



We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.®

Written by: Bryan K. Williams, D.M.

September 29, 2010

Work Like You Own It! 2.0 *Energize it. Recognize it. Celebrate it.*

Not long ago, I visited a well-known department store to buy a few items. I was armed with a list of carefully selected items that were on sale. When I got to the store, however, I realized that I left the sales paper at home. So I went to the store's customer service desk to inquire about getting another sales paper. The first person I met said that he was on a break. The second person I met said that she was working in the storeroom and did not know about such things as sale papers. Finally, the third person I asked said, "Of course! Wait right here and I'll get it for you." He then ran (not walked) to a shelf behind a counter and ran back with a sales paper. He then asked me what I was looking for and when I told him, he did not just simply point the way. He then escorted me to the exact aisle and shelf that had the item I was looking for. Afterwards, he asked if there was anything else he could help me with. I thanked him for his follow-through and professionalism, then told him that two of his co-workers apathetically disregarded my request. He promptly said the following...and I quote, "Allow me to apologize on behalf of my team and my company. That is not the level of service that we strive for." Wow. I thanked him for working with passion, pride, and professionalism. He works like he owns it.

Encourage It

If you want more examples of your team working like they own it, the first thing you must do is encourage it. This means to regularly talk about what it means to work with vested interest in the company. People who work like they own it don't just take up space on the team. The team is better because they are on it. These service superstars are the exact opposite of those employees who just do enough to get by..(I call those types of employees, the "bare minimums"...or BM's for short).

You can also "encourage it" by soliciting examples of when employees have exceeded expectations. Then don't stop there. Share those examples with the rest of their team. Excellence tends to encourage more excellence. Some companies are known for having an entire team of people who work like they own it. Zappos.com is renowned for their world-class customer service. A colleague of mine recently ordered shoes for her son recently from Zappos and after her son wore the shoes only twice, they began to fall apart. My colleague was rightfully upset, so she called Zappos to complain and get a refund. She was fully expecting the operator to be defensive. The exact opposite happened. The operator apologized, empathized, and thanked her for bringing it to Zappos' attention. The operator then stayed on the phone with my colleague and suggested that she log on to her computer so they can both find another pair of shoes right then and there.

After finding another pair, the operator arranged to have the shoes shipped via overnight mail (complimentary of course). The operator also upgraded my colleague to VIP status. In my view, Zappos.com is a great service company that just happens to sell shoes. In like manner, your company can be known as a great service company as well. The key ingredient however, is to have a team of people who take great pride in their job and work like they own it.

Recognize It

“Recognize it” means to catch people when they are exceeding expectations and let them know you appreciate them for it. Your best staff (the ones who work like they own it) crave appreciation. They may not articulate it, but they NEED to know that their hard work and professionalism is valued. If not, they will either quit and leave or quit and stay. Neither option is favorable. Don’t just give a generic award, but rather customize the recognition to the individual. Remember, if you want your staff to engage their customers, then you must engage your staff. Find out what they like specifically. Personalize the recognition, whenever possible. If I enjoy going to the movie theater, then movie passes may be a great gift. If I enjoy a double caramel machiatto with skim milk and two dashes of cinnamon from Starbucks, then a gift card would be memorable.

Celebrate It

Make “Work Like You Own It” a company initiative. Even if you don’t use the exact term, encourage your team to “own” their work. Contribute ideas. Identify opportunities for improvement and be a part of the solution. People who work like they own it should be held on a pedestal. At that point, the manager’s main responsibility is to keep that person motivated. In other words, DO NOT de-motivate those employees. Encourage them, recognize them, celebrate them, then get out of their way and allow them to create exceptional service memories one customer at a time.

Order Bryan’s new book and other resources: <http://shop.bwenterprise.net/>

Find more resources relating to service excellence at
www.bwenterprise.net.

Also on the website, you can subscribe to the official B. Williams Enterprise emailing list. You will receive announcements, newsletters and other excellent resources.
-We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world®.-

