

# The Three R's for Business Success

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In these challenging economic times, when we are surrounded by businesses struggling to succeed, it is hard to stay positive and focused on our goals. Good managers would be wise to go back to the basics and keep it simple in their management techniques. As young children we learned that the building blocks were "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic." As successful managers, the new building blocks for challenging times could be considered **respect, resiliency and results**.

**Respect:** Marriage counselors often see a major factor in divorce is a lack of respect. If you lack respect for your partner, you will lie and cheat without remorse or regard for your actions. Certainly, these factors apply in the workplace as well. Employment is also a partnership, a marriage of sorts. Many employees spend more time each week in the workplace than they spend with their families so it is important to create a respectful, positive environment. These changes will have a positive impact on the bottom line. One of the most forgotten elements of success is respect. Research shows that respect fosters connectedness and leads to increased employee loyalty, higher customer sales and greater creativity in the workplace, as well as stronger interpersonal relationships.

Publix Supermarkets have been known as a Top 100 company to work for since 1985. They offer their employees a number of excellent benefits that help to create a positive environment where everyone from the store managers to the baggers feel valued. Founder George Jenkins always made respect a priority in his dealings with his employees as well as with his customers. This chain shows that respect in a number of ways, such as allowing all employees a stock option to increase that feeling of ownership. Also, they are always closed on major holidays so every employee may spend that day with friends and family.

Whether you are a big corporation or a small "mom and pop" business finding ways to show your respect for employees every day is invaluable and will have a big payoff. There are many ways that you can start showing that respect for your employees on a small scale: email an inspirational quote each day, include a brief but genuine note of gratitude with each paycheck, and acknowledge and recognize the efforts of at least one employee a day. Perhaps you could make "TENS" a daily routine in your workplace- we shake hands with each person that we come in contact with (T for touch), we make eye contact (E for eye contact), address co-workers by name (N for name) and don't forget to Smile! Smiles have been found to be quite contagious and a good mood often spreads throughout the office (much like we have all seen happen with a bad or stressful mood).

It starts with the little pleasantries like saying "good morning" or sincerely asking how their weekend went. It expands to using kind language, cleaning up after ourselves and offering to help our co-workers. Interested in increased respect in your workplace? To try this simple activity you will need a roll of pennies and a small bowl or jar. Keep the roll of pennies in your drawer. Every time you engage in a respectful interaction with colleagues put a penny in the bowl on your desk. This visual reminder will help you to watch the respect habit grow.

**Resiliency:** Look at an elastic band and then stretch it! After it stretches it looks like it returns to its natural shape. However, the molecules in it have actually shifted and it is not exactly the same as it was before the stretch, it has been changed. This small symbol is a reminder of our ability to withstand the challenges and crisis in the workplace. In fact, the Chinese character for crisis is actually made up of two characters, one is opportunity and one is growth. Resilient people are well aware that hard times are often an opportunity for growth.

Research supports the finding that resilient people share common traits. They all have a basic belief in their ability to set goals and to make change. Resilient people recognize their strengths and see themselves as strategists. They perceive bad times as temporary and have faith in the future or in a higher power. Resilient people do not try to "go it alone". Their most important characteristic is the ability to create and expand their circle of support. Resilient people do not look in the rear view mirror, they only look ahead.

This opportunity for growth can help managers and employees look at problems from different perspectives. Luckily, resiliency can be taught. Encourage brainstorming with your employees using insight, humor and creativity as cornerstones of the process. The elasticity of the elastic band reminds us to be flexible and that we can learn to bounce back from a trauma, especially if we remember to expand our circle of positive, supportive colleagues.

**Results:** Make your business the respectful, resilient environment that will produce the third R- Results! Thinking about these basic building blocks throughout your day will result in success and greater employee satisfaction. Little things do make a difference in the end. Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success". Here's to your success!