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Great expectations

HOW TO KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES ENGAGED

Interviewed by MIKE COTTRILL

Like most leaders, Jim Ziglar has two trusted philosophers whose wisdom he relies on in tough times: his wife and his uncle.

Of course, it helps that his uncle is noted business author and speaker Zig Ziglar. But the point is that as the president and CEO of Cross



Match Technologies Inc., he has been growing his entire career by being willing to adapt and listening to solid advice from every kind of teacher in his life.

As a result, he's learned he has to do a better job of delegating and figured out what it takes to motivate his 330 employees every day. Those strategies are helping him guide Cross Match to new heights: The \$90 million supplier of biometric identity technologies has created five industry-first technologies since 2005.

Smart Business spoke with Ziglar about why it's OK to let people do things in a way that you never would and why you might be a lot better off if you get rid of your selfish superstar.

Stop trying to do everything yourself. I believe in delegation. If you hire somebody to do a job, they should be given the flexibility and the ability to do that job. When I start doing other people's jobs for them, it's a pretty good indication that they are not going to be with us for very long.

Earlier in my career, when I didn't understand that, I almost killed myself. You just can't do it all, and if you try to do it all, you're not going to do any of it very well. So if you don't delegate, you're setting yourself and the company or organization up for failure.

My wife, who is a tremendous manager, has, over the years, pointed out to me that I didn't have to do everything, and I was killing myself. And then I realized that when you ask someone else to do it, just because they don't do it exactly the way you would doesn't mean that it's wrong, they just do it differently.

Once I realized that it didn't have to be done my way every time, and that it would work doing it somebody else's way, that's when I was liberated from the need to do it all.

Part of motivating people is to gain their trust as well as to trust them. I think it has enormous positive impact that the CEO knows you exist, knows what you do and makes a point of saying, 'Hey, I know you are doing a great job, and I trust you to keep on doing it.'

Raise your standards to engage employees. Create high expectations for people. High performers expect to be pressed, and if they're not pressed to deliver at a high level,

then they are probably not going to be with you long. There is a difference between creating stress and beating people up and creating high expectations.

We have the most talented pool of people in our industry, and while no company is immune from losing people from time to time, I can tell you that we don't lose many. It actually comes the other way; we attract talent with our standards.

We don't have to push hard to get them when they recognize that this is a place where they will be surrounded by people who are at that same level they are, surrounded by

ter, and it keeps pushing our people to higher and higher plateaus.

Sacrifice the selfish superstar to improve your team. Sometimes you have people that don't know how to play as a team player and don't want to change, and even though you talk to them about it, they simply can't get there. In those cases, I've had to take some more radical action and find someone to replace them.

I spent many years on Wall Street, and I often saw people who thought they were masters of the universe. And they were quite good at what they did, but their failure or

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people who are creative, that they can share these creative ideas with and really generate these exciting products and systems.

Point toward your competitors as a motivational tool. It's a competitive business, and it gets more and more competitive. My job is to point out what the competition is doing and to urge us along and to create an environment where those creative juices continue to work among our very smart people.

Competition is a wonderful thing. I know a lot of people think, 'Gosh, I'd really be happy if I didn't have any competitors.' I'd be miserable if we didn't have competitors. Competition is what makes us bet-

inability to be cooperative or work as a team while they were productive brought down the productivity significantly of a lot of other people. I came to the conclusion a long time ago that no one is irreplaceable, even me.

When one person, no matter how good they are, gets in the way of the entire organization moving forward as it should, that person should not be allowed to do that. And it's painful sometimes when you've got somebody that's really good, but they're unwilling. I always believe you should council with people like that but, at some point, the good of the whole has to take precedence over one person. <<

HOW TO REACH: Cross Match Technologies Inc. (561) 622-1650 or www.crossmatch.com

