



Bottom Line vs. Serving Others

By Diana L. Garren

In today's business world, we hear much talk about increasing the bottom line. Many companies have actually sabotaged themselves by focusing solely on the bottom line. Why does focusing on the bottom line sabotage a company? Because the true core of business is about people. When a company loses sight of serving people their company culture changes and both employees and customers notice. When a company focuses solely on the bottom line, judgment can become skewed, decisions can be made out of fear, and their reputation becomes compromised.

We all recognize that the bottom line is important to stay in business, but focusing on the bottom line will actually decrease and not increase your bottom line. Every business has internal and external customers they must serve. When your (internal customers) employees realize the bottom line is more important than they are, they look elsewhere. Why? Because every human being wants to feel valued and serve a purpose bigger than them. They want a job that matters and makes a difference. They want to do something they enjoy. As your employee turnover grows, so does your cost of hiring and training, so your bottom line decreases. It is more cost effective to retain your employees. Your company will also lose (external customers) customers because they also want to feel valued. Not only will you lose customers but they will also tell others how unvalued they feel which; will make it harder to obtain new customers. As your customer base decreases, your marketing and sales budget will have to increase and your bottom line again will decrease.

As a business, you must always keep your focus on serving your internal and external customers for your bottom line to increase. You must first make sure your employees are being valued and given the tools to effectively and efficiently do their job. This will allow them to take the value they feel and pass it forward to your external customers. It is critical to your company's success to spend time and money to show your internal and external customers they are valued. Most times, it is not the big things that matter, but the little things. Going that extra mile will have huge payoffs to your bottom line. Other internal payoffs will be a productive and happy staff and a company culture that cultivates and empowers people to work harder and take pride in their job and your company. It will create a sense of unity and common goals. It will springboard ideas and creativity. Externally, you will retain your existing customers and easily gain new customers.

The following keys will help you develop a company that focuses on serving others

- Make a decision to serve people and not the bottom line
- Develop a value system that drives people to serve others first
- Review your internal processes and procedures and see if they are customer or money driven
- Revise all processes and procedures to be service driven
- Take an honest inventory of what your internal and external customers feel
- Acknowledge and Reward your employees for high levels of customer service
- Do not make the bottom line a goal for yourself or your employees, make service the goal

You might be thinking how do I take my eyes off the bottom line. How do I trust this process, when I have been programmed to only see the bottom line? Well, it takes faith and a knowing in your heart that what you just read is truth. It takes a paradigm shift and a desire to serve others, internally and externally. It takes close examination of your motives. It takes finding a bigger purpose than money and self. It takes a commitment in making the necessary changes.

The New Year is upon us and every choice we make today will be visible tomorrow. I challenge you to take the time to evaluate where your company focus has been, how it has worked for you, and if you need to change your focus to serve others. You will be glad you did!

Diana L. Garren of Atlanta, GA is one of the leading business image experts in the United States. For more information, you may visit TruePerceptions.com. In future issues, Ms. Garren will help your business tackle the many facets of image building and maintenance.

