



By LISA QUAST

Earning Respect At Work

Earning respect from employees can happen from charisma alone, but for most, hard work is necessary. It's a two-way street, though, with employees trying to earn respect from employers to advance their careers.

Howard Behar, retired president of Starbucks, helped establish the Starbucks culture, which stresses the importance of people over profits. Earning the respect of employees turned out to be a by-product of the culture they created, not the initial goal. *"We had our guiding principles and guiding statements and nothing in them said anything about coffee. It was all about the way we wanted to live our lives as a company. And as long as we could stay in sync with those, it helped create trust and respect within the company."*

EMPLOYERS EARNING RESPECT

Building a company culture of respect requires speaking and acting in ways that demonstrate management's commitment. Noted Behar, *"we approached creating the Starbucks culture in exactly the same way you approach building a healthy family relationship. We knew trust and respect were built by how you act, so we stressed three key aspects:*

1. We're all in this together
2. We want to have open conversations, and
3. Respond – speak up immediately."

MODELING BEHAVIOR

Earning the respect of employees is also about managers modeling the behavior they want to see. According to **Sun-**

ny Kobe Cook, founder of Sleep Country USA, a large mattress retailer in the United States, *"there should never be a task seen as 'beneath you.' Over the years I've done everything from cleaning the bathrooms to going out on mattress deliveries with various crews. If they were working, I was working!"*

EMPLOYEES EARNING RESPECT

Earning respect isn't just for employers. **Evan Harris**, a client service manager in his second year of work after earning a bachelor's degree, stated, *"I have a lot of friends who are still having difficulty finding work so I'm doing everything I can to earn the respect of my employer; keep my job, and obtain promotions. I look for ways to improve our processes, do things without being asked, and volunteer to help out even when I'm busy."*

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Employers who take the time and make the effort to build trust and earn respect from employees reap many benefits. *"A key benefit is commitment to the company and their jobs. Loyalty is another benefit [of respect],"* said Cook. *"People want to be part of something and this makes them feel like they belong. It becomes more than a job and reduces turnover."*

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Earning respect from employers can also lead to many benefits for employees. *"When I've earned the trust and respect of my employer I've found I have more fun and job satisfaction, more freedom in my role, and commitment of management to fight for my promotions,"* stated **Astrid van der Valk**, corporate controller at Arizona Chemical, Netherlands. Added **Jenni Hogan**, a TV journalist, *"Earning respect from my employer has given me greater flexibility to innovate, the freedom to be creative, and I can get more accomplished because I'm not asking for permission all the time."*

CAPITALIZING ON RESPECT

Earning respect at work is especially important due to the on-going global economic difficulties and high unemployment rates. Employers need productive, creative, and problem-solving employees with relationships built on trust and mutual respect. Additionally, employees need to earn respect from employers to differentiate themselves in the workplace, obtain promotions, as well as find and keep jobs. Earning respect in the workplace helps the bottom line of both groups. ●



The Ultimate Currency in Business

by DANIEL J. COHEN

The only way to gain respect in the office is to create strong 2-way communication as **Jason Arcemont**, CEO of BrightBox Brand Marketing explains, *"give people undivided attention. When you have worked with somebody and know what they say has value, there's no reason to tune them out. People can tell whether or not you are giving them your focus."*

According to **Venkat Maddikayala**, CEO of V3Main Technologies, the IT

industry also demands a two-way route to respect, *"during my first job at Fujitsu, we had a great team and diverse group of people speaking different languages. I felt management was informative and flexible,"* he says. *"We were able to meet deadlines and produce great results."*

Gavin Skal, audio industry and staffing specialist, says *"that's when working there becomes intolerable."* *"I once had a manager who had me work on his boat instead of setting up a large recording session for a client who was coming in the next day. I lost respect for him."*