

**"Very often, a change of self is needed more than a change of scene."**

» **A.C. Benson**



## Don't Hold Your Applause

I recently found myself in a familiar setting that had me smiling and shaking my head.

I was backstage at a conference, being introduced by a pleasant fellow whom I had not met before.

He read my bio and said very nice things.

When he brought me out, people applauded, and I shook his hand like an old friend.

I then joked with the audience, "Sadly, that was likely the highlight of my day. You applauded because I showed up. It's all downhill from here."

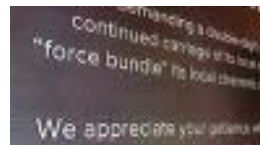
I suggested that it's a shame more of us don't have folks giving us a round of applause for showing up to work each day.

Heck, I've had lots of jobs in which a little clapping would have been nice.

I shared that in my younger years, I once had a minimum wage job cleaning the meat saws and floors in a butcher shop.

If ever there were a job deserving of applause for showing up each day...that was it.

In some presentations, I follow those type quips by sharing that through the years I've asked countless managers about the traits of their most valuable employees.



## Poor Channel Management

A recent high-profile spat between two companies has reminded me of the danger of taking customers and demand for any product for granted.

Last week, I sat down to watch a sports talk show I record each afternoon. When I pressed play, a screen stated that the network that produces that show and my satellite provider were in a dispute.

Switching over to live TV, I discovered several channels were displaying the same screen, encouraging viewers to contact the network and demand they be reasonable. (Huh? That's my job?)

They were airing videos about why these disputes happen and, of course, why the other side is wrong. The kicker is that they also provide suggestions on how we can get some of that network's broadcasts free.

That got us rethinking what we've been paying for. Tech-savvy friends have long told us about cheaper ways to get the programs we want.

When my wife researched the "bundles" on another provider, I said I really did not care if that network was included.

After over a week of missing their shows, I realized, hey, I'm okay with that.

Along with many personality traits you might expect to hear listed, "reliability" is often included on their lists.

When I hear that, I am reminded of a comment frequently used by sports analysts: The most important ability of a star player is "availability".

I like to joke with managers that in all of the awards ceremonies I've participated in, I don't believe I've seen anyone brought up on stage for being reliable.

I'm talking about the folks who have the work ethic and professional pride to take what they do and their responsibilities to others seriously.

We've likely all managed team members who you have to absolutely force to go home when they are sick, but are still trying to work.

Conversely, there are others who consider a bad hair day to be an excusable absence...or at least reason to be late.

Joking (and HR regulations) aside, I remind leaders of the great Tom Peter's quote, "Celebrate what you want to see more of."

That doesn't have to mean ceremonies or framed certificates.

Most of us have certain team members that make our jobs possible and our lives a little less stressful because we know we can absolutely rely on them.

Applaud that fact this week by making sure those folks know you truly appreciate them.

Honestly, I can't say which company is the most wrong in this dispute. What I do know is that it has devalued both in many customers' eyes.

In a world of increasing options for just about every product imaginable, customer loyalty is something no one should ever take for granted.

Over the years, I've preached to thousands of in-store bankers that their retailer relationships are vital.

Anything they do to make shoppers happy helps their store...and their own business, as well.

The opposite is also true. Anything that negatively influences shoppers' experiences or diminishes traffic negatively affects their branches.

Any partnership can sometimes have a few bumps in the road and miscommunications, but the fact that all are on the same team should not be forgotten.

The same holds true for the various business lines, channels, departments, etc. of our own institutions.

Our front lines need our back offices and support staff...and vice versa. It can sometimes feel that other areas have competing interests.

Never forget, however, that you play for the same team. And in the end, loyal customers are who keep you in the game.

Make sure yours never have to wonder whose side you're on.

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**"Good leaders can let you fail, and yet not let you be a failure."  
» Stanley McChrystal**

*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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