**Goldsmith Speech [EZ Speech No. 16343]**

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Remarks by Mr. Larry Goldsmith to the sales department of Hendrick Toyota, Charleston, S.C.

[**note:** make sure all the attendees have something to write with and to write on, as they’ll be asked to submit suggestions. ALSO, PRINT UP A SET OF “BIG IDEAS” CARDS FOR HANDING OUT TO THE ATTEND-EES AT THE END OF THE MEETING.]

good morning, ladies and gentlemen. i know you’re all probably wondering why i called this meeting.

yes . . . I know you’ve all got a ton of paperwork to do, calls to line up, emails to write, spec sheets to study, deliveries to get ready, and so on. and yes . . . i under-stand why you might honestly feel that you’ve got *way* more productive things to do with your time than listening to some manager blabbing on and on about his and that or whatever.

well . . . i promise to make this meeting well worth your time. what i hope to do in this and A FEW future sessions is to explore WITH YOU all the possible ways and means IN which we could together improve the operation OF hendrick toyota, significantly boost ITS profitability, and make this dealership ***the*** most desirable place of employment for gearheads and car salesmen through-out the greater charleston region. ALL THREE OF THESE GOALS SHOULD BE VITALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU.

I DON’T HAVE TO TELL YOU that, when operational flaws or glitches are discovered ANYWHERE IN A DEALERSHIP and AREN’T FIXED RIGHT AWAY, *everybody* suffers, *everybody’s* job gets tougher, *everybody* loses money. CONVERSELY, when THE dealership’s profitS goe up, it means inevitably that your commissions are going up, too. and when we’ve together transformed hendrick toyota into AN employee paradise, it’ll be a joy and pleasure for all OF us to come to work each day.

now, there are a lot of SPECIFIC topics BURIED WITHIN what i’ve just said, and my plan is to devote each of our next few meetings to one of these topics and zero in on it intensively. There might be some specific training topics, like customer satisfaction, or successful prospecting, or the keys to conquest selling. or they might be problem-solving sessions, where we’ll focus in on a specific policy or procedural issue THAT the sales team’s GRAPPLING with at the moment. or we might devote one or two meetings just to brain-storming about the future. in any case, I’M AIMING to make these meetings at the very least interesting, and, at best, useful and usable to you in HELPING YOU DO your jobs.

SO IN THAT SPIRIT, I’D LIKE TO DEVOTE REST OF THIS MORNING’S MAIDEN SESSION TO THE CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT CONCEPT OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, NOT JUST AS A COPORATE POLICY, BUT AS AN OVERALL CORPORATE MINDSET, AS WELL.

NOW, IT’S BEEN TRUE OF BUSINESS SINCE THE FIRST CAVEMEN SWAPPED SPEARS FOR HIDES THAT — *NOTHING GOOD REMAINS GOOD UNLESS* *IT’S CONSTANTLY BEING IMPROVED!*

LET ME REPEAT THAT:

*NOTHING GOOD REMAINS GOOD UNLESS* *IT’S CONSTANTLY BEING IMPROVED!*

WHY?

BECAUSE THINGS CHANGE. TECHNOLOGY CHANGES. THE COMPETITION CHANGES. NEW PRODUCTS ARE CONSTANTLY REPLACING OLDER ONES — IN OUR BUSINESS, EVERY YEAR! REGULATIONS CHANGE, THE WORKFORCE CHANGES, LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS CHANGE, AND SO ON. POLICY AND PROCEDURES THAT WORKED FINE 10 YEARS AGO OR EVEN 5 YEARS AGO, MAY NOT BE WORKING QUITE SO WELL TODAY. BUSINESS MODELS THAT WERE ONCE “STATE OF THE ART” AT THE DAWN OF THIS CENTURY ARE EVEN NOW DEAD OR DYING. INDEED, AS THE PHILOSOPHER ONCE SAID, THE ONLY CONSTANT IN THE UNIVERSE IS CHANGE ITSELF. AND FOR ANY BUSINESS THAT DOESN’T KEEP UP WITH THE EVER-CHANGING PROFILE OF ITS MARKETPLACE, CHANGE CAN BE A KILLER.

THAT’S WHY I THINK WE MUST, ACROSS THE BOARD, IN EVERY DEPARTMENT HERE, COMMIT OURSELVES CONSCIOUSLY AND *CONSCIENTIOUSLY* TO THE PRACTICE AND A MINDSET OF CONTINUOUS-IMPROVEMENT. AND WHAT IS A CONTINUOUS-IMPROVEMENT MINDSET? IT’S A MINDSET ANIMATED BY A REVOLUTIONAY NEW CORPORATE ATTITUDE THAT SAYS: *IF IT AIN’T BROKE . . . FIX IT ANYWAY!*

THAT’S RIGHT: *IF IT AIN’T BROKE, FIX IT ANYWAY!*

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT LOOKING FOR PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BECOME PROBLEMS. IT’S KEEPING OUR INDIVIDUAL JOB SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE UP TO SNUFF THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION. IT’S BEING INTIMATELY AWARE OF WHAT OUR COMPETITORS ARE DOING, AND FIGURING OUT HOW WE MIGHT LEARN FROM THEM. AND IT’S LEARNING FROM OUR OWN MISTAKES, AND FIGURING OUT HOW NOT TO MAKE *THOSE* BLOOPERS AGAIN.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX. IT’S NOT BEING SATISFIED WITH “HOW IT’S ALWAYS BEEN DONE.” IT’S A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE A CALCULATED RISK, KNOWING THAT — WHATEVER THE OUTCOME — THE ENTERPRISE WILL BENEFIT.

I THINK IT’D BE A HUGE BENEFIT TO HENRICK TOYOTA IF THE COMPANY COULD IMMEDIATELY GET YOUR HONEST, CANDID, AND ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK ON TWO QUESTIONS RELATING TO CONTINUOUS improvement HERE AT HENDRICK TOYOTA. YOU ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO WRITE ON . . . YES? . . . GOOD. NOW, IN ANY ORDER YOU CHOOSE AND IN ANY WORDS YOU CHOOSE, PLEASE WRITE DOWN, NUMBER ONE: WHAT’S THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING THIS DEALERSHIP COULD DO TO IMPROVE ITS OPERATIONS OVERALL. AND NUMBER TWO: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT YOU’D LIKE TO SEE MADE SPECIFI-CALLY IN THE SALES DEPARTMENT. AND YOU DON’T HAVE TO SIGN YOUR SUGGESTIONS. I UNDERSTAND THAT MOST SUGGES-TIONS FOR THE FUTURE CARRY AN IMPLIED CRITICISM OF THE PAST, SO IT MIGHT BE MORE COMFORTABLE FOR YOU TO KEEP YOUR SUGGESTIONS ANONYMOUS FOR THE TIME BEING.

[as you’re collecting their sheets, HAND OUT A SET OF “BIG IDEAS” CARDS TO EACH ATTENDEE.] so i’m not exactly sure when the “larry goldsmith continuous-improvement forum” will meet NEXT, but it won’t be long; for one thing, i’d like to have a chance to review your sug-gestions HERE before structuring THAT next meeting. but until then, i truly hope you’ll ALL feel free to share whatever ideas for continuous improvement occur to you, AT ANY TIME AND by whatever medium you choose — email, anonymous voicemail, personal meeting, carrier pidgeon, doesn’t matter! my office door and my mind are always open.

thanks for coming, and in the words of don ameche at the end of that wonderful film, *trading places*: “get out there and sell . . . sell . . . ***sell!”***

have a great day!

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