



THE DNA OF A WINNING COMPANY

BY SCOT MCCARTHY

So, you want to be a “Best Of” award winner in *Lynchburg Business* next year? What does it take? What are the building blocks of an organization that reaches the pinnacle of being recognized as “best” in class? Whether customers are choosing a business to buy a new suit, cater an event, renovate a kitchen, or host a child’s birthday party, there must be something that drives their choice of one organization over another.

Perhaps it is a significant investment in TV, radio, and print ads that makes it happen. Perhaps an active social media presence is the secret. Or, maybe it’s more than that.

Anne Mulcahy, former Chairperson and CEO of Xerox Corporation, is credited with saying, “Employees are a company’s greatest asset.” I agree to the extent that employees produce the products and services businesses bring to the marketplace, but haven’t we all encountered employees that we would consider a company’s *greatest liability*? So, it’s not just any employee.

Let’s think about this—what makes people physically, mentally and emotionally unique? It’s all linked to deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), the material in nearly all living organisms that provides our individualized genetic makeup. You can’t tell exactly what a person’s DNA will allow them to do just by looking at them or having a conversation. That’s why I suggest you need to be crystal clear on what “best” looks like when you hire and retain employees—and not settle for anything less.

Dictionary.com suggests that “competent” means having the skill, knowledge, and experience for some purpose. Related descriptors might include savvy, expertise, know-how, moxie. (Moxie...I like that one.) I know what you’re thinking though—“*We already hire for work experience and the ability to do the job and we are still far from the “Best Of” realm.*” The solution is to hire not just for WHAT people do, but behaviorally HOW they do it. You need to increase your focus on the *behavioral DNA* that separates good work from great work and good businesses from the best businesses.

What does that look like? It’s the difference between a salesperson that asks if they can help find your size versus the one that asks about the suits already in your closet, the occasion you are going to, and then brings you options that

match your exact needs. It’s the difference between a caterer who provides the standard menu offerings versus the one that asks about your favorite foods and creatively describes how they can be incorporated to enhance your event.

And it is not just about great customer service. That’s just one key component. “Best Of” organizations are comprised of people that are:

- action-oriented, enjoy working hard and solving the day’s challenges,
- comfortable generating and capitalizing on “Goldilocks conflict”—you know, not too little and not too much... just the right amount of healthy debate to foster higher-level thinking and decision making,
- motivating to others and create environments where people want to do their best work,
- effective leaders that vary their leadership approach based on the differing levels of expertise and motivation that employees bring to the table.

It’s not just WHAT people do, but behaviorally HOW they do it that makes them the best. If you really want to be considered a “Best Of” winner, you need to determine what the best “HOW” looks like for each role in your organization and make it a clear expectation of the people you hire and your current employees. And if some employees choose not to strive to deliver the “best” behavior, you need to have the courage to graciously and caringly help those people move on to other career opportunities that better match their aspirations.

Everyone has behavioral DNA, but you need to find and develop people with the unique DNA mix to get your business or team where you aspire to be—an organization comprised of people that are:

- **D**edicated to exceeding business and customer expectations
- **N**imble and focused on solving problems with creative solutions
- **A**mazing stewards of your organizational reputation and brand

Otherwise, let’s face it—you are settling for good instead of the best. **LB**

After a fulfilling 25-year career in companies ranging from the world’s largest conglomerate to local financial services and healthcare organizations, Scot McCarthy founded StyleWise Partners and has been consulting in the Workforce Enablement arena since 2015. StyleWise helps organizations determine the “how” for key roles and provides engaging development experiences that help you hire and groom your unique DNA behavioral-based competencies. For a free consultation contact Scot at scot.mccarthy@stylewisepartners.com or check out www.stylewisepartners.com.

