**Business Excellence – June 2013**

What does Excellence mean to you?

**It might be easy to say but difficult to achieve without a focused effort.** There are differing opinions, from *we need it* through to *waste of time*.

**Who is right?** Both!! As they are talking from *their own* opinion, but is our opinion the one we should focus on? Who actually pays for our services or products, of course it is our customers. So we must qualify our opinion with the paying customer’s input.

**Do we know the customer’s opinion?** Often people tell me what they think the customer’s opinion is, I ask to see the data and then it gets interesting….

Do you recognize any of these….

***“I think”***based on very little solid data and is often a variation of their own opinion.

***“Data says this”*** when you go through the data it may say a number of things but only the “correct answer” data is highlighted.

***“Blinkered”*** like “data say this” with the extra factor of a product or service theme.

***“Best before”*** feedback is about a different period of service, gives little or no input to the needs of today.

***“Light weight”*** the data is just too vague to be useful to give any real customer opinion.

***“Constricted”*** in the effort to get answers the customers are given limited options in their feedback, with important parts omitted.

**The aim is to know the customer opinion**, so if your customer data fits any of the above then more must be done. So what can we do, as getting quality customer information is expensive and time consuming?

**Ask the Frontline staff**. If you have ever watched the TV program “Undercover Boss” or a variant, where a CEO/owner takes on a frontline role without the employees knowing who they are, it always shows that the frontline people know what customers want or need but nobody seems listen to them. They are talking to customer every day, in fact often it is their job, they hear and deal with all sort of enquiries and issues, but there is often a lack of process to gather this first hand knowledge!!

**So what can we do?**

A simple format to get this customer data, which I call the

**3-2-1 Approach** will get things moving by getting people involved.

**The Principle is 3-2-1…**

**3 – Team**

Teams of 3 staff from one area get together to discuss what they know, share and learn. They follow a standard process with walks them through the steps. One of the team should have attended a short training session so they know what to do and what is expected.

**2 – Time**

Up to 2 hours to develop the issues, problems, concerns and priorities that they understand from their customer connections. Following a standard stepped process, the team list the inputs they have, refining and simplifying as they go until they have a top 3.

**1 – Topic**

Prioritise 1 topic from each of the team to bring forward to the next level. The process filters the initial team inputs to the ones that are most important to the customer using a scoring system to bring forward the key topics.

**By repeating this then a very wide and deep organizational input can be quickly brought together.** As each level priorities to 3 topic inputs, it ensures that there is no overload and there is clarity. The process ensures that every voice is heard and where there are common topics then it will be highlighted clearly.

**This 3-2-1 process** can be easily adapted for other business situations where we need to bring together a wide group of data and distil it into a concise set of focused pieces of information. You can make some little changes to the process above, like making the team larger (but never more than 7 or it will naturally break into smaller groups again) or adjust the timing.

**If you want to know more** on this, then send me an email and I'll send you further details on each step so you can implement it yourself. Let me know how this or similar processes have worked for you, you can post directly on the blog: <http://blog.mcknightgracie.com>

**Matthew Gracie**

McKnight Gracie Management Consultants

enquiry@mcknightgracie.com

<http://www.mcknightgracie.com>



This eZine is a monthly publication of McKnight Gracie Management Consultants and we welcome your feedback

feedback@mcknightgracie.com

Please share this email with your friends and spread the message about Excellence!

**Further Info….**

 Download our Business Excellence iBooks (currently free)



**If you want to change your email address or unsubscribe, please don't email.** Click the link at the very bottom. Only takes a second or two to leave or to make changes. Thanks!

**PRIVACY and SPAM POLICY:** We never rent, trade or sell our email list to anyone for any reason whatsoever. You'll never get an unsolicited email from a stranger as a result of joining this eZine list.

**TO SUBSCRIBE FREE:** <http://www.mcknightgracie.com/MailingList.html>

Just put in your email address and then confirm the address in the check email so we can eliminate spam. Takes about 10 seconds. And you'll also get a link to the Business Excellence book.

**Want to unsubscribe to the Business Excellence eZine or change your email?**

**No problem.** See the link at the bottom? Click on that and it will take you to a web page where you can unsubscribe.

<http://www.mcknightgracie.com/MailingList.html>