

**"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things." » Leonardo Da Vinci**



## Radio Days

I was recently interviewed for a documentary being produced at my alma mater.

The production is to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the campus radio station.

(And, no, I wasn't on the original staff.)

They asked a dozen or so former station managers to sit down for interviews about the era in which we managed.

I was given a tour of the current radio and TV studios, and I found myself sounding like an old guy who had time traveled to the future.

I may have even dropped in a "Kids today have no idea what it was like back then," comment.

Thankfully, the professor in charge of the production was old enough to remember the references I made to the mystical, magical, and much lower-tech time that was radio in the 1980's.

Many of his questions had me smiling as I explained some of the unofficial managerial duties that likely don't exist anymore.



## Popeyes University

After picking out a few shirts in a campus bookstore last week, my wife and I got in the line of the one cashier on duty.

Apparently, she was also a counselor because she spent 5 minutes or more on each customer. The line grew quickly.

I looked around and saw four employees behind a counter at the rear of the store. They were chatting with each other, oblivious to the growing line.

Nearing the fifteen-minute mark of waiting, a student worker walked up and offered to assist the next customer (us) at a register behind that counter in the back.

It had taken a quarter-hour for a manager to send someone to relieve that line.

It may have been the employee's first day. As she struggled, three managers stood 10 feet away.

After a minute or so, the young lady walked over to interrupt them and ask for assistance. One gave a verbal instruction, but never moved.

The young lady returned and continued to struggle. I didn't fault her.

The high-tech system they're on now never goes off air. If a DJ doesn't show up, it's not a big deal. The "show" goes on.

When I was manager, you wanted to find a radio when a new shift was set to begin to make sure the DJ showed up.

If you heard "dead air," or something like the last song on the B-side of Van Halen "Diver Down," you knew you had an empty studio to get to as quickly as possible.

As we chatted and chuckled about that, I was reminded of a comment I've made to bankers through the years.

Just because you have the same job title as the people who came before you does not mean that you have the same job.

Industry and business conditions evolve, and leaders' priorities and job functions must evolve, as well.

Judging someone by whether they are focused on the same things and tasks as the leaders who came before isn't always a fair comparison.

And transformational periods are frequently unsettling. Even clearly necessary change tends to create discomfort during the process.

It's a fair bet that the foreseeable future will present challenges that many leaders haven't dealt with in many years...if ever.

Achieving the same objectives as previous periods may require noticeably different priorities and practices.

Regardless of the time, however, running a successful business still comes down to building and leading teams of good people, focused on customers and their needs today.

How tuned-in is your team?

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She was receiving no real training or assistance. We joked between ourselves on the way out that we hoped the bookstore's operations didn't reflect the business school.

The next day, we visited a Popeyes restaurant to pick up an order for a large group.

My friends and family have had a long running joke about Popeyes. We say that the food is so good that you'll put up with DMV-level service.

In this case, my wife put in the order and prepared for the obligatory, ridiculously long wait. The cashier initially struggled to figure out how to enter an order of that size.

Without a word, the manager who had been walking about and talking to customers and team members stepped in and explained how to handle an order of that size as she personally entered the info.

She nicely said, "You see what we're doing here?" and waited to make sure that she did. She then said, "Good job. You got this," as she departed.

That new employee was noticeably comforted and showed new confidence completing the transaction.

Her team operated like a NASCAR pit crew and had that big order completed impressively fast.

All we could talk about on the way out was how the university bookstore needed that Popeye's manager.

Those two environments could not have been more different... nor could the quality of frontline leadership.

Which one will you more mirror this week?

**"I'm a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down."**

**» Abraham Lincoln**

*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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