

# The 10 Es of Managing and Motivating people

If your people aren't on board, you may as well give up

This is the first in Supermarket & Retailer's series of articles where we share stories of what some organisations and managers have done to motivate and inspire their teams. In these, we give you practical ideas of what you can do to create the most amazing, customer-driven company in the world.



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Delight your customers

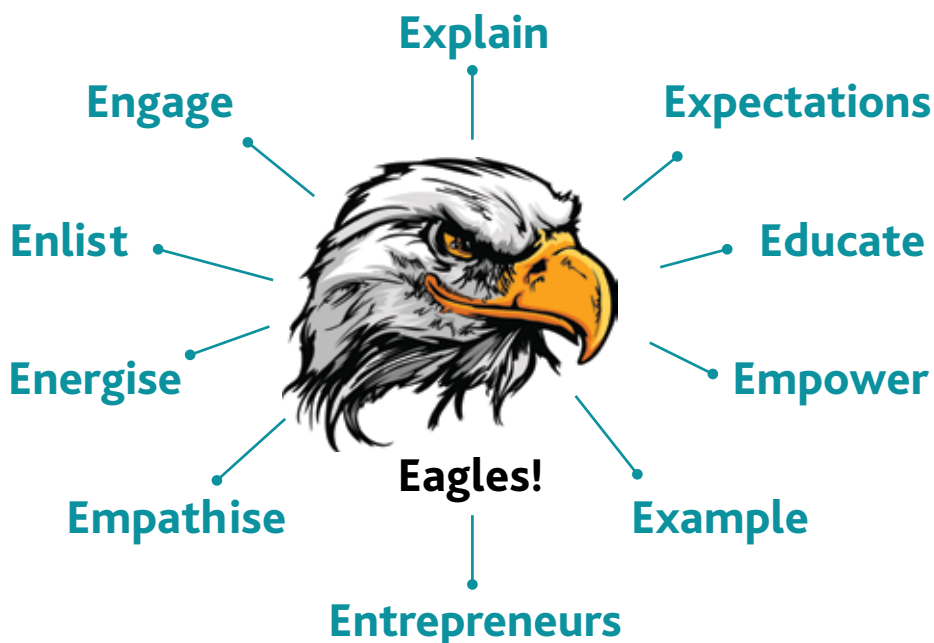
I can declare, without any possibility of being contradicted, that delighting your customers depends completely on the commitment of people on your team. You can have the most attractive premises, IT systems that are the best available, and logistical processes second to none, but if your people aren't on board, you may as well give up.

In last month's column I made the point that all of us like to feel special, unique and respected, but many routine jobs don't allow front-line people who deal with your customers to experience that. Unlike a tailor who produces a beautiful suit, there isn't much for people to feel proud that they produced.

But when you want a group of employees that is fired up with enthusiasm, where do you start? This month I want to introduce what I like to call, "The 10 Es of Managing People," and over the next few columns we'll unpack these so you'll have a practical list of how-to activities that you can implement.

Our diagram summarizes these 10 Es, and this month we will look at what it all means, and focus on the first one – **Enlisting** the right people.

First, you will notice that in the centre of the picture is the word '**Eagles!**' This is an idea that came from popular psychologist



**Able**      **Willing**      **Allowed**

Dr. Wayne Dyer in one of his books. In it he stated that there are only two kinds of people in the world – ducks and eagles. Ducks act like victims, never get things done, hang around together quacking as they moan and groan about everything in their lives. We create ducks in our businesses by demeaning people and making them feel inferior.

Eagles, on the other hand, take the initiative and soar above the crowd. In their confidence, they take full responsibility for their choices, and don't allow pettiness and power games to affect them. If you want more eagles and less ducks on your team, then it's your job as a manager to create the right environment.

That's where the three concepts at the bottom of the figure come in. Not only must people become **able and willing** to do their work, but they also need to be **allowed**.

And it all begins with hiring or **enlisting** the right people in the first place. Most of us don't have the luxury of starting to recruit everyone in our business from scratch, but there is much you can do when new positions come up. Traditionally new employees

are hired because they have the right skills, knowledge, and experience and the nebulous characteristic of the right 'attitude.' We also usually ensure that they come at the right price for the company. A couple of meaningless reference checks are possibly used, and I've also seen credit checks and examination of criminal records coming up more frequently. But it usually ends there.

Now while I have no problem with these criteria, I'd also like to suggest that you need to also look out for the new person's awareness of customer care, and their ability to deal with customers. It's not as difficult as it sounds. For example, as you are busy interacting with them, ask yourself if they are showing the right levels of empathy and warmth, of respect and communication, of openness, and so on. You may even want to test things like their innovative ability to come up with alternative solutions, their resilience in the face of difficult people, and their reluctance to get into an argument about trivial things.

But if you want to check if they have any insight or acumen into customer care, any



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awareness of how important it is, then asking one simple question will give you some clues: "How do you feel about customer service in the world today?"

If they don't immediately and unequivocally start sharing with you how frustrated they are with shoddy service when they go shopping, the alarm bells should start ringing for you. On the other hand, if they launch into an animated discussion about how poor service standards are, and how they regularly fight for their rights as customers, then that's a good sign. At least they are mindful of customer care. We know, for example, that people who are "fussy" about the service that they receive are inevitably also able to give their customers better experiences too.

Of course, that's not the only question you can ask to see how vigilant they are about customers. You can ask them to tell you about the last time they complained about something to get a better result, or you could ask them if they thought customers were just simply too difficult to please. It doesn't matter what the questions are. What matters is how you gauge their attitude.

In our business we also used another trick when we were looking to hire good people. (Although I'm not always proud of this tactic, it works particularly well.) Let's say that you notice a really customer-focused and friendly person at your bank, or at a restaurant that you go to quite often, or at another retailer. You have tested them already as a customer, and there is nothing stopping you from offering them a job at your business. It confirms the old management adage that says "You can train the skills and experience, but you can't train attitude."

What if you aren't intending to recruit new employees in the near future? What if you have to live with the group of people that currently work for your business? The message to people on your team them must be very clear. Your customers are the reason for your business. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, you can have a great location, wonderful products, and superb delivery systems, but if you don't have customers you don't have a business. You don't have to be overly dramatic: I was recently waiting to be introduced to a group of people in one company, and the CEO started off with a welcoming speech to the delegates. And then he said: "I want you all to remember something very important. It's not my job to teach you the manners that your parents should have taught you!" That certainly got their attention.

In the next of this series of articles I'd like to focus on the next three of the 10 Es, that is Engage, Explain and clarify Expectations. Until then, have a very inspiring month. **SR**

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