

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

tronic collating, makes signature printing obsolete in theory. "It forces one to rethink the entire bindery process," Lamparter notes. "Digital controls are critical to today's improvement and important to the next revolution, which is computer integrated manufacturing (CIM)."

For binderies to adjust successfully to the digital revolution, they must be customer-sensitive and learn to solve their needs digitally. "You must be digitally savvy and develop solutions beyond tomorrow," stresses Lamparter.

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■ JUST REWARDS

"Rewarding peak performers with money is necessary, but it's not sufficient on its own," writes Charles Garfield, author of *Peak Performers: The New Heroes of American Business*. "Many generous companies have not realized improved performance; monetary rewards will not work without recognition."

Speaking at the recent Binding Industries of America (BIA) conference, Garfield pointed out that employees need this positive recognition to validate their excellence. "Set standards high," he points out. "However, if people meet or exceed these standards, they must be rewarded. Unfortunately, many managers are all talk. Employees, if not given praise, will come to work physically, however, their hearts and souls will be absent."

"If you do not deliver on your promised rewards, you can turn a peak performer into

dead weight—his or her spirit will be broken," Garfield continues. "Thus, employees never will trust your proclamations again and will cease to follow your lead and vision."

The author stresses that the "my way or the highway" approach to management must be discarded forever, and employees should be viewed as human resources. Unfortunately, many managers fear that soliciting employee feedback or offering praise will give workers a "big head." However, he notes, employers can't afford a workforce full of "shrunk heads" with low self-esteem. Thus, a set system must be established to provide and solicit positive feedback.

■ SERVICE DISNEY STYLE

When it comes to making service magic, few companies do a better job than the "Magic Kingdom" of Disney. Ask anyone who's ever visited this fantasy world how they felt about the experience. Almost unanimously, people will tell glowing stories of superior service and staff attention to their every possible need. The money these satisfied customers spend on return visits is no fantasy.

Leslie Bays of Disney University (Lake Buena Vista, FL) is convinced that many of these positive service aspects can be replicated in businesses of all sizes. Speaking at the recent Binding Industries of America (BIA) conference, Bays related some simple practices companies can employ.

- Treat clients as VIPs . . . Very Individual People. Go beyond the stereotype of what you think that person's needs are, based on perceived past experiences, to what they are today.

- View all individuals as consultants. Ask if they received good value for their dollar.

- Deliver information with

a personal touch. Respond politely, even to "silly" questions.

- Deliver information in a timely fashion.

- Maintain the "wow" factor—the positive experience the customer had the first time you exceeded expectations and went the extra mile.

- Don't eliminate or ignore seemingly insignificant details. They might be very important to certain customers.

Although these tips go a long way toward making business transactions positive, Bays concedes that some customers will go away unhappy anyway.

Thus, when customers approach you with a complaint or concern, Bays stresses three simple strategies to "service recovery:" always listen, never interrupt; apologize (not necessarily an admission of guilt); and ask the customer how you can help resolve the problem."

■ THE MAKING OF A MERGER

LMX A/S (Billund, Denmark) parent company of Purup Prepress, and Eskofot A/S (Ballerup, Denmark) have entered an agreement to merge their graphic activities. The new company, Purup-Eskofot A/S, reportedly will become one of the 10 largest prepress suppliers in the world.

The merger is subject to mutual due diligence and final approval by the Eskofot general assembly.

The new company will offer integrated high-tech system solutions to the graphic arts industry. The merged company will benefit from electronics and mechanical component manufacturing and assembly lines at three factories in Denmark and one in Switzerland.

Vagn Holck Andersen has been named chairman of the board, and Stig Christensen has been appointed president. ■