



Loyalty

Recently I had a most interesting conversation with some friends about the employment crisis infecting Saskatoon. It seems that youth are quitting jobs to work with competitors for a few cents more an hour. Sometimes they just don't show up and "forget" to tell their employers that they won't be coming back. Where is the loyalty to the employer?

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These friends also talked about a youth that worked for a company whose ads expound the fact that working for them is a career with great fringe benefits. Examples of companies like that are fast food restaurants and telemarketing groups, who are all under the employment crunch. This youth was wooed by the consideration they received during the interview and the first few weeks of working for the company. But what they found after a couple of weeks was that their new found managers began to treat them differently. This might not be bad if the treatment was acceptable. Let's face it, when management plays with people hours, "forgetting" to tell them that their shifts have changed and generally treating them like insignificant forced labour – today's youth, who have a large

number of options, decide that maybe turnabout is fair play and treat the employer in a similar way. No loyalty from the employee = no loyalty from the employer.

It also struck us that it's far easier to keep customers than to get new ones, until of course you treat the ones you have like they don't really matter. A good example of this is a financial institution that is willing to give you perks for moving your account to them, but don't give any thought to encouraging you to keep your account there. Case in point:

I have been with one financial institution for 40 years. They have never given me anything (not even a Christmas card – or a thank you card for being loyal to them). For the past 25 years I have been moving different aspects of my financial workings to other organisations, mostly because the new guys actually talked to me and found out that they have a service I need. My current financial institution put a similar product into their organizational offerings a year or two ago but failed to let me know – In fact, I only heard from them when I moved my account. Thinking about me? Nope – only when the computer tells them I have been a bad boy. So after 40 years of loyalty I really have nothing to show for it – not even good service. No loyalty from the business = no loyalty from the customer.

Here's an exercise that will help you evaluate how your loyalty program is going. For the next 15 minutes (or a 1000 seconds if you like) write down everything you can think of that would drive staff (or customers) away from your organization. Dirty floors, bad lighting, cranky managers, bad pay, -- you know what they are. Do this today and for the next two days. On the fourth day sit down with your list and see how many you actually do. Now fix them!

What changes can you make to show your staff and customers that you appreciate their loyalty and how critically important it is to your and your organization?