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RETAILING TONY GATTARI

Building a championship team

IMAGINE A SOCCER coach assigning positions for each of the players. He pins up the positions on a team sheet. His team warms up before the game, and each of the players takes the field in the position that the coach assigned them. The team loses its first game, 2-0. At the next game, the coach does the same thing, putting the same players in the same positions. Again the team loses, this time 3-0. This goes on for 12 games, and the team languishes at the bottom of the ladder.

After each game, the coach goes home wondering why his team can't win a game. He has players covering all the crucial positions. All his players are playing in their favoured positions. At game 13, the coach gives an emotional speech designed to fire up his players. The team loses 5-1. The coach hits the bottle.

At game 14, the coach changes the lineup, dropping some players to the bench, and bringing in some new players. The team loses again. At the start of the season the coach had black hair, now he's turning grey and his liver's not doing too well either.

The importance of job descriptions

The failure of this coach is similar to the failure I've seen many retail owners suffer. It's not enough to have people in the right positions. They need to know what they're doing. In retail, we guide staff using job descriptions, which assign roles, responsibilities and lines of authority for each employee. Everyone in an organisation should have a clear job description. Even if you as the business owner perform the sales role, as well as the human resources role, you should have written job descriptions for both roles. All functions of the business should have assigned roles and job descriptions.

Job descriptions aren't that hard to write. You can search Google for job

description templates to find ones that suit your business. Job descriptions should:

- Support the business function they fit within
- Be based on responsibilities assigned to the role, not designed for the specific individual
- Be clear and concise, with a stated objective; and
- Be in line with the vision, mission, and values of the company.

"If I want a banana, give me a banana!"

In my time running companies, I've lost count of the number of employees coming up to me and saying, "Tony, I work 60-70 hours a week. I work hard for this company and I deserve a raise". My reply would be, "That's great that you're working hard, but more importantly, what fruit have you produced?" I would get a blank stare, and sometimes a rebuttal about how I didn't care about the time they had dedicated to the company. At that point, I'd say, "Think of this as a fruit factory. If I want a banana, give me a banana!"

Before you plant seeds in a garden, you check the words and the picture on the packet to make sure you have seeds for the plant you want to grow. What would happen if the plant that grows is not the one you thought you'd purchased? Or, what if the plant didn't grow at all, even though you followed the planting instructions? You'd ask for your money back! When it comes to employees, you hire staff with certain and reasonable expectations of how they'll perform. Sometimes these expectations are not met. In such a situation, ask yourself if you've given that person direction about what they should be achieving.

"How to set out key performance indicators"

KPIs are the ignition for job descriptions. Without KPIs, job descriptions are no more

than basic employment contracts with details on pay, occupational health and safety and how many hours staff are expected to work. KPIs give staff a sense of purpose, and knowledge of what is expected from them on a daily basis.

KPIs work well when they:

- Support the goals of the company
- Match the level of employee skills; and
- Are clear, concise and measurable.

When I reflect on my time at Harvey Norman, I see that one of the reasons for our success was that the proprietors had clear objectives that were measurable and achievable. Their main aim was to increase operating profit on the previous year.

The following activation shows how to set out KPIs for your employees.

ACTIVATION EXERCISE

- Employee Name
- Job Role
- What are the objectives of the company for the next 12 months?
- What are the requirements for the role?
- Based on these requirements, what areas does the employee have to work on?

Based on the areas the employee needs to work on, and the strategic objectives of the company, write down the employee's key performance indicators. ●

■ **Tony Gattari was the General Manager of the computers and communications division of Harvey Norman and oversaw the growth of this business from \$12 million to \$565 million in nine years. He is the founder of The Achievers Group and is a professional speaker, business educator, author and corporate business advisor. Tony has worked with more than 110 businesses around the world.**

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