



Goshen on Leadership

LOCATING A LEADER

While having dinner on the Presidential Yacht, Sequoia, in Washington, DC, I had the opportunity to have a conversation with a fellow committee member, Bill Marriott Jr. I asked him the secret to his success in finding the best general managers for his hotels. I waited for an in depth explanation; perhaps he used a reverse evaluation to determine how each manager worked with his staff. Perhaps he employed a test that was an industry standard related to hotel managers. His reply was simply, "When I visit each hotel, I get the general manager and take him or her to the 'Heart of the House.' This term is used to describe the center of all activity—housekeeping, reservations, bookkeeping; it is the focal point or nerve center of the hotel. As I walk with the GM I take careful notice of how he or she is greeted. If the staff walks up with a smile, looking forward to seeing the manager, this is a great sign. If, on the other hand, I see no smile and very little eye contact, I am certain we have a problem."

Isn't it interesting that a key indicator of the success of Marriott's general managers is not their years of experience in another hotel, not their grade point in hotel and restaurant management, but how they relate to those they lead? It is what I refer to as their "people skills." A great leader is one who can create relationships with those given to him or her for mentorship.

How many corporations or organizations reduce their effectiveness and often their bottom line because they have people in leadership positions that lack "people skills"? An organization is a reflection of its leadership.

I recently stayed at the Marriott in Budapest, Hungary. While having a late lunch, I visited with the restaurant manager. I asked him if he had ever met Bill Marriott Jr. He replied, "Twice." When I inquired what sort of person he was when he visited the staff and management, he answered, "Each time Mr. Marriott visited the hotel and this department, he would have all the staff meet with him. He would go around the room shaking everyone's hand and thanking them for their service." Bill Marriott lives what he teaches.

Then I asked, "Can you see the mark of Bill Marriott and his leadership principles being carried out by your management staff? Since Mr. Marriott is the head and he is thousands of miles from this hotel, do you see his corporate culture carried out consistently?" The manager answered with a story relevant to Hungary. "When you go to the fish market to buy a fish, you should always smell the head. If the head stinks, the entire fish is bad." So it is in leadership. If the head of the company or department "smells," it is likely the entire company or department is dead.

When was the last time you have been in the "Heart of Your House"?



As a member of the National Speakers Association, Bob has been invited to corporations and organizations to speak on the subject's of Marketing and Leadership. For additional information on Bob Goshen go to www.bobgoshen.com or email bob@bobgoshen.com.