



The Exchange

A newsletter for members of the Greater Toledo Area Chapter and Lima Satellite Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING!

“COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES FOR TRAINERS”

Please join us for breakfast on **Wednesday, September 19, 2008 beginning at 7:30 am**, as the GTAC-ASTD welcomes John C. Adams of Adams Group, LLC.

John is the exclusive provider of Dale Carnegie’s eight patented training programs for all of Northwest Ohio and Northern Indiana. Dale Carnegie Training® is the world leader and respected global provider of locally sponsored classroom training for corporate, institutional, professional and personal development. Adams Group was recently awarded the Northern Indiana territory, from Fort Wayne to South Bend, because of his team’s success in Ohio. John is a graduate of Central Michigan University.

You will learn some of the key Dale Carnegie concepts important to being a successful trainer. These include communicating with clarity and confidence, influencing and motivating trainees to maximize their learning, and achieving a high degree of participation and commitment among those being trained. John will provide us with important techniques we can all use to maximize our training effectiveness.

This program will be held at Brandywine Country Club, 6904 Salisbury Road, in Maumee. The cost is \$16 for members, \$14 for full-time students/retirees, and \$24 for non-members and guests.

To register, contact Judi Kline at judikline@yahoo.com or (419) 474-6459 by Noon on Monday, September 17, 2007.

GTAC-ASTD 2007-08 Meeting Calendar

(All meetings will be held at Brandywine Country Club, 6904 Salisbury Road, Maumee, OH)

October 24 Late Afternoon Meeting

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Diana Wong, Eastern Michigan University
“Leveraging Learning and Innovation in the Balanced Scorecard”

November 28 Breakfast Meeting

7:30 am – 9:30 am

Sharon Pruetter, Senior Corporate Human Resources Consultant, Medical Mutual of Ohio
“Creating a Framework for Leadership Development”

December – NO MEETING

Happy Holidays!

VISIT US ONLINE AT

www.gtac-astd.org

Please give us your feedback on the newsletter!

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NEW WAYS TO OBTAIN CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Robert B. Tucker

You don't have to spend a fortune to find out what's on your customers' minds. Nor must you hire an expensive market research firm to find out how you're doing. A bit of creativity works wonders.

In the early years of Domino's Pizza, founder Tom Monahan couldn't afford research either. So he took a clipboard and stood in front of his counter and asked one question every night for a year. "What's important to you about a pizza?" Out of this he discovered that three times more people wanted it delivered than had any other preference. They weren't as concerned about service, or parking or price. They wanted convenience.

Listening to customers is an attitude. It's what you as a leader choose to focus on. Here are seven methods you can use no matter what the size of your business:

1. Survey your customers (and potential customers) informally.

As he travels, Choice Hotels CEO Robert Hazard continually asks people a basic question: where do you stay when you travel? The answers he gets back keep him in touch with people's preferences, and provide valuable ideas. He got the idea to segment his hotel chain into budget, economy, upscale and luxury by talking with a Phoenix barber.

During the course of your business day, keep a two or three question survey by your phone. After you've conducted the business at hand, simply explain to your customers that you really value their opinion, and ask away. Take notes, so that you can review responses later. You'll get far more insights if you simply say "hummm" and "oh, I see" as they respond, validating to them that what they are saying is of keen interest to you. Even if your organization does extensive and ongoing marketing research, it's wise to buttress such formal feedback methods with your own informal questioning.

2. Convene a customer focus.

Such groups get you in touch with ordinary customers articulating as best they can what does and doesn't work about your products and services -- and why. There's no magic number, but somewhere between eight and twelve persons is about right. To entice people to participate, you might offer a token reward or free meal, which should be served after the session. If you are the facilitator, make sure that you explain at the beginning that there are no "right" answers, that what you're looking for are people's opinions. Plan on tape recording the session to review later. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak, and disregard your personal evaluations of the usefulness of what people are saying. Be "in the moment" with each person as they speak, give them your full attention, and briefly restate their point before moving to the next person. Never try to explain or justify why you did something a certain way. This will sound defensive and cause people to clam up.

3. Survey your sales force.

Your sales force is an army of trend detectives out there every day getting feedback, taking the customer's pulse, uncovering up-to-the-minute changes in your performance. Unfortunately, most salespeople never get listened to by management. To mitigate this, one company with which I am familiar has a "question of the week" that its salespeople are asked to report on and investigate during the week. On Fridays, they are asked to call in their comments to a designated person in the home office, who then makes sure they receive a \$10 bonus for doing so.

4. Listen to your competitors' customers as well as your own.

Norm Brinker, chairman of Brinker International, is one of the country's most respected restaurant gurus. In an eight year period, Brinker expanded Chili's from 20 outlets to 365, generating \$1.63 billion in annual

(Trainer's Notebook continued from page 2...)

sales. The company now operates restaurants in 43 states and seven foreign countries. Shortly after purchasing Chili's, Brinker began to recognize that consumers were growing more health conscious. He responded by adding salads and other health-conscious items to broaden his menus.

How does Brinker observe the changes in what customers value? One favorite way: He likes to pose as a confused tourist outside his own restaurants. He asks departing patrons if they were happy about their experience. He also visits competitors' restaurants, walking around as if he owns the place, stopping at tables to inquire about the food and service. "You have to listen to customers on an ongoing basis," says Brinker.

5. Become your customer.

Call your 800 number and place an order. Play the role of a befuddled customer who doesn't quite "get it." Call your office and ask for information about the company, and see how you are treated. Immerse yourself in the process of understanding what benefits your customer values most and find out what aspect.

6. Do "follow them home " research.

Intuit Corporation, makers of the best-selling personal finance software Quicken, has a unique method of learning from customers. Market researchers get permission to go home with new customers to watch them unpack and install the new software, what hitches

if any they encounter, and how much time it takes to get "up and running." In addition, there are continual customer surveys and focus groups and a well-staffed telephone service operation for free support. With such attention to detail, Intuit was able to introduce QuickBooks, an accounting program for small businesses that seized 60 percent of that market in its first two years, all in the face of repeated frontal assaults from Microsoft.

7. Host an off site meeting for key customers.

You will want to hold such sessions as far away from the normal rush-around world as possible. Throw in some recreational activities that allow people to cooperate, communicate, and have fun. And sure, bring in an outside speaker or two to get the juices flowing, to give people some new ideas they can take back and apply to their businesses. And don't forget to have plenty of food. But then the gleaning starts. You'll say something like: "Thanks so much for coming to our customer meeting, we really value your comments, ideas, and feedback on how we're doing." And listen away!

This list, of course, only scratches the surface of possible ways to gain valuable, up-to-the-minute feedback from customers. Every innovative, cutting edge, successful company I've ever known or worked with has a well-thought out system for information gathering and involving key managers who maintain a keen interest in leading these dialogues. In an era when customer values change as rapidly as they do today, the wise leader will continue to try new methods, new ways of gaining this type of information.

Robert B. Tucker is a Santa Barbara-based professional speaker on the subjects of Future Trends, Innovative Thinking, and Customer Service. He is also the author of 'Customer Service for the New Millennium', 'Win the Value Revolution', and Managing the Future: 10 Driving Forces of Change. For more information please feel free to contact him.



Lynn Kampfer with John Mallin, Owens Corning University
John was the GTAC ASTD's featured presenter at the February meeting.

IT'S YOUR TURN!

Members are encouraged to submit items for the newsletter pertaining to training tips, reviews & resources. Please contact the coordinator of *The Trainers' Notebook* page, Phil Snyder, at psnyder@officemax.com. For additional training tips & resources, refer to <http://www.gtac-astd.org/links.htm>.

Spotlight on Chapter Members

ADAM DAVENPORT

Adam Davenport has been working for Gorillas & Gazelles LLC in Perrysburg, Ohio in Business Development for the past year. Gorillas & Gazelles is a professional services firm that specializes in career alignment, assessment, consulting and leadership development services. More information is available at www.gorillas-gazelles.com.

He says the most rewarding part of his job is building relationships and having the opportunity to network with a variety of business owners and employees of Northwestern Ohio and Southeastern Michigan companies.

Adam graduated from Bowling Green State University in 2005 with a BSBA in Marketing and a minor in Entrepreneurship. Immediately upon graduation, Adam started his own company selling and installing safes and security cabinets into private residences and small businesses.

Adam joined GTAC-ASTD in December 2006 to connect with members and to keep current on training and development issues, an integral part of Gorillas and Gazelles' services.

Adam is an avid golfer and loves holding business meetings on the golf course



LYNN KAMPFER

Lynn Kampfer, Senior Consultant in Human Resources has worked at The Andersons for 21 years. Prior to The Andersons she worked at the Toledo Hospital, and the YMCAs in Toledo, Long Beach, CA, Beverly Hills, CA, and Atlanta, GA.

She received Bachelor's in Education from The Ohio State University and a Master's in Education from The University of Toledo.

Lynn's passion is helping people grow and she feels blessed to have a job where she can spend most of her time on training and development and employee relations issues. She was an active ASTD member in the 90's and rejoined again about a year ago. She is currently president of the GTAC-ASTD and is looking forward to a productive and exciting year.

After you spend time with Lynn it's hard to believe that she used to be very shy and would do anything to avoid getting up in front of a group of people.

EARN REVENUE FOR THE CHAPTER!

Support the Greater Toledo Area Chapter of the ASTD! When you renew your national membership, buy a book or register for a national conference, just use our chapter source code (CH3092), and we earn a revenue share. Type our chapter source code (CH3092) into the box at checkout. If you have a paper order form, write our chapter source code (CH3092) on it!