



THE HUMAN SIDE OF BUSINESS

During the mid-80's, I joined a colleague in working with large corporations in order to evaluate how much more effectively new business ventures might be able to capture market shares. His role was to research past performance of products that a particular division of the corporation had proposed or implemented in the open market in order to determine the effectiveness of the new product that was being proposed. Often, hundreds of thousands of dollars were allocated for the development of new products that went unused because of the fear of efforts failing to provide a solid success rate. My colleague's role was to minimize the risk while enhancing the probability of success using research and various mathematical formulae that he had devised in order for those kinds of predictions to be made.

My role was twofold both of which concerned themselves with the human element. First, because of my background as a psychotherapist, I taught those responsible for researching and delivering new products about the power of the human mind with the emphasis being on creativity and ingenuity. In effect, those responsible for developing new products were all entrepreneurs but many of them were not of an entrepreneurial mind. An integral part of my role was to teach them about the intricacies of success and failure and how to take the kinds of risks that were vital and necessary in order to create and manufacture new products. I trained them how to allow their minds to "roam free" in order to examine all of the possibilities that might pertain to their developing new business. Emphasis was placed on the fact that there is no "right way" to approach their jobs and that making mistakes while taking a calculated approach to problem solving could result in extremely important findings that would add to their success factor. The main methods used to accomplish this training were through the use of

various relaxation and visualization techniques. The emphasis of creativity was placed not on the conformity that individuals manifested with respect to their company but on their retaining their individuality.

Secondly, my role was to examine what kinds of stressors individuals were experiencing and how they were handling them. With every assurance that the information participants provided would remain confidential, I examined the stress not only from the job situation but from their personal lives as well. Just previous to my taking on this consultant role, I had written a self-help book on stress management entitled “Guide to a Life Management Process.” In that publication, I placed special emphasis on what I called the “carryover effect” that stress produces. In other words, this was concerned with the stress that individuals might experience in one area of their lives that they might carry over into another area. This could include it going from their personal life into their job role and vice-versa.

Of course, most employers did not feel that they should be concerned with effects of stress. Most afforded the philosophy that people needed to “tough it out” in order to get the job done and that if there was a problem at home, it should stay there. Although many corporate businesses had HR departments which may have included counseling services, many of the individuals that were interviewed indicated that they did not prefer to take advantage of those services for fear of their jobs being jeopardized. For those who did use those services, there was often a lack of coordination between work and personal issues. Also, the service was limited to the employee and not to other people that might have been part of the problem whether on a personal or job-related basis. In fact, job-related problems were usually handled with warnings, threats of termination and disciplinary actions. There was usually little or no emphasis placed on the cause or causes of the problem. I can safely say that there were many valuable employees in danger of termination because of personal issues or patterns of behavior that interfered with their performance.

The problems that were found as a result of the several studies that were conducted affected creativity, job satisfaction and performance, communication, the effective use of authority, dedication to the job role and the parent company, absenteeism, the ability to rebound from making mistakes, fear of failure and success and many other very important factors that lend themselves to the bottom line of business...**MAKING A PROFIT.**

As a result, I formulated a process that could be employed in any company that would help both employers and employees begin to understand how they could become more efficient and effective in the performance of their roles. It was called a **NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY**. Below, is a description of that study which has helped countless numbers of small businesses and large corporations. The Needs Assessment Study is primarily concerned with the human element of business and addresses key factors that are common to all business and to all people. It is concerned with promoting success by using the most valuable asset of business...the people who conduct it.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

A **NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY** consists of the evaluation of a company's infrastructure to determine whether it is operating as efficiently and productively as possible. Fees are based on either an hourly rate or a total service fee dependent on the agreement that is reached. The contracting business is responsible for all travel, lodging and transportation expenses incurred. These fees include the writing of a detailed report as well as meeting(s) with administrative personnel.

The philosophy of the services described below places value on the dignity of each staff member resulting in complete confidentiality while conducting the Study and is meant to be a preventive measure to offset future problem areas. The contracting business is responsible for all travel and allied expenses.

The following points are considered in the process of conducting the Study:

- The attitudes/personality traits of administration, management and employees and how restructuring of roles or responsibilities might facilitate more effective/efficient day-to-day operations;
- Employees' ability to relate to administration and management;
- The degree of dedication employees/management have to the parent company;
- Issues involving inter-employee and employee-administration/management communication;

- How administration, management and employees deal with stress of conducting business;
- Evaluation of impediments to efficiency and productivity;
- Effectiveness of dealing with Customer Care Issues;
- Complete confidentiality of all information obtained in the interviews that are conducted.

Once the study is complete, the interviewing data is evaluated and a written report is given to the administration for their review and subsequent discussion with the consultant. Decisions are then made as to what services need to be introduced in order to implement the Study's recommendations. The professional services that are available to implement Need Assessment recommendations are:

- **TRAIN THE TRAINER PROGRAM:**
 - This program designates and trains certain key individual(s) to become aware of problems occurring with an organization long before they fester into irresolvable problems requiring more drastic action including termination of employment. The program is designed to help employees on a day-to-day basis rather than dealing with problems only after a long period of time and they become so drastic that little can be done to resolve them. The designee(s) may be first line employees, managers or administrative personnel. Selection is based on a person(s) capacity to problem-solve and comfortably relate to other staff members.

- **“FIRESIDE CHAT” PROGRAM:**
 - This program consists of training on how to facilitate effective staff meetings so that a relaxed, informal atmosphere prevails enabling resolution of whatever problems or issues that might be interfering with productivity and efficiency. Emphasis is placed on turning negativity into positives in order that resolution be the result instead of conflict. Methods might be introduced to promote creative and useful thinking, common goals and functional activity.

- **ON-GOING CONSULTATION:**
 - This service can be either on-going or periodic in nature to facilitate the continued implementation of the initial recommendations. Contact could be with any level within the staff structure dependent on what the best course of action might be as determined by the Consultant in concert with administrative staff.

A Brief Biographical Sketch

After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.

Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was essentially a "mind game", he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.

He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.

Charles invites you to view his website at www.charlesmbonasera.com as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address (charles@charlesmbonasera.com). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is "seeking alternative methods to happiness" and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: "enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.