

THE FIRING SQUAD

- by Lloyd Merritt Smigel

Firing someone or letting them go or alleviating them from their duties or canning someone usually is a difficult thing for me to do.

Thirty years and it's still difficult. I do know some people who actually enjoy it. To me, that's sad.

After all, when we hire someone we go through an interviewing process where we both feel that we have a match - not just a job offer, but often a career offer. Then it doesn't work out. It's usually THEIR fault but not as often as you think.

Many of us do not really have a formal training program for these people (they ride with Bob for a week or two) and sometimes we don't follow through with the promises or insinuations that we led this person to believe.

In my opinion, it's generally a 50-50 deal. We are not perfect nor are they.

If we can make it work where it is profitable to BOTH of us - we both win.

If we squeeze our employees too much, usually quality loses out. They can be VERY profitable by servicing 50 accounts a day. But we all know what the results would be.

It's a two way street and it's difficult to deal with so many of those differences that we all have. Our value systems are different, our behaviors are different, we are not the same in intelligence, gender differences, cultural differences, etc.

Then we are expected to take all of those differences and work with them.

It's not easy.

And, if it doesn't work out - then what? Who's to blame? What can we do about it?

Overall, (for the most part) companies that have the least amount of turnover - show the most profit and grow the fastest.

Could you imagine having ONE year of zero turnovers? What could you do that year? Where would you spend your time?

Some owners/managers tell me that it is a continual 'weeding' process. If you do not ever use a pre-emergence agent on your lawn - you will do more weeding than a neighbor who does use pre-emergence.

Taking care of your present employees and working out problems quickly and offsetting problems BEFORE they occur cuts the weeding down.

We do not live in a perfect world. I understand that. But we can do things to make our own life's and the lives of our employees much better.

We have to learn to nurture our employees and have the proper training and care to keep them around. Employee Assistant Programs (EAP) can be very helpful as well as mentoring programs; ongoing training programs, Sexual Harassment programs and many other employee ongoing informational programs can be very valuable.

The least amount of money that I ever heard it cost for an employee to leave us was \$9,000.00.

That would include such things as accounts that cancel ("Not another tech this month.") training someone else which puts you in a position to pay two people to do one job, etc. etc.

What we need to do is to become better at hiring and maintaining our employees and put your firing squad on vacation for a while so that you can go on vacation without wondering whether or not your place will be there when you get back.

After all, unless you work alone - you are probably as dependent upon YOUR employees as my partner and I are.

When we all work together - there's lower turnover and Life is Good.