

STAR Finds Author's Principles Brighten its Performance

By Sarah Janssen | Wednesday, June 17, 2009

About three years ago, STAR Financial Bank held an employee event to mark the beginning of a new direction of the company. STAR wanted a workplace more focused on customer service and satisfaction, said President Jim Marcuccilli, in an e-mail. In 30 months, STAR moved from 3.3 services per household to 4.3 and reported an increase in equity return by 3.26 percentage points. "During the heart of a recession" Star also had \$100 million in loan growth, said Marcuccilli.

The company's growth and new direction can be attributed to the principles of Roxanne Emmerich, founder, president and CEO of Emmerich Financial. The consulting firm has a reputation for turning businesses around, and Emmerich is a sought-after speaker around the nation. Her most recent book, "Thank God It's Monday!" has ranked on The New York Times' and Wall Street Journal's best-sellers lists since its release in April.

"We wanted to bring that energy to our leadership team and also share the story in our markets," said Marcuccilli.

STAR brought Emmerich to The Summit Club on Monday to speak at a luncheon, and later she met with its leadership team.

Laura Huffman, superintendent of Whitley County Consolidated Schools, was able to attend the event. Huffman said she thought the talk would be more formalized and focused for businesses, but she said she learned skills she could apply in her own leadership position.

Emmerich said the most important of the seven principles of Kick-Butt Kick-Off, discussed in "Thank God It's Monday!" is the disallowance of gossip in the workplace.

"Gossip is like workplace violence on steroids," she said in an e-mail. Eliminating gossip helps employees feel safer and more productive.

During economic hard times, companies cannot afford to pay employees for not being productive. Holding others accountable for missed deadlines and dysfunctional behavior is key to improving the workplace environment, said Emmerich.

And, she says, it is not only management's job to ensure workers follow the rules. Cleaning up a negative work environment is everyone's job. "...it's imperative for others and everyone to take action and responsibility for making the negativity go away," said Emmerich.

Emmerich began her career as a commercial lender. She was later offered the presidency of a large bank, but turned it down because she said she wanted to do something bigger, "not just working for one business but really helping to turn around and transform many, many businesses." Twenty years ago, she started Emmerich Financial, and is now the president of Emmerich Group, Inc.