

WIN IN THE WORKPLACE

Leadership is key to establishing your garden center's culture and achieving desired results.

Every business wants great results. Every business wants great employees who run great operations that deliver great service. Of course they do. But for most businesses it's a constant struggle to achieve greatness in any one area let alone all the areas required to produce consistently great results. Why?

Because performance cannot be declared. It must be led.

No matter the size of your garden center, great results are initiated and sustained by great leadership. Not just leaders at the top, but at every level.

You don't get the results you want: You get the results you lead.

The Performance Pathway

Leaders create the culture that drives the behavior that produces results. Results — the "numbers" — are a reflection of the behavior of people. The behavior of people is a reflection of the culture created by leaders.

Many managers are preoccupied with the spreadsheet. They're fixated on the numbers.

You can't make a car go faster by staring harder at the speedometer.

Leadership is much more than simply declaring what you want and then expressing disapproval when you don't get it. That approach doesn't clarify, align or inspire; it demotivates, discourages and disconnects.

The role of a leader is to create a work environment that engages hearts and minds, focuses effort and energy and enables excellence. When that happens, the numbers follow.

Keep in mind that the numbers are a reflection of the way you lead. Your garden center will perform to the level of leadership you provide.

Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch

Culture is the thoughts and beliefs that drive behavior, and the experience people have with your business.

Strategy determines your organization's direction and plan of action; culture determines your organization's level of engagement, energy and execution. Once strategy has been developed



and communicated, success becomes a matter of execution. And culture has a much greater impact on execution than strategy.

The competitive advantage of any business is the work environment created. People win because they intentionally build a culture that energizes the behavior called for by their strategy.

To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace.

The Power of Culture

The power of culture lies in its ability to engage, align and energize people. When people in a company share a deep commitment to a common belief system about how they work together, their effort and energy are focused in the same direction, and an immediate strategic advantage is gained.

Culture is what leads when no one is watching.

In a business with a less-than-effective culture, people and departments are not aligned.

They pursue different and conflicting agendas. Communication and teamwork are poor, problems don't get resolved, and people resist change. Achieving goals is a struggle.

If your garden center has a strong and effective culture, people will work together for the success of the business. People communicate and collaborate. They solve problems. They innovate and pursue continuous improvement. They manage change. They produce superior results.

Winning behavior will not thrive in a culture that doesn't support it. When companies with similar strategies compete, the company with the best culture will win.

The Power of Systems

Words like "culture" and "leadership" have become so common that many people tire of hearing about them long before they've become skilled. Too often it's leadership by "best-seller" or a new "flavor-of-the-week" training. This approach simply doesn't work.

Let me explain a simple, universal truth that has implications beyond just how we lead our companies ... but how we lead our lives:

Average companies wing-it.

Good companies have a plan.

Exceptional companies have a system.

Winging-it always produces inconsistent and ineffective results. The world is too complex, people are too unique, and our minds are too tricky. Sure, you might get lucky every now and then. If inconsistent results and an uncertain future are your thing, then keep winging-it!

Any plan is certainly better than no plan at all. But the thing about plans is there's one big, giant, disruptive obstacle that always gets in the way: change.

And in case you're not paying attention, our world and your industry are undergoing massive change and people aren't very good at responding to it. People make plans and then lose their way when things don't happen just like they planned. They often get upset too. Does that ever happen in your garden center?

Exceptional companies — and exceptional people — use systems. They bring a consistent, reliable structure to the important areas of their businesses and lives. They don't use a rigid plan or make it up as they go. They address the goals they're trying to achieve by aligning with

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a set of rules, disciplines and principles that guide their decision-making. They intentionally and purposefully build a consistent way of thinking, deciding and acting regardless of their circumstances. And within that system, they build skill, they build flexibility and, most importantly, they build discipline.

Where to Start

The best place to begin is by implementing a simple and powerful framework into your garden center (and ultimately your life). A system for being intentional about the way you think, make decisions and act. The first element of the system

is this simple equation:

$$\text{Event} + \text{Response} = \text{Outcome (E + R = O)}$$

Outcomes are not determined by the events you experience. Outcomes are determined by how you choose to respond. You do not control events; you do control how you respond. It's called "The R Factor."

The biggest variable in a business is not the events or circumstances that people encounter ... but how they respond. Technologies emerge, competitors arise and markets change. Programs and initiatives come and go.

The R Factor remains constant. The foundation of performance in any business will always be found in how people manage the R.

The second element of the system is to apply "The Six R Factor Disciplines" as you manage $E + R = O$. The application of these disciplines, not the circumstances you face, determines the quality of outcomes you produce.

1. Press Pause.

Before you respond, slow down and give yourself time to think. Focus on understanding the situation and what you are trying to accomplish. Get off autopilot. Be exceptionally clear about the event you are experiencing and the outcome you are pursuing.

2. Get Your Mind Right.

Pay attention to your inner response. Get into a

productive mindset by taking ownership of what you focus on and the story you tell yourself.

3. Step Up.

Respond "Above the Line." Engage in the best possible response given the outcome you want and the situation you are in. When circumstances call for it, elevate your response. Your response is most important when the event is most difficult.

4. Adjust and Adapt.

Get good at change. Life requires you to make changes whether you are ready or not. Success goes to those who are adaptable.

5. Make a Difference.

Create great experiences for others. Your attitude and behavior are deeply personal but rarely private. What you do has a profound impact on the people around you. Your response is an event for others.

6. Build Skill.

Be intentional about the habits you develop. Your behavior patterns have you on a path. Develop the habits and skills that will take you where you want to go. **LGR**

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