

**"The road to success is dotted with many
tempting parking spaces."**

Will Rogers

What Are We Here For?



A recent article by Mitch Frank had me doing something I rarely do. I took a complimentary copy of Wine Spectator home.

Well, I assume magazines in hotel rooms are complimentary.

I do not believe that policy is true for hair dryers or TV remotes, but I sometimes discover that previous lodgers did.

What grabbed my attention was the picture of Tilman Fertitta on the cover. Fertitta has been an extraordinarily successful Houston-based entrepreneur for years.

He has since become well known nationally from his CNBC television series, *Billion Dollar Buyer*.

Fertitta is the CEO and owner of Landry's, one of the largest hospitality groups in the country.

Oh, and he also owns the Houston Rockets.

Positively Bagging It



One of the last places I wanted to be on Christmas Eve morning was standing six-deep in a checkout lane at a grocery store.

Yet, there I was in our local HEB, swimming in a sea of humanity.

Now, for the record, our household spends about the same amount of money each month at that HEB and three other store chains close to our home. (I don't want any other grocer friends angry at me for this commercial.)

As I was standing there, a familiar looking guy walked by and began bagging groceries in the lane adjacent to mine.

I quickly realized the new bagger was the President of HEB, Scott McClelland.

HEB is a sponsor of the Texans and Astros and he is constantly on TV in funny commercials with folks like JJ Watt, Deshaun Watson and Jose Altuve.

Still, Fertitta's first love remains restaurants.

Reading his comments about running successful restaurants had me reflecting on the many conversations I've had with restaurant owners and managers over the years.

I'm fascinated by what makes one restaurant a hit and another a miss.

I also smile when friends talk about opening their own place after they retire.

Because, an uber-competitive, labor-intensive, government-inspected business sounds like such a relaxing retirement!

Fertitta acknowledges that he is referred to as "the king of middlebrow cuisine."

Honestly, that is something I like about his chains. I like going to dinner with my family without feeling I'm making an investment decision.

He suggests that too many "highbrow" and "celebrity chef" restaurants forget that they are, foremost, in the hospitality business.

Fertitta recognizes who are the most important people in any of his restaurants.

They aren't found in the kitchen.

The most important people in a restaurant are the folks who actually pay to keep the doors open - the customers.

Customers do not exist for the benefit of businesses.

HEB is the largest private employer (not a small thing) in the state of Texas (not a small place) with over 100,000 employees.

I instinctively looked around for cameras, thinking a commercial was being filmed. There were no cameras. He wasn't there to pose for pictures or sign autographs.

No, he was there to bag groceries and thank folks for shopping their store. Folks began taking pictures and texting their friends.

When I reached the young cashier, I asked if having the president bagging groceries 10 feet from her made her nervous.

She matter-of-factly said, "Nah. Scott is cool. He's been here a bunch before."

That struck me as much as anything else.

I've been on more store (and branch) visits in my day than I can remember. Very senior management has accompanied me on many of these trips.

Quite often, it has seemed to me that frontline folks become a bit frozen and maybe a little apprehensive.

These visits were apparently seen more as inspections than supportive gestures.

That tends to be my first piece of advice upon leaving.

Even if leadership doesn't have enough time... in fact... because leadership

Businesses exist for the benefit of customers.

Laser focusing on customer experiences and delivering on your promises are the truest way of focusing on your business.

People walking into our branches, phoning our call centers, emailing our online support, etc. today are not burdens.

They are the reasons our businesses (and jobs) exist.

Let them see today - in word, tone, and action - that you and your team fully recognize that fact.

doesn't have enough time... they need to get out into the field more.

For one, it shows teams that what they do matters to leaders they do not see every day.

Also, you almost always learn things during these visits that would never show up in a spreadsheet or report.

Whether you manage two or two thousand people, strive to invest more of your most valuable resources in them this year - your time and attention.

"You were hired because you met expectations, you will be promoted if you can exceed them."

Saji Ijiyemi



Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

For more info about having Dave or an FSI Consultant speak to your group, email Tina Coleman, tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com or call 800-992-4978.