

The “You” Factor

Products and services - that's how you make money. But this business IS people. That is how you truly succeed!

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Many years ago, when I started my first foray into Retail Management, my general manager, Rik, called me into his office to discuss how things were going in my department. It was a positive experience, thank heavens, but with him they usually were. He was a skilled motivator. He told me that he noticed that I was often away from the sales floor working on administrative stuff like scheduling, planning, and so on.

It was true. There was a lot of this kind of work to do, so I would make sure I was not distracted by activity on the sales floor, and took my work elsewhere to complete. Of course, I enjoyed working with my staff and customers, so the more time I spent on the sales floor, the less time I spent on administrative tasks. My manager pointed out something very important to me that has stuck with me ever since. He said:

"Jim, you are a factor in your department. Do you know what that means?"

I wasn't sure at first what he meant, so I asked him to clarify.

He looked at me with a smile and said,

"A factor is a multiplier in math, right? That is what you are as a manager. You multiply the productivity in your department."

Ahhh, I understood now, or so I thought. He continued.

"When you are not there, you are a factor of zero. When you are there, you are at least a factor of one, but you can easily be a higher factor depending on what you do."

A factor of zero? Zero times any number is zero! Yikes! Rik was trying to tell me that while I was away from my sales floor, I was killing the productivity of my department. He then helped me form a plan to get my managerial work done without being a factor of zero. I learned to do my administrative work off to the side, but where I could still see my sales floor, and where my staff could see me. I could easily notice customers that would come into the department that had not been greeted or helped, and I could see employees that need guidance or a task to do.

Wow! While I was gone, customers were no doubt wandering in and out of my department, virtually ignored by employees that were either working hard on restocking products, cleaning, or just plain old goofing off. I was able to get their attention and direct them to greet the customer while I worked on my schedules and other tasks there on the sidelines. And when everyone was actively engaged, and someone else needed help, I was there to step in and help when needed. When I didn't have other work to do, I would be an active salesperson, an example to my employees. I would engage customers with another one of my people, or just on my own so my employees would gain more respect for me.

***They could see for themselves
that I could walk my talk.
Productivity, and sales volume,
increased by a literal factor of 3
after I started following Rik's
advice. And so did my bonus!***

You see, Rik also knew HE was a factor to his managers, and his influence on me made a powerful impact. When he eventually promoted out of our store, and was replaced by another manager, I could tell the difference. My new general manager was often unreachable, in meetings or on the phone, and generally didn't want to be bothered with my

questions. He was a nice enough guy, but simply put, he wanted to see the numbers, and that was it. I left the company a little while after that. The previous general manager made a big difference in my experience with that company.

As a leader in your team, you are a factor as well. People in this industry buy into you and what you are doing, and join because of you more than they do the company or the product.

How much you participate, how much you care, how available you make yourself, and how well you look over them to help them, all play into what kind of factor you are to your team. There are lots of things, like administrative and managerial tasks that you might need to get done in your personal life and in your businesses. Some of these things may be taking you away from being a factor for your team.

You will be a better leader, and will attract more people to join you and your team, by being the kind of leader that looks out for your team, helps them identify customers and prospects that need to be talked to, helps them find things to do that will grow their business, and coaches them on how to be a better leader, too. If your team is smaller right now, plan time with everyone on your team. Make calls to them. Meet them for lunch or coffee. Be at their meetings and presentations. If your team is larger, work just as closely with key leaders in your team, and help them identify and develop more leaders. Help them help their team just the way you did when your team was smaller like theirs.

Organize yourself. Use tools and technology that will make you work smarter. Be an expert on your products or services. Know the most about your company. All these things take time, and may require you to develop skills. That's fine. Work on them. In time you will be a revered leader in your company. Be a good example. If you are asking your team to talk to their warm market, you need to talk to yours. If you want them to make a list, be sure that your list is always getting new names added to it.

Rik had another saying that I liked real well: The Speed Of The Leader, The Speed Of The Pack. He used this when he talked about how a wolf pack runs. The pack always runs behind the pack leader. They never run faster, and if the leader runs slower, they slow down too. But if the pack leader runs faster, the rest of the pack will do everything they can do to keep up.

So as a leader, a factor on your team, you determine the speed. They will follow.

This business is needfully ABOUT products and services. That is how you make money. But this business IS people. That is how you truly succeed! Enjoy it, and always remember that you are a factor of your team's success!



Jim Dickinson is the Co-founder of i-SupportDesk.com, an experienced inter-Network Marketer, Author, trainer, and entrepreneur. Jim has over a decade of IT experience and has honed his talents to create a New Breed of IT professional. His motto is 'We can fix it fast, for less - TODAY!'.

Jim is married to his high school sweetheart and Dad to 10. He loves the ocean and mountains and loves the freedom that network marketing can provide in todays troubled times. His love for the industry, technology, and people have created a unique ability in Jim to work as a Geek, but speak to the laymen.

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