

# Quality Business Develop Your Players Skills

By Tom Raffio

**D**uring my more than thirty years in the business industry, I have learned a thing or two about what it takes to run not only a business, but a successful one. What follows is the second article in a series of twelve that will position any business for success.

In my last column I discussed how to find the right employees for the right position within a company. While you are hiring dependable and capable employees, you must also be willing to take the next step in your commitment to them by developing their skills. At Northeast Delta Dental, we regularly monitor what training employees need through evaluating performance reviews, communicating with managers, and we even ask the employee what they would like to learn. From there, we develop a training plan.

Depending on your business's product and your clientele, I suggest offering training that will help your employees do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. For example, we offer dental terminology courses and training for employees to earn or maintain professional licenses and certifications. We also have a substantial repository of helpful books and other materials related to anything from business savvy to retirement planning.

Don't forget that managers need training, too, as they must be able to mentor and train their employee colleagues. We train our managers on situational leadership so they are able to deal with others in a non-cookie-cutter manner. This has been especially

helpful in recent years as there has been a greater number of the millennial generation (born in the early 1980s to early 2000s) entering the workforce and the baby boomer generation (born in the late 1940s to early 1960s) is slowly retiring.

Because of this, we train our managers to understand these generational and cultural differences – especially because the millennial generation has started to transition to managerial roles, and often times, this requires baby boomers to report to an employee colleague who is younger than they are,

something that may be uncomfortable for both parties at first. The training we offer allows for all employees regardless of race, gender, age, religion or a disability to be coaches and mentors -- not dictators. Employees want their managers and co-workers to respect them and see them as individuals and not just as people who exist to get a job done.

If you are utilizing financial and human resources on training, I recommend you monitor how you are

doing and determine if you are achieving the goals of the employee and/or manager and if this translates to success for the company. For example, our customer service employees receive about 300 hours of on-site training before they are answering customer phone calls on their own.

The bottom line is: If you invest in your employees, they will invest in you. Another way you can develop their skills and encourage them to meet goals in their professional and personal lives is through offering a formal tuition reimbursement program. When your employees advance in their roles or earn their degrees, you should celebrate this as a company success story. My company is fortunate to have many success stories like this, and sometimes this results in employees leaving the company to advance their careers.

While you will miss these employees and their contributions to the company, instead of being disappointed about it, we celebrate with them and note this as a "promotion outside of the company."

In summary, any successful business needs to demonstrate a commitment to its employees. If you invest in them through training and/or tuition reimbursement, they will always remember you for this. It will make their work lives easier and you can rest assured knowing you are giving your employees the tools and encouragement to be successful in their personal and professional lives.

