



PROFIT MATTERS

HOW DO YOUR NUMBERS LINE UP? | BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK

Working Harder and Enjoying it Less?

You have successfully built a wonderful business with a great reputation. Everyone is proud of your accomplishments. Your family is very appreciative of the many hours it has taken you to build your business. Your customers love you for taking care of the safety of their families. Your associates have looked up to you for years and, for the most part, will follow you into any battle.

You love your business and you enjoy working in it. You have rarely ever met anyone who can do it as well as you can. You have made mistakes like most shop owners, but you have hung in there and learned what it takes to run a profitable business. You have the ability to run your business in concert where all the necessary ingredients to make everyone happy are at your fingertips if you just focus daily on the details.

So why would you want to change anything? Well, you may be just like many other shop owners who are experiencing requests from their loved ones to spend more time with them. I know during most of my life, the business had to come first at times, and, yes, I am guilty of missing games and recitals that were very important to the family. I justified it by telling

myself no one could do it like me, but the truth was I enjoyed doing what I thought no one else could do. You could say I did not trust anyone with the keys to the city.

Maybe you have had some bad experiences in your lifetime. I can recall many a terrible story from shop owners who complain of managers stealing their money, customers and even sometimes their wives. So why would you want to take a chance with your "baby?"

Maybe you're a little selfish and the recognition has gotten in the way of watching your family grow up. It's never too late to change, and the grandkids would appreciate it. If the business that was supposed to give you a life has taken your life away, you are the only one who can fix it. I have had the pleasure of helping thousands of shop owners in this posi-

tion, and it is not impossible to fix. You may have to go backwards a few steps to end up with a second in command that can help you run your business, but the investment in time and money will be well worth it.

Additionally, the vast majority of shop owners who have managers that can run their businesses without them have much more successful businesses. These owners work on the business, not in it. Their businesses are usually bigger, better and much more profitable because they have the time to focus on all the details without getting sucked into the daily operations. This doesn't mean you can't hang out at the counter and kiss some babies when you feel like it; you just don't have to.

So, if you're still with me, how do we train the second in command? More importantly, where do we find one? Hopefully, they are right under your nose. The most successful businesses have proven time and time again that promoting a second in command from within is the very best way to go. This person understands your vision, systems, associates and customers. Their learning curve will be much shorter, and the odds of them carrying on your legacy are much

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

QUESTION:

How many shop owners achieve working on their business instead of spending their life working in their business?

Not many! Approximately 75 percent of our clients develop a second in command so they can have plenty of free time, but it takes a lot of coaching on our part and an owner not afraid of change or failure.

Do you have a question for Chubby? E-mail him at cfrederick@autotraining.net.

greater. They understand the culture you have created in your business. They may be in your family. They may be selling service or turning wrenches. Remember, great leaders are not born; they evolve from training and experience. I believe that looking for a second in command inside your business is a wise investment.

What if there is no one to promote from within? Then you have to get the right person on the bus. But where do you find them? This is when owners really have to dig into the recruiting process to find the right manager. I would start with referrals, then advertise and, yes, even work with headhunters. Don't delegate the interview process

once you have some good candidates. Listen to their entire career and look for their real accomplishments. Micro-manage their references yourself by talking to their previous leaders. Then give them a personality test to ensure you have a winner.

We have administered personality profiles to thousands of managers since 1985 and have found a common thread to successful second in commands. We built our own proprietary test, but there are many products such as Wonderlic in New York. In order to fill your shoes, you are going to want someone with a very high goal oriented drive for immediate results. Before you invest your time and money, be sure your selection possesses this quality. Leaders may not be born, but they are born with personality traits that make them trainable.

I am also an advocate of finding a candidate who has a very high desire to compete and win. As you are well aware, there are daily challenges and roadblocks in an automotive service center. You want a manager who can get it done, and there are personality tests that will help you make a logical decision, not an emotional one.

Then the training begins. The first ques-

tion to ask yourself is, are you a great teacher? Most of us cannot home school our children nor transfer our skills because we have never been taught how to teach. Find a coach and/or a teacher who can help you develop your second in command. Maybe you can use someone who taught you finance sales and leadership. Invest in giving them the knowledge and the skills that will be necessary to fill your shoes. This is not an area in which you just want to try to wing it. I have had the prospect of training many a sibling who was marked for succession, but they had previously been poorly trained and had lost the desire to stay in the family business.

Take a look at my Leadership/Management Profile Assessment. Check off your candidate's strengths and start to work on their gaps by investing your time with them. When we developed leadership training for ATI, we knew we needed a different system for managers than owners. Most shop owners do not want a manager to disrupt order and create vision. The owners want to set their own direction for their companies. But all the other traits are extremely important for a manager in

waiting to develop.

At this point, you might be thinking your employees will never follow another leader. The truth is, your people aren't following you anyway. They are following what you believe in, and that has made their behavior seem like it is you they are following.

After years of research, Don Schmike, an archeology professor at Harvard, discovered that the \$40 billion invested each year in leadership training has failed at attracting followers. I am not saying that character ethics and being a great leader by example is bad, but how many of you are great leaders and they still don't follow you? History's great leaders who could motivate their followers to take action for a cause changed

their followers' beliefs first, then their behaviors to create the results they wanted.

The secret to closing the gap between ideals and reality in your managers in waiting is to create a compelling story for them to follow. Leaders may change, but their beliefs will motivate their followers to follow any leader who believes in exactly what they believe in. Craft a story that inspires passion and focuses action. It is one secret to assuring that your second in command achieves the same results you have, because you based your vision on your beliefs, not your position. Begin by filling out the leadership assessment for all candidates and start investing in the most important asset your business will ever have — your second in command.

Chris "Chubby" Frederick is CEO and president of the Automotive Training Institute. He is thankful for assistance from George Zeeks and Brian Canning in preparing this monthly column. Contact Chubby at cfrederick@autotraining.net.

Leadership/management profile assessment
*Source: John Kotter, Harvard University

1. Rate each direct report on his or her demonstrated capacity for:

Management	Rating (1-10 High)	Leadership	Rating (1-10 High)
Creates Order		Disrupts Order	
Seeks Compliance		Seeks Commitment	
Creates Structure		Creates Vision/Direction	
Controls		Motivates	
Eliminates Risk		Takes Risk	
Supervises		Inspires	
TOTAL Average			
Associate's Initials			

2. Plot their names in the following graph:

3. Do you have what you need? Are there gaps?

READER INTEREST SURVEY
 Visit www.motorage.com/readerservice to rate this article.