



SHAME ON MANAGEMENT!

Once again this week a learning opportunity knocked on my door. As background information, I should explain that the City of Ottawa is launching a new green bin recycling program early in the New Year. This week they first they went door to door to drop off our new recycling bins, and then yesterday they had crews going door to door answering residents' questions.

The program has raised a number of concerns with the public, and some would argue is quite controversial. Since I don't fully understand the program myself, I welcomed the opportunity to receive the answers to my questions. I was soon frustrated and disappointed by what I was hearing, however the reason why had nothing to do with the recycling program. It was because I wasn't getting any answers! Finally, after the fourth "I don't know" I gave up.

As I closed the door thinking the whole experience was a complete waste of my time and tax payers' money, I thought to myself that this was not the worker's fault. Shame on the poor employee's manager for sending him into the streets without first giving him the knowledge or tools to do his job properly! I was getting "I don't know" because the employee wasn't given the answers to my questions in the first place.

Unfortunately, this type of situation is common in business too. How often is a technician sent out on a service call only to discover the required part is out of stock? Or how often is a customer service representative forced to deal with an angry call because the phone system had the customer on hold for 15 minutes?

It's no different on the sales side either. How many times is a sales representative hired and told to go out and sell without anyone taking the time to show him how to process an order? Or how often is a new product launched without giving the sales force the right pricing or expected delivery schedules for customers?

We have all seen it, we are all frustrated by it, yet as managers, we continue to do it! When we point our index finger at an employee for doing a bad job, there are three fingers pointing right back at us. A mistake or customer complaint is just as much our fault as it is the sales representatives. If we are not giving the tools to do the job right and not training the employees how to use them, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Shame on us!

Aim Higher!

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