff.

Communicate. They OVER communicate. This includes active listening, and honest and open feedback in response to expressed concerns and issues.

Know your team. Every manager and supervisor is visible and interactive with every employee they interface with. It is important to him that every supervisor and manager knows every employee both up and downstream from them.

Train. They train – everyone – on everything. They’ve embraced the theory that if you’re not improving, and not learning something new all the time – you are losing ground to the competition. As such they have a very robust training and development initiative that

Address challenges immediately. They address challenges directly. As such they’ve created one of the most progressive employee oriented cultures we’ve ever witnessed.

The results: a few of the more profound company metrics: Turnover less than 10% in an industry that averages over 30%; Profitability – steady 6-9% per year; Customer Retention – 98%. The numbers speak for themselves.

So in this frenetic time of Holiday chaos – remember this. Everyone cares about someone – hopefully more than just one. If we could follow suit with this CEO and show how much we care about everyone we meet, work with and interface – especially during this holiday season – wouldn’t that be the best gift of all – especially when it is reciprocated? After all, isn’t that what human capital is all about – The Power of People – Realized!

May the Blessings of this most profound season be with each of you!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Dave