

# OBSTACLES in performance and the transition of responsibility

Obstacles can be a significant constraint to performance and can create reasons for employees to resign, customers to leave, and profits to diminish, with owners and managers contrarily disregarding the constant remedy opportunities employees offer them. Although my focus of profession is hospitality, the fact of the matter is that obstacles are in every company. It does not matter the type of business you own or manage, as obstacles are present and can even hinder your culture if they not recognized as limiting the service abilities of your staff.

Obstacles can be anything. They can be preparation limitations in a poorly designed kitchen, a coffee machine that has only one working heating element, an ice machine that continually breaks down, or a walk-in refrigerator that has no room to even walk in. Add them all up at your property and then look at performance issues. These common types of obstacles prevent employees from being effective in their role to the owner or manager, but are not always considered when an employee is being charged with poor performance. The obstacles that are occurring in your business may transition to interference's against your employees, conceivably resulting in a complaining employee, poor service, and unhappy customers.

Time after time the expectations we place on employees are jammed by obstacles that encumber their role in service. In almost all instances the burden of poor service falls on the employee when in fact the owner or manager can be directly at fault for these instances. How often has an employee informed an employer that a door causing concern needs fixing, or there is not enough silverware in stock to accommodate a party, or shelving is not sufficient to properly manage inventory, or a piece of equipment is in disrepair but everyone must use it. Many employers just say deal with it, and go on with their misunderstanding of why their business has slowed, or staff has left. Address these circumstances and perhaps a different outcome can prevail.

My contentions that employers do not consider conditions that may prevent an employee from performing to the level of expectations is real and common, and in my view a direct reflection on the performance of the manager or owner. When employees decide to leave for reasons like poor working conditions, management must consider the obstacles in their business that if addressed, could have prevented these failures. Eliminating obstacles that directly affect employee performance can result in better service, gratified staff, and reduced turnover.

Solutions to obstacle are not always easy, and there is generally a monetary value to result an obstacle. However, when your business thrives on service and you have areas in your shop that are preventing your team in their performance, fixing obstacles becomes more valuable to your bottom line than the commonplace action of inaction.

Today I want you to walk through your business and observe, and accordingly, ask a question to your employee's specific to what is preventing them from doing their work. If you can, really pay attention to what you see or hear, and perhaps fix your obstacles. While this may not be the only reason for performance issues, it goes a long way with employee appreciation.

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