

Count your blessings & ASSETS!

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When we compile a list to determine our 'net worth', I wonder how many of us, at least mentally, stop to consider what is probably the most significant asset to our operations, our people, or our employees.

Try as we might (and believe me, we keep on trying!)

we cannot remove the human element from the equation and continue to run our operations dependably and efficiently.

Think about it: You can invest a fortune in the latest and greatest state-of-the-art equipment from earthmovers to telephones but without quality, dependable operators, what good is it? Yes, I know, telephone operators went out when I was in grade school, an example of the human replacement I was speaking about. Who else will admit to remembering picking up the phone and hearing an operator ask: "Number please?" A simple "299" connected me with my Grandmother. God rest her soul.

But wait! Are they obsolete? I, for one, would far rather speak with your receptionist than push buttons at your taped electronic messages! Good phone etiquette is crucial! It is the first, if not only, (and perhaps the **last**) contact a caller has with your operation. People often form strong opinions of us, or our business, within the first few seconds of exposure. Very serious thought should be put into how our receptionist receives visitors or answers calls.

Consider that brand new excavator, or just as importantly, the old one you just cannot afford to replace just yet. Without a trustworthy operator to check the oil, lubricate it, and operate it responsibly, your excavator becomes a liability and no longer an asset. This is true from hand tools to specialized equipment.

I truly hope we all realize that our people have a profound impact on our personal and business reputations. Whether you are the owner, upper, middle, or lower management, the people in your charge can make or break you! 'Word-of-mouth' can be your best or worst advertisement.

Do you have work to be done? May I suggest:

- 1.) Hire the right people. Yup, sounds easy! Check references. Try to get to know as much as you can learn about them. Look for qualities that indicate a person's interest in becoming an integral part of your operation, not just collecting pay stubs. Remember, a 'revolving door' does not speak well of you.

- 2.) Provide them with the proper equipment and training to accomplish the task you want performed. Don't expect mind readers.
- 3.) Here is a biggie, **PLEASE! DON'T MICRO MANAGE!!** There is a vast difference between 'managing' and 'operating'! Too many managers think they have to be operators also, which usually results in strife, conflict, and low morale.
- 4.) Trust them! If you truly have hired the right person, provided equipment and proper training, allowed them enough latitude, then they will rise to the occasion and do the job you expect to be done. If they don't, fire them and go back to suggestion #1.
- 5.) Communicate! Be certain that employees clearly understand what is expected of them. They should fully understand what the end result is expected to produce. If you have folks in positions above you, the owner, the boss, the board, keep them informed as work progresses. Try to avoid surprises.

Here it comes.....brace yourself!!!

- 6.) **PAY THEM!** You have a vested interest in your people. Try to insure it. Some of them have obtained and maintain special licensing. You have an investment in their training and experience. When your receptionist or representative cast you and/or your operation in a favorable light, it is a result of your investment in them and has great value, or should have, to you! When your expensive equipment is being operated proficiently and effectively, that's increased profit margin, a.k.a. great value.

Perhaps you are reading this from a low rung on the ladder, (please move over, you're standing on my foot). Gainful employment is a two way street. Your employer must make a profit or provide a service to ensure your future also. How do you serve yourself if you in any way subvert the success of your employer?

You don't have a 'right' to your job. The only thing you have a right to is agreed upon wages and benefits. Beyond that is theft.

Pause once in a while and look at things from your employer's point of view. Are you the right person for the job? Ah! Ah!, be honest now! Would you hire you?

If you are in a management/supervisory position and having difficulty with a subordinate, perhaps things will improve if you simply raise your 'anatomical sights' a little, a wise sage once told me: "You will get more from a pat on the back than from a kick in the butt!!" ♠