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CAROLYN STAFFORD

06. Make all your staff the head of marketing

Why would I put a chapter about staff in a marketing book? Shouldn't I be writing a human resources book? The simple answer is that your staff, apart from you, are your greatest marketing asset. If you've been blessed with talented, dedicated staff that share your commitment, then you know what I am talking about.

It astounds me that many big businesses treat their employees like a dispensable commodity, assets to the business that are managed by the latest fad department called 'Human Capital'. People are not capital. People are not employees. People are people. They have feelings, they have personal motivations, they love being empowered, they love coming to work and having a laugh, they love to know that you have an open-door policy. If they are there because they love you and love your business and love your customers rather than the money, they'll be inspired to help you on the path to growth, regardless of the offer for more money from someone else.

Whether you employ one person or twenty, they should all be treating your business as if they owned it themselves. They wake up in the morning itching to get to work. Their job is more than a means to a pay packet. They feel they are making a difference. When they are out and about, they are not bitching and moaning about what a dreadful place it is to work. They encourage others to do business with you. Always remember that your staff are a living, breathing, powerful marketing tool and that they can be great at helping bring in new business, even if they are employed as the office administrator.

Managing staff is not always easy. We've all worked with duds, bludgers, dead-wood. There are some people who are merely passengers in life. Make sure you have rigorous recruitment strategies to weed these people out. Already got someone like that working for you? You have a

choice: getting this person to lift their game or letting them go.

You also need to increase and maintain your staff's skills – look at this from the point of view of the customer to ensure that the phones are answered appropriately, that questions are answered quickly and no-one gets the run around. Do your staff possess sales skills and are they engaged with the vision of your business?

Make your business a fun place to work. Everyone should take their work seriously but not themselves. Encourage initiative. Reward your people well. Thank them. Ask them. Listen to them. Be aware of how important family/work balance is to everyone.

Your staff are a walking billboard – what is the message they are sending out about your business?

Case study

WordStorm & Monica Rosenfeld

Monica runs WordStorm, a public relations firm with a practical, no nonsense approach. The business provides PR strategies to companies of all sizes.

For Monica, her staff are valuable because they are responsible for managing client accounts professionally and with enthusiasm.

"I work part-time as I have a baby, therefore I need to trust that my staff are performing to the best of their ability at all times," she said.

"PR is a very people-oriented business and a successful campaign relies heavily on the positive relationship that is created between the client and the PR professional."

The staff at WordStorm are very aware of the organisation's culture and they all resonate with the message being conveyed to the market.

"We are a down to earth 'non-champagne' PR company who are focused on achieving the best results possible for our clients. We have

team building activities and discussions throughout the year where our culture is constantly reaffirmed.”

In the past, staff have been employed who for one reason or another didn't fit into the culture, or didn't perform as Monica would expect them to.

“Fortunately, we usually realise that the fit isn't right in the first three months during their trial period and then it isn't difficult to terminate the relationship.”

By creating an environment where everybody is respected, acknowledged, listened to and given the opportunity to develop, WordStorm has been able to maintain staff enthusiasm and energy.

“We have also created an environment where the team is responsible to each other not just to myself and Joram, my business partner. Besides that, we spend a lot of energy, time and money in order to keep our team enthusiastic and energetic.

“We organise a fun team building activity on average once a quarter, we have an annual party in September which the whole team organises and therefore feels proud of and involved.

“We bring in a masseuse where each person gets a half hour massage on a Friday sporadically throughout the year and we organise a surprise Christmas extravaganza and much more. We also have two performance appraisals each year where we formally give and receive feedback.

“As our business is all about people and positive relationships, our staff are very important in the marketing of our business.

“This is illustrated in our website where each member of staff is featured, in our Christmas cards which always has a photo of the team, and at our party where the whole team is introduced.

“Having said that, WordStorm has created systems which all new employees adhere to, therefore it is not the individual staff member who is marketed but the WordStorm team as a whole, “ Monica said.

www.wordstorm.com.au