

How Top Companies are Elevating Loyalty, Productivity and Innovation in Their Workforce

Written by Ginny Grimsley
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Treat Your Organization's Most Valuable Resource with Care, Says Former Businessman of the Year

When a successful formula is discovered in the business world, it's copied and becomes part of standard operating procedure throughout entire industries.

The newest SOP trend among leading businesses? – Focusing on employee and family well-being, says Gary Kunath, who was honored nationally as Businessman of the Year and recognized with a dinner hosted by the President of the United States.

“Many think that professional well-being drives personal well-being, but it's the exact opposite,” says Kunath, a speaker at top business schools and businesses including Lockheed and Marriott, and author of “Life...Don't Miss It. I Almost Did: How I Learned To Live Life to Its Fullest,” (www.lifedontmissitbook.com).

“The top companies know focusing on employee well-being is critical and serves as the conduit to increasing innovation, emotional loyalty, natural productivity and overall profitability, but they have exhausted the traditional vehicles inside their companies to do this, so they are focusing on impacting their employees lives 'outside' of the company.”

Employee well-being is very smart business and everyone wins, he says; it's the key to elevating associate engagement. According to the Aspen Institute, more than 70 percent of employees today would sacrifice promotions and pay increases for family well-being. Yet only 40 percent of employees feel their employers demonstrate that they care about them, says the

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American Psychology Association.

Several major corporations have approached Kunath and asked him to build a program that shows their people how to master life balance and maximize the joy and contentment in their lives, he says.

“The results have been tremendous,” he says. “People love that they are cared for just as much when leaving the building as they are when arriving.”

Kunath’s newest three hour seminar for businesses centers on employee life balance and well-being; here he offers five things business owners and employees should consider in achieving life balance:

- Bring humanity back to the workplace: There are simple truths about what motivates employees today and what they want and need from their employers. Employee well-being drives profits and is good for business, he points out. Employers need to allow employees to completely disconnect from work in their off hours – for instance, not expecting them to respond to emails or conference calls after hours. He also points out the “Life Balance Dilemmas” people face, including his own; a former workaholic lifestyle nearly ruined his family relationships before he learned how to develop balance.
- The “Life ... Don’t Miss It” approach: According to a Harvard study, we all have the capability to maximize our happiness regardless of the situation we find ourselves in. A large part of how happy you are is determined through intentional activity. There are things you can do to maximize happiness in your life even in the worst of adversities. Giving people a way to elevate their family well-being is critical to top performance on the job.
- Applying Life-Balance secrets: Kunath targets 10 points for Mastering Life Balance. Some of those points are: Money doesn’t make you rich; Express gratitude to others; the power of perspective; relationship refinement (thinning the herd); and Good goes around. “All of these points go to the overall perspective of total life balance and focusing on the areas, and the people, that really matter,” he says.

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- **Power of Perspective:** Why is it that people who have faced death often live the most? Why must we wait for adversity to teach us to get the most out of life? The answer is that you don't. Kunath emphasizes various perspectives on how you can live life to the fullest every day and what the keys are to maximizing employee and family well-being.
- **The three greatest gifts you can give your family:** For all the importance and effort involved in mastering a worklife to fund a family's well-being, the three greatest gifts you have to offer are actually free! They are time, memories and traditions. Time is our greatest resource, and it's also our most scarce, which makes memories all the more important. They give you a place to go for all of your life. Traditions live on after you're gone; they're a legacy you leave for your loved ones.

About Gary Kunath

Gary Kunath is the founder of The Summit Group, which is ranked among the top sales-training companies in the world by *Selling Power* magazine. His value-creation approach received the "Innovative Practice of the Year Award" by 3M worldwide. He was named Businessman of the Year and was recognized at a dinner hosted by the president of the United States. He has lectured extensively at prominent business schools, and is currently an adjunct professor at The Citadel's Sports Marketing graduate program. Kunath is an owner of several professional minor league baseball teams along with his partners, Bill Murray, Jimmy Buffet and Mike Veeck. The group is famous for managing its teams around the "Fun is Good" approach.