

Yes! Network Seminar Review

By Clarity Patton House | Tuesday, March 16, 2010

If you attended the recent seminars presented by The Yes Network, then you probably agree with me that presenters Dan Coughlin and Roxanne Emmerich sure know how to pack in a lot of content. If you missed one or both of the seminars, here are some of the highlights.

AFTERNOON SEMINAR

Dan Coughlin's seminar titled "Accelerate Your Business: Practical Approaches for Achieving High Performance and Great Results," delivered on its promise to be practical. I've never seen so many "action steps" presented in just a few hours! I'm not exaggerating to say I left with at least a dozen good ideas that I'd love to implement immediately at my office. But I'll keep in mind one of Dan's important pieces of advice: don't try to do it all, all at once.

Dan began with a story. On his way to Chicago the night before a business meeting, Dan discovered he'd left behind his shirt and jacket. An early meeting start meant no time to shop in the morning, and it was already approaching 9 PM. The first solution that popped into his head was to call Nordstrom's in downtown Chicago. He asked the associate if they could have a jacket and shirt in his size pressed and ready. The helpful response was, "No problem." When Dan said, "I'll be there at 9:30 PM" the associated responded that although the store closes at 9 PM, "We'll remain open until you arrive." When Dan arrived, not only was the store open as promised, with the jacket and shirt pressed and ready to go, but the associate greeted him by name, offered him a cold bottle of water and said, "I also prepared these other shirts that go with this jacket." Dan's response, "I'll take them all."

How did this Nordstrom associate end up with a \$1,000 sale? Sure, it was the excellent customer service he provided that day, but there was something even more. Years prior, accompanied by his young son, Dan stopped by a Nordstrom in St. Louis to have some shoes polished. As Dan was holding his son's hand, about to pick up the bag of shoes, the associate said, "May I help you with that?" Dan assumed the gentleman would pick up the bag and hand it to him. Instead, the associate carried the bag all the way out of the department, out of the store, through the parking lot and placed it in the vehicle, so Dan could give full attention to his son. This gesture made such an impression that years later when he was in a jam, the first company to come to Dan's mind was Nordstrom.

The Nordstrom "shoe guy" in St. Louis doesn't know the "shirt guy" in Chicago, but they're both part of a culture of service that delivers the little bit extra that makes a lasting impression. Dan was so intrigued by his Nordstrom experiences that back in St. Louis he asked a manager, "Where do you find all these friendly people?" She said, "During the interview we ask, 'Are you a compulsive smiler?' If they don't break into a smile right away, we don't hire them."

How do businesses, not only Nordstrom, become top of mind for their customers? Dan's first point of emphasis is this: see equity in value. When you create and deliver value, the first person your customer will think of is you and your company. It's a return to business basics, and the most important business basic is to create and deliver value to other people.

To help us accelerate our businesses to greater results, Dan offers 19 Accelerator Actions (19!) along with steps to facilitate achieving them. For abbreviation reasons, I'll share two in particular.

Accelerator Action #4: Continually Raise My Bar

Although setting a goal and achieving it is great, too often we don't take the time to review and discuss the results in order to achieve better results next time. Here are seven questions Dan recommends addressing to help analyze company performance and raise the bar.

- In the past six months, what were the two or three most important outcomes we wanted to improve or achieve in our organization?
- In terms of those two or three desired outcomes, what was actually achieved?
- What did I do to try to improve those outcomes?
- What worked well and why did it work well?
- What did not work well and why did it not work well?
- What lessons did I learn or relearn?
- What will I do the same and what will I do differently in the next six months in order to improve performance and results in those two or three desired outcomes?

Accelerator Action #7: Sacrifice To Accelerate

Dan cautions us about the dangerous tendency to load our calendars with too many things to do; as if the busier we are the more productive we will be, when in fact the opposite is often true. Dan offers a "1-3-6" process for focusing efforts.

- What is the ONE most important business outcome we want to improve in our organization in the next six months?
- What THREE things can I do that will have the greatest positive impact on improving that outcome?
- What SIX things do I need to stop doing - or spend a lot less time doing - so I have the time and energy to do the three things I know would have the greatest positive impact on improving that outcome?

During his work with clients, Dan hears objections like, "You don't understand. I can't stop doing anything because every one of these things is important." To which Dan counters, "I understand that it's all important. But it's not all the same level of importance. If we're not willing to let go of good ideas and important things, then we're not going to be able to accomplish the MOST important things."

The last insight I'll leave you with from Dan Coughlin is the 60 Second Rule. Study the first 60 seconds of every customer interaction: on the website, on the phone, face to face, using the product. If the first 60 seconds go well, the customer is much more likely to be okay with any issue that arises later. At McDonalds, it's the 2 Second Rule. "Smile at the customer before asking the question." Studies showed that if the first 2 seconds went well and then a mistake was made later in the order, the customer was much more tolerant than if the first 2 seconds were less pleasant.

Dan's presentation was action packed, so fortunately The Yes Network provided a break to let it sink in before the second seminar began with other great insights. If you'd like to know more about Dan Coughlin beyond these highlights, additional information is available at www.TheCoughlinCompany.com.

EVENING SEMINAR

Roxanne Emmerich had no trouble keeping her audience engaged into the evening hours with her seminar titled "Thank God It's Monday: How to Create a Workplace You and Your Customers Love."

Roxanne introduced the statistic that last year 65% of people actively looked for a job. That's 65% of people with a job. Furthermore 71% of employees are disengaged. 17% of employees are actively disengaged, i.e. working against you every day.

Wow. That's disheartening. I'm having visions of payroll dollars floating out the window. Fortunately, Roxanne has solutions that will help on Monday, Tuesday and everyday.

Roxanne's solutions start with understanding WHY people come to work. It's not JUST about the paycheck. We want to make a meaningful difference. But we end up selling ourselves short because not everyone else is up to the "big game." Workplaces fall into a kind of corporate depression brought on by the experience of getting up, going to work, going home, getting up again, going to work again, etc. without an invigorating sense of purpose.

The Vision

Roxanne recalls when David Letterman asked Bill Gates, "How did you become the wealthiest man in the world?" Gates responded, "I had a vision." We all need a vision – a mission to create something magnificent, says Roxanne. Companies can avoid or recover from corporate depression by getting people engaged, and what gets people engaged is "being of service in a great way."

Roxanne's process for engagement begins with involving employees in creating a "vision of greatness." This is not a generic, corporate-sounding mission statement. The vision needs to be short and visual, representing what the extraordinary end result looks like. Roxanne recommends getting everyone together in a room. Give them ten seconds to decide the most important value they each stand for and then explore this question. "If we were to live that value in an extraordinary way, what would happen?" And if that happened, what would happen, etc. until you get to an outcome worthy of saying, "Heck yes!"

The Culture

Once you have your "vision of greatness," the engagement process involves creating corporate culture that prevents negativity or "baditudes" (bad attitudes) from getting in the way. Roxanne offered specific steps to create a culture of engagement, and thereby achievement, which I've abbreviated or paraphrased for you here.

- a.** All excuses should be eradicated. Excuses are at the core of all nonperformance. If you hear someone making an excuse for why they can't do something, simply say, "Thank you for sharing. Now tell me how you can."
- b.** Own our mistakes. "I blew it and here is my massive corrective action plan to fix it and make sure this doesn't happen again."
- c.** Don't buy in to collective negativity. For example, send a memo to the team stating, "The media will be talking a lot about a recession. We, however, did not sign up. Instead, we will take advantage of this opportunity to move ahead of the competition."
- d.** Bring your game face. Gut wrenching things happen in life, but you're at the workplace now and it's "game on." Whatever is going on in your life, tell yourself "I'm bringing the joy."
- e.** Stay calm. Don't react when people push your buttons; it just encourages them to do it again.
- f.** No whining. Establish a no whining rule and encourage everyone to enforce it.
- g.** No we / they language. We're all part of the organization regardless where we work.
- h.** No gossip. Gossip is a cancer in the organization. Absolutely no complaining or listening to complaints about anyone else. Instead say, "It sounds like you need to talk with him about this. Will you go talk to him about it now?"

The Results

Roxanne reminds us that business is about results, and "busyness" is no substitute. To improve results, create a monthly Board Report. "It will change your performance, double your income and create better results," says Roxanne. Present it to your boss so your results are visible. If you don't have the courage to give it to your boss, do it for you. It focuses your brain, keeps you thinking on a higher level and helps you achieve more.

Roxanne's formula for a good Board Report includes the following elements, concisely collected onto one page.

- Here's what we said we were going to do
- Here's what we accomplished
- Here's the massive action plan for where we blew it; here's what we're going to do to catch up on the things we didn't achieve
- Here are projects we'll accomplish, or results we'll achieve, within the next 30 days

Board Reports are declarations, and declarations are stronger than goals. Declare what we are going to do and then live our word.

Throughout her presentation, Roxanne emphasizes the importance of employee engagement through being of service in a great way. Being of service in a great way in turn engages customers. Roxanne encourages us to "Make every customer successful; not just satisfied but successful." When we accomplish this, our passion to perform goes way up to a higher level, and that's where we'll be really successful.

People who are being of service in a great way within a positive culture are more engaged and more productive. The results benefit the company, the employees and the customers. Roxanne's presentation included many more insights to help "create a workplace you and your customers love." For today's review, I'll conclude with a story Roxanne shared.

One day an elderly gentleman walked into a bank. He was greeted by a teller who was very nice to him. The next day he came back and told the teller, "Yesterday I came in to withdraw money because I wanted to buy a gun to take my own life. But when you were so nice to me, it gave me hope that life was worth living after all and I decided not to. So I wanted to thank you."

Imagine if that teller had brought a bad attitude to work that morning and gone through her day whining and complaining. What a powerful reminder that every customer interaction has an impact for better or worse, and most often we'll never know how small or great that impact might be.

If you'd like to know more about Roxanne Emmerich beyond these highlights, additional information is available at www.roxanneemmerich.com

For more information about Clarity Patton Newhouse, visit www.clarity.tv