

I said to my fellow board members, "I'll pay for this program out of my own pocket! I believe in what it can do for us so much!... It really has been priceless!"

Robert Rayo - SVP Haylor, Freyer & Coon

For Robert Rayo, Senior Vice President at Haylor, Freyer & Coon - a top 100 US insurance brokerage head-quartered in Syracuse, Upstate New York, life was pretty good.

12 months ago, Haylor - an ESOP company - had posted its 2nd best ever financial results, and the company had enjoyed healthy profits since its inception in 1928.

However Robert (who runs his own business unit and has company wide responsibility for mentoring and employee development) knew that Haylor could be better still. He knew that there was a journey that Haylor could go on which would take it from being a *good* company (in fact, a very good one) to a *great* company.

Robert knew in his mind that there were three things Haylor needed to do:

1. Close the gap between sales and operations. Principally, Haylor's employees are divided into two core functions. Producers (sales people) and Operations (Customer Service Reps). Like many companies who have sales and operations teams, there is always the opportunity for customers to fall through the middle. Although Haylor's customers received a good experience,

Robert always knew it could be better. There was room for improvement and an opportunity to give customers a great experience.

2. Create a rock solid point of difference. As an insurance brokerage, Haylor is the link between end customers and policy underwriters. It is not the only insurance broker in town, and in many ways, competes with the big direct insurance companies such as State Farm, Travellers, Hannover and Hertford Insurance. Robert knew that customers have a choice where to buy their policies from, and in order for Haylor to *attract new* and *retain existing* customers, it was important customers had a strong 'reason why'. Robert knew that 'reason why' had to be the *service* all employees offered and the *experience* every customer received.

3. Create more engaged and passionate teams. Robert is a voracious reader of business books and clearly understands the power of having an engaged, motivated and collaborative workforce. His only question was how to make all 230 employees at Haylor even more passionate about their work. Many employees have been at Haylor 5, 10, 15 or even 20+ years. With such long standing employees, there is a danger that complacency can creep in. That said, Haylor was a successful company by any standard, but Robert was aware that the teams at Haylor could be more unified, engaged and and passionate. He knew if he could get his teams firing on all cylinders, the experience customers received would be even better and the company would be even more successful.

Finding an Answer

The question for Robert was how to address these three core challenges.



Robert Rayo (SVP) and his fellow Board members wanted Haylor's 230 employees to feel like business owners, rather than just ESOP share holders.

Whilst searching on his iPad for a new business book to read, Robert stumbled across a little known book by UK author Richard Parkes Cordock. The book was called '*People Upgrade*'. Immediately the title struck a chord with Robert, as he realized getting the best from his people was the key to Haylor going from *good* to *great*.

In the book, Robert was introduced to the concept of creating a culture of high performance.

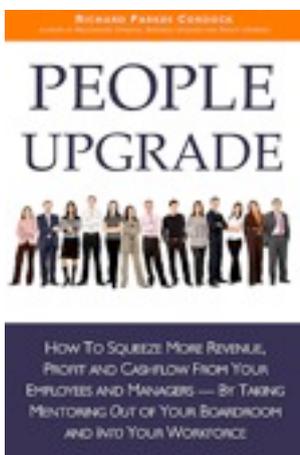
Robert also read *All Employees Are Marketers*, *Business Upgrade* and *Profit Upgrade*, by the same author.

The overarching theme of all these books by Richard Parkes Cordock was the concept of creating a culture of high performance by emotionally connecting employees to the company, and helping them think like business owners, rather than just employees. In the books, Parkes Cordock explains how this can be done by managers mentoring their teams.

More specifically, managers work closely with teams of employees and meet each week to learn more about



Haylor has its head office in Syracuse, Upstate NY with regional offices in surrounding towns. With many sales people on the road, keeping all employees working together as a unified team was a challenge for the company.



People Upgrade by Richard Parkes Cordock showed Robert how he could create a culture of high performance -- without using outside consultants.

their business, their customers, themselves and each other.

To help companies do this, Parkes Cordock had created a mentoring program called Enterprise LEADER. Robert had read about this program in the books he had read, and had seen how Haylor's management could use Enterprise LEADER to bring their company closer together.

After reviewing www.enterpriseleaders.com, Robert had a pretty good idea what the program was and how he could use it to help Haylor go from good to great.

Unlike most development programs which bring external coaches and consultants into a company, Enterprise LEADER was something Haylor could run internally by giving managers the tools they needed to become mentors to their teams.

Robert believed in the program and what it could do for Haylor so much, he initially told his fellow Board members that he would pay for the program out of his own pocket to use in his department. Thankfully the Board saw the same benefits as Robert and approved an enterprise wide implementation... something they now wish they had done five years ago, such has been the impact in Haylor's culture.

Enterprise LEADER

So what is Enterprise LEADER and why does it work?

The best way to think of it is as 'one big' case study which every employee in the company can learn from.

In MBA courses around the world, case study learning is considered the most effective way of learning. Pioneered as a learning approach in Harvard, case studies (and more importantly the conversation around them) give a common framework to enable discussion, self reflection and idea stimulation.

In Enterprise LEADER, employees learn from the story of Amroze Technology, a software company which has fallen on hard times, but is bouncing back.

The case study of Amroze Technology is presented through a series of 20 audio mentoring sessions (each around 15-20 minutes long) which employees can listen to on MP3, Audio CD or watch in PC Flash format.

In the case study, employees examine three core themes of *customers, teams* and *personal leadership* and learn (or are reminded about) the basic fundamentals of business which every business owner knows.

Whilst the audio mentoring sessions help get everybody on the same page, the real change in any company (and in Haylor) comes from the face-to-face mentor sessions, where managers (mentors) bring groups of employees (mentees) together each week to discuss the case study, and apply the learning back to their company.

In Haylor, around 25 different mentor groups were run, led by various VPs, Directors and Managers. Each group had 8 to 10 mentees in it and met around 15 times.

This is where the real team bonding and communication happened, as employees got to talk and interact with



Syracuse (the home of Haylor) is famous for its high performing university basketball team. With the help of Enterprise LEADER, Haylor has been able to create its own teams of passionate, engaged and high performing employees.

each other, using the common bond of Amroze as the platform for the sessions.

To aid discussion, each mentee and mentor also received a workbook with exercises which they completed before the face-to-face meetings. These exercises enabled the employees to share their own thoughts and ideas, and also asked the question 'What changes would you make if you were CEO for a day?' As a result of this simple task, Haylor had over 1,000 new business improvement, revenue growth and cost saving suggestions which employees made.

A New Culture

With the help of Enterprise LEADER and the face-to-face mentor sessions, Haylor has been able to drive change from within, and create a new culture where every employee now *feels, thinks* and *acts* like a business owner. As a result of the program, Haylor has:

1. Closed the gap between the boardroom and employees.
2. Improved communication, idea sharing and collaboration.
3. Created close-knit teams who understand each other more, and work together better and are more accountable to each other.
4. Refocused every employee 100% on the customer.
5. Created higher levels of employee morale, motivation and engagement.
6. Put the right people in the right places and identified new talent.
7. Turned managers into leaders.
8. Closed the divide between sales and operations.
9. Instilled the fundamental rules of business into every employee.
10. Made all employees think about customer retention, up-selling and referrals.

In the words of Rober Rayo, "I think the program is priceless. Really, to be able to get to the level of enthusiasm that we're at is incredible. This was the vehicle to help us get there. It has been an amazing experience for us."

To learn how you can get the same results in your own company, please visit www.EnterpriseLeaders.com.