

CHAPTER 24

EMPLOYEES ARE A PAIN IN THE @\$\$. . .

*Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity;
and I'm not sure about the universe.*

~ Albert Einstein

Of all the sections in this book that has the potential to piss off somebody or offend the sensitivities of the “politically correct,” this one leads the pack. If you are from HR or a kumbaya type, then skip this section. Otherwise, sit back and enjoy the ride.

When we were in the process of buying a franchise, one of the companies we looked at was a maid franchise. The main reason we did not buy this franchise was that we realized it would be nothing but a huge human resource problem combined with language issues. Since I was not particularly interested in learning another language so I could speak with my employees, and I did not want the hassle of dealing with a large number of hourly workers, we purchased a coaching franchise which did not require employees. Why? Employees are a pain in the @\$\$. . .

Employees will never care as much as you do. They are your greatest asset and your biggest liability, usually a combination of both. Either way, they are still a pain in the @\$\$. The most likely person to sue you is an existing or ex-employee. They call in sick and bring their personal problems to work. They lie, cheat, and steal. If you are lucky, this is the worst they will do. Harsh? Nope, ask any business owner who is not trying to be politically correct and they will wholeheartedly agree.

Part of the politically correct movement has created a culture

where people think it is the responsibility of the business owner to take care of the employees when they bring personal issues into the workplace. It is not your responsibility to babysit your employees or be their rescue net. It is your responsibility to provide your employees with the tools required to do their job in a positive work environment. It is your responsibility to make sound business decisions that help the company grow. Keeping a problem employee on board is usually not a sound business decision. These employees cost you customers, productivity, revenue, morale, and potential lawsuits.

When the business owner starts making exceptions for underperforming employees, the whole organization suffers and the good employees start lowering their performance to the lowest common denominator. Make exceptions for one, and you have to make exceptions for *EVERYBODY*.

One example I see a lot is letting an employee work from home because they are a “disruption” to the office. You know the kind – no social skills and should be locked in a room and fed under the door. I had one business owner tell me that letting one of his problem employees work from home was not an issue because the rest of the employees knew that this was not a reward. I had to respectfully disagree. If I am one of the other employees, I am going to start being a disruption because now I don’t have a commute, I save gas money, and I can watch the *Jerry Springer Show* from the comfort of my own bed. My solution was to convert the employee to a contractor and use him on an as-needed basis. Now he is no longer a disruptive employee working from home; he is a contractor working less hours from home.

Employees are the number-one component of your business that will make or break your company. There is a reason factories are going fully robotic. Robots don’t go on strike, shoot each other, or try to burn down the business when they get pissed off. Robots don’t call in sick, do drugs, or engage in petty politics. They just work. The really good ones even tell you when they are about to breakdown. This beats getting the call on the last day of the month that Sue can’t come in because she’s under the weather (partied too hard last night).

I know of a business that had an employee burn down part of their building because she “thought” she was going to get fired. Imagine her surprise when she learned that prior to the act of arson she was not the

one getting fired. It was somebody else in the organization. Rumor mills can be brutal.

There is no shortage of books or advice about employees and how to build the perfect team. But they all seem to miss that one very important fact – employees are *a pain in the ass*. I know there may be HR professionals having seizures because of my “insensitivity.” Get over it. Ask any small business owner what is their biggest headache and almost universally you will hear: Cash flow is number one and employees are number two. As the business gets bigger, these two will tend to switch in order of importance.

Whenever I hear this drivel that “all people are created equal,” I have to laugh. The simple truth is that some people are more equal than others. Why is it that people are willing to agree that some athletes are better than others, yet are reluctant to admit that some people are smarter than others? It is because of political correctness and its sibling “Let’s not judge anybody.” The truth is, there are stupid people, smart people, and everything in between. One of the goals of a business owner should be to *not* hire the stupid people and everything in between. Employees will make or break your company – period. Hire the best and do not hire anybody without putting them through a real hiring process and requiring the candidate to take a behavioral assessment.

If you are fortunate to find one of the good ones, do everything you can to keep them. Make the other employees live up to their standards, not the other way around. The good ones are worth their weight in gold.