



The Value of Networking

Being in business requires a network of people; a network that is trusted to accomplish things on time and without incident. If a driver is an operator they need to network with a mechanic to keep their truck serviced well and on the road for a reasonable cost. They also need to network with the carrier, to get the good loads that bring in the appropriate revenue. Taxes need to be done by someone trusted while the operator is on the road. Financial services such as lending must be available and working within a seamless framework. Everyone needs a support group that helps them achieve goals.

In business, as in life, drama needs to be minimized in order to get things done right and on time. Those who waste precious time and resources soon become (or should be) marginalized. This isn't prejudice or insensitive... it's practical. Sometimes, in both life and business, there is little choice as to what and when things get done. There are some people who just have not prioritized the accomplishment of goals. Their own opinions are of greater value.

George Cohen, the author of "To Russia with Fries" (the story of starting up McDonalds in the Hammer and Sickle Nation), told the story of when he was supervising the

installation of fiber optic cables into one of McDonalds warehouses. They laid the cable across the floor and began testing the system. All of a sudden the screen went sideways and fizzled. George (along with the manager) walked back along the cable to find out the problem. They saw a forklift had driven over the cable that was stretched across an aisle. They immediately stopped the forklift driver and told him to stop what he was doing and stand guard at the fiber optic cable while it was being tested so as to ensure nobody would drive over it again. Luckily nothing was damaged. George and the manager went back to the screen. Several minutes later the screen suddenly went sideways again as before. Both the manager and George raced back to the aisle. Sure enough there was a forklift on the other side of the cable again and the driver who was told to stand guard was still there... standing guard. George asked the guy why he let the forklift drive over the fiber optic cable. The guy replied "...well I thought that if there was no damage the first time it should be OK again".

That young man was not worth the wage he was getting even if he was getting only minimum wage. At some point in his mind he placed his priorities or opinions above his bosses. His perspective was of greater

value than the goals of the company he worked for. This is a crisis of personal work ethics; someone who believes they are more important than their customer (or in this case their boss). He is simply not to be trusted. He has proven himself as unworthy to be networked within work related goals.

Every person and worker is evaluated as to their merit and their contribution to the goals of the company. It has nothing to do with feelings or any of a wide variety of perceived discriminatory circumstances. There are some people who just cannot be trusted with certain goals or responsibilities.

If you have goals, you need to have people around you who support them, or at least don't become an anchor to your efforts.

Too many people think that the process of surrounding yourself with a like-minded support group or those who have similar goals is discriminatory. In some people's eyes that may be so but in reality, trust or mistrust has little to do with discrimination. It has to do with character, performance or merit.

Does this process exclude people? Absolutely it does because sometimes the cost to find quality people is time consuming and expensive. Sometimes it's even a matter of "the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know".

The longer you are in business the more valuable trustworthy people become. Loyalty can bring great rewards. At times, yes, it very much seems like an old boys club... or "middle age" girls club. If you find yourself excluded... just build your own club... but build it better than the one you wanted to belong to.

It reminds me of when I was dating as a young and single guy. If they dump you... be a gentleman; make sure they remember you have class. Then become such a success that they live in regret that they rejected you.

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