

HIGH TECH - HIGH TOUCH ARE THEY COMPATIBLE?

by
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I remember when my mom opened her first business. Well actually I don't remember the **exact** day, I wasn't born yet (3 months to go), but I do remember growing up in her business.

Mom owned a flower shop, which opened in December 1955. She was one of two florists in our small town of 5,000 and would soon buy out her only competitor and then bring her into my mom's business as second in charge.

Since I could walk and talk I watched my mom's business grow leaps and bounds and my dad's business (the only liquor store in town) stay the same. Why? What did mom do differently than my father and how was it that every employee that worked for my mom, no matter how long, felt a deep loyalty to her and her business?

I realized one day about six years ago that my mom had figured out the blend of high tech – high touch and become a **master** at it. How high tech were the mid 50's- 60's? Nothing like today. But if there was a new technique, a new system for planting crops in the green house, a new technology for early budding Easter Lilies – mom studied it and utilized it where ever it would improve profits, productivity and her delivery to her customers.

Mom figured out that the integral part of customer service was the customer. If you focused on them, *they* would tell you the services they needed. She also knew that not every person on the staff clicked with every customer, but there were always common courtesies that could be shown.

She started at the very top of her organization – her staff. They received the best care and treatment of any staff I know. Not only did she respect everyone on the same level, but also everyone had one vote when it came to company policy. She showed them respect, treated them with dignity and most importantly valued their growth personally and professionally. They were her greatest resource and would become her greatest investment.

My mother was a fair, equitable, highly respected businesswoman who allowed the technology to **enhance, not replace** her relationship with the customer. She *studied people* not arrangements or dirt. She *grew people* not flowers. What can we all learn from a businessperson of the 50's? Simply this:

1. Focus on the people in your organization and treat them better than your best customer
2. Consider every staff member a "*partner for life*" (*Carl Sewell's term*) – one you will love through the good and the bad times
3. Never stop building your organization by building your people
4. Expect the best from your team – create an image they will be proud to grow into
5. The best way to develop a deep and meaningful relationship is through communication – find out what your staff need, want and what will project them into the future profitably and personally well balanced

6. Create an environment of solution makers rather than challenge identifiers
7. Reward actions you most want to see repeated – with staff and with customers
8. Never stop the two way communication or even take a rest
9. Remember the basics of any good business –**T**rust, **H**onesty, **E**thics, **I**ntegrity, and **R**espect – **THEIR principle** – the true meaning of customer service
10. Take time to evaluate new techniques, new systems, and new technologies, and then ask the questions: *“How will this improve the services I give to our customers? and How will it effect our staff?”*

Building a great organization isn't hard, its building great people that takes time. Leave a legacy wherever you go!

KAZ is an international speaker, author, consultant and coach who focuses on working with people who want to **BE** more and organizations that want to **DO** more. For a free booklist, more articles or a copy of **KAZ's** speaking topics simply visit www.CompetitiveBalance.com and let us know how we can help you.