



Human Resource Management



Leadership



Employee Morale



Product Sales

Lead by Example

Team-Building Through Leadership

By John P. Ribner



Bill Niesciur, Owner of Sundazzlers

Want a happy, motivated and productive staff? Try being a leader instead of a boss and you'll have a team eager to do their best!

Five months ago, salon owner Bill Niesciur was forced to spend more time at his facility, Sundazzlers in Edwardsville, IL, after his former manager sought a career change. This meant reacquainting himself with everything from payroll, purchasing and marketing to hiring personnel, ordering supplies and running employee meetings and much more. At first, he thought his biggest priority was mastering the salon's new software program; but after three months, he realized that leading his staff was the bigger challenge. What he did to form a bond with and earn the trust of his employees is a lesson which all tanning salon owners can and should learn, especially if they desire all the benefits that come with improved morale.

Bill realized the need to be a better leader at his first staff meeting. "I could sense some tension before we even got started," he said. "As I began to address them, I quickly realized that I needed to dump the 'I/me' style of talk and began to present myself as a part of their team. Seeing everything they did for the salon each day made me appreciate them a lot more than when I didn't have as much involvement, so changing the way I related to the staff wasn't really that difficult." While Bill admits that there

might have been some tension remaining after the meeting, he recognized that he had made an important step toward separating himself from his former "boss" mentality and becoming a leader his team could respect.

After talking the talk at the employee meeting, Bill knew it was time to start walking the walk. "The best way to lead is by example," he said, "and I set out to do that. One of the ways I show them my dedication is by coming in at 6:30 each morning, two hours before we open, and taking care of everything I can to help create an easy transition for the morning staff." Bill also designed a series of free-tan cards which he personally passed out around town, and the brutal Midwestern winter had him shoveling the sidewalk of the salon every morning. "I believe that seeing

me do all this has helped earn my staff's respect," he said, "and that's important to me."

Since Bill wanted his staff to see him as more than just "the guy who signs the checks," he knew he needed to see them as more than just the young ladies who work for him. "I continue to make a huge effort to get to know each of my staff on a more personal basis," he said, "and it's been well worth the effort. They've enjoyed meeting with me to discuss various strategies to help them sell more products and memberships to increase their commissions and I've witnessed an increase in their overall performance as well as their sales numbers!" By investing in his employees, Bill believes every member of his team is giving 110 percent. ■

Quick Tips

- Get back in there. The first step to being a good leader is spending more time on the frontlines of your business.
- Get over yourself. If you want to get the best from your staff, think less "I/me" and more "we/us" ... and mean it. Be a part of the team you're leading.
- Do it! Employees will follow the example you set, so don't be afraid to get in there and get your hands dirty.
- Get to know them. Your employees are people too, so it helps to get to know them on a deeper level. It will make them feel more connected and vested in your business.
- Involve them. No one knows the "frontline" of your business better than those who are on it. Talk to your staff and encourage them to share their ideas for improving the business. You might be surprised!