Speedbump #22: Not Providing Training

Regular training for your employees is integral to productivity and profitability, so you can face change head on and wrestle it to the floor. In short, meaning it's something you should never take for granted. Even if the company doesn't provide it—and they should—strongly suggest it for your team, or take it on yourself to do it in your spare time if necessary. Among other things, training:

1. **Improves your confidence and, therefore, performance.** When you've been equipped to do your job properly, it boosts your spirits and reassures you that you can achieve levels of competency and productivity you may not have realized in the past. Furthermore, when you understand why your work matters and how to do it, you're more likely to hit the mark or go above and beyond.

2. **Saves the company money.** If you're well-trained, you make fewer errors and require less supervision. You also spend less time thinking about problem solving, because you already know what to do. Consistent training also decreases employee turnover—a big drain on corporate costs.

3. **Earns the company money.** While money saved is equivalent to money earned, directly fattening your team's bottom line makes the C-Suite sit up and take notice. A few years ago, Nations Hotel Company invested heavily in coaching and saw an ROI of 221 percent.

Johnny and the Guitar

Too often, many teams I work with are happy with "good enough." Things are humming right along, the work is predictable (if boring), and the team is in neutral gear, just kind of coasting down a slow downhill grade. If that's the case in your team, put the brakes on immediately! Put the team car back in drive and give her some gas! Do not settle for mediocrity! If you want your team and your company to stop the future downhill slide, you should keeping moving and accelerating. Don't coast; keep working to improve. Always be thinking, "What can *I* do to make my team go FAST?"

Here's an analogy of what this looks like. How would you react as a parent? My son Johnny took guitar lessons for about a year when he was 11 years old. For his weekly homework, his teacher Michael gave him the basic chords for *Sweet Home Alabama*. Johnny dutifully practiced it for hours that week and had fairly mastered it. Indeed, when Michael heard it, he said, "Hey that's great! Here's how you can play it even a little better—watch this!" Michael showed him how to do a riff.

To his teacher's surprise, Johnny was resistant and stubbornly refused to try it. Michael was mystified at his reaction, but he didn't press him. After he left, I asked Johnny what

was wrong. Johnny said, "Well, none of my friends play the guitar, so they don't know if I'm doing a bad job. They think it's so cool that I know how to play that song, so I don't want to work so hard to change it."

I shook my head, baffled. I gave him the "mom talk," explaining that personal improvement is done for yourself, not for other people. I told him he was doing an amazing job on the song, and when he learned to do it even better, he would have tremendous personal pride in his accomplishments. I closed with, "The fact is, Johnny, when you're an adult, you'll work with people who *will* know if you're doing a bad job. You should always strive to get better and never settle for 'good enough.'"

Big-Time Payoff

While you want to hold firm to your unwavering company values, always try to change things for the better—on purpose. Get the training you all need. Don't complacently coast, satisfied with just getting by, or you'll never grow and improve that bottom line.

Where do you and your team members need training? Good, consistent training more than pays for itself in terms of employee confidence, performance, productivity, reduced turnover, and dollars earned on the bottom line. Rather than view it as a necessary evil, treat it as a positive expense—just as you would any initiative that promises to increase profits and benefit everyone all the way down the line.