

Get the right people out and about

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Are you getting the right feedback about your product or service? Do you truly know what it is about your product or service that customers or end users like or don't like? Are you sharing your feedback with the appropriate people who can take the necessary action to fix or improve your product or service?

Many businesses and services of all kinds and sizes lose money or fail because the right information wasn't obtained and understood by the right people at the right time.

In his book, *Authentic Leadership*, Bill George, former CEO of Medtronic, a medical device company, talks about how he routinely watched medical operations to get an idea of how Medtronic equipment performed. When he saw a Medtronic catheter fall apart

during one operation, he had to duck when the physician threw it at him in disgust. Afterwards, he found out that a sales rep for this device had repeatedly reported defects to company managers and no one acted on that feedback. In fact, the sales rep also tried to reach out to company engineers to share the information but those engineers were too far removed from the customers to really care or act.

As you can imagine, Bill George was extremely disappointed knowing that no one was listening to feedback from sales people. (After all, anyone involved with sales knows how often customers or clients complain directly to them about a product or service's quality.)

Realizing this, Bill George decided to send his engineers out to the field so they could see first-hand how the product worked in the hands of its users. After

much observation, they became more engaged in making progress on product development. Many of the engineers, who thought they knew best on how to make the catheter an effective product, realized how out of touch they were on industry issues and obstacles. As a result of their newfound knowledge and awareness, Medtronic's catheters were redesigned to be a much better product.

Whether you run a mom-and-pop store or a large corporate empire, it is vital to know how effective your product or service is as well as whether it achieves its desired level of customer satisfaction. By getting the right people out and about, where the rubber meets the road, you can certainly learn this valuable information. And always welcome unsolicited feedback with open arms!

~ The End ~