

THAT'S NOT MY JOB!

I was to have originally written an article this month on motivation, but a recent incident caused me to think about the statement “that’s not my job”. How many of you reading this just bristle at the thought of those words?

Why is it, I wonder, that some organizations are able to create a culture that encourages excellent internal and external customer service - encouraging everyone to chip in and do whatever it takes for the organization to be successful - while others perpetuate the “it’s not my job” mentality? A businessman I once knew refused to allocate titles to anyone, including himself. He believed that if there were no titles, then no one could consider any job below them, and he claimed to have been successful with this philosophy. Was he right? Understandably, as a company grows, titles need to be assigned to ensure a sense of order and to avoid confusion.

Is it the title or is it how we perceive ourselves in relation to what we do? Do we go above and beyond the call of duty only when it makes us feel good; when we obtain some sort of recognition from our action, when we perhaps feel important by performing a specific task? Do we claim not to have the time when we perceive some tasks as menial; below our stature – especially if we’ve received some sort of promotion?

Where does this start? If we subscribe to the belief that it starts at the top then what can we do to ensure that, as managers, we aren’t contributing to the problem? In small offices where it is difficult, and sometimes almost impossible to separate duties and responsibilities, how do we ensure that everything gets done, that everyone’s needs are met, and we do not create a mantra of “that’s not my job”?

I’d like to hear from our readers on this subject. What is the culture like in your organization? Is this a problem for you? Do you know where it started? Do you know why it continues? Are you doing anything about it or are you learning to live with it? If it was a problem, and it no longer is a problem, then what was your secret?

I look forward to hearing from you: lconstant@optimusperformance.ca