

Kick Your Career into High Gear

By Craig Kitch

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For the better part of a decade, I worked as a regional manager for several different hotel companies. One of the things I used to tell managers that reported to me was that I wanted them to think like an owner and make decisions accordingly.

Much to my dismay, they sometimes took those words as a license to make critical decisions, without consultation, resulting in unnecessary financial losses. What I wanted them to do was to make every decision as if they owned the place, meaning that every dollar they spent came out of their pocket and every critical decision had a direct impact on their future profitability and, thus, their income.

Having made the transition from employee to business owner, it amazes me how much my attitude has changed towards things such as financial responsibility and customer service. When your paycheck literally depends on the delight of your customer and the frugality with which you approach your business expenses, it rocks your world and causes a major paradigm shift in your thought process. If I take a client to lunch, that money comes out of my pocket. In the old days I simply turned in an expense report and was reimbursed by the company. Similarly if we lost a customer at one of my hotels, I still got a paycheck. If I lose a customer now, I miss a pay day to boot.

My point is this: by becoming an owner I changed the way I think, which changed my behavior, which improved my effectiveness, which added to my value in the eyes of my customers. If the process works for me, it will work for you. Want to increase your value as an employee? Want to get the next promotion that becomes available with a nice fat boost in salary? Want the boss to continually sing your praises to her boss? Then stop thinking like an employee and start thinking like an owner.

Follow me on this, if you will. You are now the owner of your own business, it is called your name, Inc. Your customers are your coworkers and your boss. Every time the boss asks you to do something, think of her as your customer and take care of her wishes accordingly. Do the same with your coworkers and the people you serve and you will be amazed at the difference in how you are perceived. (Someone might even ask you if you are feeling alright).

By the sheer nature of thinking this way, you will automatically begin to do things differently. You'll start adding that little extra touch and before long you will stand out from the crowd. People will start treating you accordingly and you will begin to gain the confidence that comes to those who are outstanding in their field. Your annual reviews will improve and you will be in greater demand.

Promotions come to the cream of the crop because the company does not want to lose their best people to the competition. Oh, by the way, once you have been thinking like an owner for a while, you will know the competition well because they, too, will be knocking on your door hoping they can steal you away.

Welcome to self employment. Now, start thinking like an owner.