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**"If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you'll never get it done." » Bruce Lee**

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## Shark Wisdom

While I'm not a regular viewer of the TV show "Shark Tank," it says a lot about the clips-on-demand world we live in that I am awfully familiar with it.

And my favorite resident "shark" is Barbara Corcoran.

I've seldom seen her in an interview in which she didn't impress me with her common sense, wisdom, and empathy.

A clip I watched recently from one of her appearances had me smiling and reflecting on hiring advice I gave for many years to bank managers and HR professionals.

While sitting on a panel, Corcoran gave context on her past statement that she didn't tend to invest in "rich kids."

She smiled and shared that her blanket statement wasn't always true...but she stood by it.

Her explanation was that the people she met on the show coming from affluent backgrounds had gone to the top schools, with all the right apprenticeships and introductions along the way.

She stated their privileged experiences led many to overestimate what they know about what it takes to build a business.

## Are We Getting It Right?

I recently had a nice visit to our local post office. I was taken aback by how upbeat and helpful the postal worker was.

Like many, I have had slightly dehumanizing interactions with our postal brethren in the past.

This time, however, I walked out after our interaction in a better mood than when I walked in.

While that may not be the most sophisticated of customer experience metrics, it's one that I often reference.

I ask bankers whether customers walk away from a visit (or get off the phone) with them in a better or worse mood than they were in before.

A day or so later I received an email from the postal service asking me to complete a survey.

I was in the middle of something and didn't have much time, but I figured that postal worker deserved acknowledgment. And I knew I'd likely forget about it if I didn't get to it now.

As I feared, the survey was longer and more detailed than it should have been. (Aren't they all?)

But it did ask a question that made me chuckle. I'm sure that wasn't their intention... but it did.

Most had never had tough service jobs, been yelled at by customers and bosses alike, or known real financial stress.

Conversely, most from humble backgrounds have dealt with those things.

She finds them more mentally and emotionally prepared for the challenges of building and running a business.

And they are almost always hungrier to prove themselves.

Her words had me harkening back to one of the questions I received hundreds of times over the years: "What traits should we be looking for in our new hires?"

Before getting into chats about personality types and job experiences, I'd always say, "Well, first and foremost, try to hire the person who actually wants the job. Look for folks who see the job as an opportunity to prove themselves... and not something they walk into already feeling 'above'."

That often led to chuckles from veteran hirers. They knew it was often folks without degrees (or pedigrees) who became top performers.

The job was not seen as something they had already earned, but an opportunity to advance themselves.

Regardless of background or tenure in a role, we have opportunities each day to show why we've been entrusted with the positions we have.

How will you show that they made the right choice today?

The multiple-choice question stated, "For you, it is most important that a sales associate \_\_\_\_", followed by four choices.

(Did you know post office folks are called Sales Associates? Neither did I.)

The choices given for what is most important to me were: A) Be knowledgeable about postal products and services; B) Work efficiently; C) Have a positive attitude; D) Treat you with courtesy.

There was no "All of the above" option.

I honestly sat there and chuckled that they were asking you to choose one.

Hey, we can't do ALL these things!

You want expertise? Sorry, that option doesn't come with courtesy.

And if you want folks with positive attitudes, you better expect incompetence!

The sad thing about so many surveys is that they miss the point.

Do you actually want to know how you are doing and where you can improve? Ask simple questions and let customers consult for you.

Customers will usually gladly let you know what you're doing right and what you're getting wrong in their eyes if you ask politely - and don't make them work too hard to tell you.

Don't be scared about what you'll learn.

Respectfully asking customers for their feedback is a compliment to them. It shows they are valued.

And even minor suggestions can lead to improved experiences and more profitable relationships.

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**"Until you are happy with who you are, you will never be happy with what you have."**

**» Zig Ziglar**

*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.*

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