Results-Driven Solutions November 2009 Newsletter
by Sarah E. Dale and Krista S. Sheets

"The ultimate success of a financial services practice means maximizing ROP - Return on People and Return on Process"
Sarah Dale and Krista Sheets

Happy November! The final days of 2009 are upon us. Please be sure to spend this time reviewing the year, being present to enjoy the many "gifts" that the holidays bring, and looking toward building a stronger future. The energy that you put into this time of year will reap rewards for the upcoming year, so we encourage you to spend it wisely.

In this month's newsletter, we offer a brief discussion on the importance of *Emotional Intelligence*, some *Current Statistics to Make You Think*, and *The Season of Thanks is Upon Us*. We hope that these topics are of interest and value to you. Please feel free to share the content of this newsletter with anyone who may be interested in the material. We hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday with your loved ones.

Emotional Intelligence

> "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."
> - Charles R. Swindoll

Krista just returned from a two-day advanced consultants training event led by Competitive Edge, Inc. Included in the agenda were in-depth discussions on emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, is defined as our ability to recognize, understand, and use emotions to cope with ourselves, others, and the environment. In essence, it is our capacity to manage our feelings in order to foster successful relationships in the workplace and society. Much has been studied on the subject with the conclusion being that leaders can no longer be defined solely by their IQ's or technical skills; their emotional intelligence must also be considered because it is that ability that makes the difference. No actions or decisions can really be made without feelings, so we must spend time studying this critical area that allows us to flourish no matter what the environment. 80% of leadership effectiveness involves emotional intelligence competencies such as independence, emotional self-awareness, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, and stress tolerance. Of the six primary emotions – surprise, disgust, fear, anger, sadness, and happiness - the emotion most expressed at work is anger at 53% (happiness is only 19%). Since we are focused on providing teams with the insight that they need to create a conducive work environment for their team members to thrive, we will be adding this valuable information to the work we do in 2010.

Current Statistics to Make You Think

- In a Monster.com May 2009 survey, 79% of jobholders said that they had stepped up their search for a new place to work since the recession began.
- A Watson Wyatt survey found that engagement or loyalty of top-performing employees has dropped by 25% over the past year.
- 46% of new hires leave their jobs within the first year and 50% of current employees are actively seeking or are planning to seek a new job.
- Between June 2007 and December 2008, the number of employees expressing loyalty to employers plunged from 95% to 39%. The number trusting their employers fell from 79% to 22%. There have been

over 100 studies that have demonstrated the correlation between employee engagement and business performance.

- Key Drivers of Employee Engagement are:
  - Feeling respected, valued, and recognized
  - Feeling that their job is important to the success of the organization
  - Having pride for the company and what it stands for
  - Having trust and confidence in the leadership of the organization

So with these statistics in mind, what are you doing in your own organization to keep your team engaged? We're here to help.

The Season of Thanks is Upon Us

It's hard to believe that the end of the year is approaching and that Thanksgiving and the holiday season are upon us. Although we are proponents of having an organized appreciation plan for your clients throughout the year, clearly November and December are the traditional time to show appreciation. This has been a tough year for almost everyone, so make sure that you take the time to create customized "thank yous" for your best clients, your support team, and your strategic alliances.

> "I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."
> - G. K. Chesterton

Relationships, whether personal or professional, are a two-way street; gratitude needs to be prevalent for both parties to feel that they are valued. Appreciation goes well beyond paychecks and portfolio performance. The "Almighty Dollar" is certainly a driving force and a component of most people's equation for success, but appreciation outside of remuneration ranks highly, regardless of whether you are a client, team member, friend, or spouse. Study after study has shown that workers are more likely to stay with a company if that company makes them feel good about their job and recognizes their contributions. Clients feel the same way; it's simply human nature to want to feel appreciated. Portfolio performance and the fees that they pay for your advice certainly matter, but it is the *small* things you do that will make a *big* difference to their loyalty and commitment to your practice.

Appreciation Based on Knowledge: Do you know enough about your best clients and team members to give meaningful appreciation? To be meaningful, a show of appreciation must be personal and genuine. If it's done too often, it becomes expected rather than special. If you don't show it at all, you can eventually expect a request to transfer the account or lose a valuable person in your life! As you think about ways to express your appreciation to the important people in your business and your life, be sure to match the gift or thought to their individual needs, interests, and passions. Of course you must keep the annual maximum rule in mind as you devise your specific tokens of appreciation to clients.

Gifts do not have to be expensive to make an impact; it is far more important that they are genuine and expressive to the client or team member. Wherever possible, gifts should reflect the giver *and* the receiver, so choose wisely. You need to match your tokens of appreciation to the particular interests and passions of the recipients, but they also need to fit your style.

Food is widely used, but it is not always particularly personal. If you do use goodies, try to find something that your best clients really enjoy, such as fresh, gourmet cheese for the cheese lover or a bottle of special wine for your wine enthusiasts. Gift cards are the hottest trend in retail. Do you think a Do-It-Yourself type of client who just bought a new house would love a gift card from Home Depot? How about a prepaid phone card for clients whose families live abroad? Gift baskets are a great idea, and with the Internet as a resource, you can discover some unique ideas and customization capabilities. When planning a gift for any occasion, you can have fun creating baskets that are personalized to the circumstance and the individual. These will help form memories that your client will talk about for years to come.

For the people with hobbies, consider a CD for music lovers, gadgets for techie clients, luggage tags or a travel guide for adventurers, or a rose bush for clients with a green thumb. Company branded or logo items certainly give the team and your firm further exposure, but take care not to overload clients with umbrellas, golf balls, calendars, etc. These have their place and you should utilize your company's resources if possible, but make sure that you also include more personal items that befit the client.

Appreciation Connection Opportunities

Personal, Handwritten Notes or Cards
Industry Gifts (Bull & Bear)
Books of Interest
Gourmet Food
Charitable Donations
Chocolates
Music CDs
Gadgets
Gift Cards
Magazine Subscriptions
Cultural Tokens
Gift Baskets
Company Branded Items

Charitable Donations and Community Service: The gift of giving can be a wise investment. It is powerful to show that you not only help your clients make money for their own needs and interests, but that you also help your clients grow their assets so that they can give back to society if they so choose. Making donations to a charity or community event sends the message that your team cares. For example, the knowledge that Mrs. Cravitz is volunteering much of her time to The Starlight Foundation can be utilized by donating just $25 in her name; by doing this, you show an interest in her personal endeavors and life, not just her money. With the multitude of organizations in need, you can make an impact on so many people's lives. Support the local museum or botanical gardens, help buy uniforms for the local little league, or even buy livestock for a family in a third world country through Heifer International. If you need to say "thank you" but don't know much about your clients' feelings on charitable organizations, sending a gift card or food item is a safe bet. However, sending them a card letting them know that you bought a pig for a family in Africa sends a much deeper message of your character.

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Closing Thoughts

So as this holiday season of thanks and appreciation approaches, be unique, get creative, and have fun with your gifts; a little bit of extra thought will prove memorable and beneficial to the giver and receiver! The options are endless and thinking up ideas can be a lot of fun for you and your team. Lastly, take care to gift wrap the item and send a handwritten note! Add as much of your personality as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE

If you believe that you need to turn reactive client service into proactive relationship management, visit www.BoundlessPublishing.com and take a look at our book, *Know Service: Connect with Clients. Shape Your Future. Differentiate YOU*. Filled with instructional content and specific tools, this resource will help ensure that you build a service model that is differentiating and will lead to driving new business! Additionally, the tools included in the book are available for download.

DRIVE REVENUE WITH 5-STAR SERVICE Workshop for Branches, Firms, and Industry Associations!

In order to retain ideal client relationships and attract new ones, SERVICE is paramount. You must have a service model in place that adequately articulates, demonstrates, and validates your value proposition. Our workshop provides participants with a simple process and enumerable tools which lead to dramatic results including:

- An **increase in both assets managed** and **revenues generated**
- An **increase in asset retention, client retention**, and **loyalty**
- An **increase in referrals**
- A more **efficient practice and team**

This program is being offered to branches, firms, and industry associations as a ½ day, 1 day, or 1½ day program.

Visit our website at: www.paragonresources.com/services/knowserviceworkshop.php for more information.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can better assist you and your practice, please know that we welcome your input. If you are looking for assistance on a specific project, please feel free to contact us so that we can craft the best solution for you using our own expertise or that of our strategic partners.

Warmest regards,

Krista & Sarah