

STRATEGY

AND THE

FAT SMOKER

CHAPTER

This is another example... **CONTINUE**

BY **DAVID MAISTER**

THIS IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE, in a completely different setting, of how a skilled manager goes about getting his organization to reach for—and accomplish—high standards. As at the time of writing, Dyelry (Jerry) Labbate was the manager of an exercise gym in downtown Boston. The chapter is his description, given in March 2006, of his managerial approach, along with my comments on the lessons that managers can take from Jerry's experience:

Here are some of the key lessons from Jerry's story:

- The key to giving your clients a great experience is making your people want to give that to them.
- You can't delight the clients with unhappy people.
- Hiring people who share your philosophy, values, point of view, and approach makes managing them a lot easier. Be very clear about what your philosophy is.
- Hire for passion and attitude.
- To get the best out of people, have clear, enforced standards and an empathetic, supportive style. One without the other won't work.
- Even if people are going to leave, take the high road in dealing with them. All your other people are watching.
- Never misrepresent, exaggerate, distort, or lie just to get something done, or to get someone to join you. People will find out the truth sooner or later, probably sooner, and there will be no benefit if they think you have misled them.

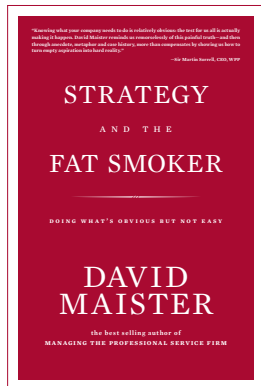
- You must help your people learn that there is more to serving a client than being technically skilled at what you do.
- If you focus on being the best, the revenue growth and profits will come, and your people will enjoy them more.
- Don't be soft—have very high operating standards that are clearly communicated and strictly enforced.
- Then give people the freedom to meet the standards without being micromanaged.
- Work at helping people actually experience what it is like to be a client—they will do a better job as a result of it.
- Work at team bonding by finding ways for people to work together and by getting together to discuss common issues.
- Learn from your people—let them teach you what they know and what they are discovering as ways to improve your operation.
- Commit to helping your people grow professionally: don't let them cruise.
- If you want people to be accountable, go first. Let them evaluate your performance, and let the results be publicly known.

- In all of the emphasis on working with your people, you must never lose contact with your clients. Make it easy for them to talk to you and to raise any concerns they may have.
- Even though you are a manager, keep practicing your profession to some degree. It will help you to understand and relate to both your people and your clients.

Now, how's that for a quick and really helpful MBA course?

And, of course, all of these general lessons apply to other workplaces, even among highly paid people with advanced degrees in glamorous professions (though they don't always like to admit it).

INFO



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Click here to get more details or buy a copy of David Maister's *Strategy and the Fat Smoker*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Maister is widely acknowledged as one of the world's leading authorities on the management of professional service firms. For two decades he has acted as a consultant to prominent professional firms around the world, on a wide variety of strategic and managerial issues. In 2002, he was named as one of the top 40 business thinkers in the world (Business Minds, by Tom Brown, PrenticeHall/Financial Times). He is the author of the bestselling books *Managing the Professional Service Firm* (1993), *True Professionalism* (1997), *The Trusted Advisor* (2000), *Practice What You Preach* (2001) and *First Among Equals* (2002). These books have been translated into 14 languages. For seven years, he served as a professor on the faculty of the Harvard Business School (1979-85), prior to launching his consulting practice. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

In March of 2005, he finally took his own advice, gave up smoking and lost 30 pounds.

Visit his website at www.davidmaister.com.

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