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How Now, The Buzz???

I've just finished the annual reviews for my management team. An extraordinary group. I glowed as we talked. My lieutenants. My friends. They had "it"---The Buzz. A passion for the business. An enthusiasm for the club. A joy in living. The numbers proved it, member participation proved it, the wait list proved it, their smiles proved it. They had it---The Buzz.

The Buzz. We all know people with The Buzz---they're glowing each day, yowling and howling as they wander through the clubhouse, slapping busboy on the back and high five'ing member children. When they talk about reupholstering bridge chairs they get excited. When they explain the intricacies of the balance sheet to the finance committee they get excited. They give others the glow, make them feel special, help them become larger than they might otherwise be. Managers and supervisors with The Buzz talk about staying and not going, filled to overflowing with a passion for life, family, members, staff, facility, the universe. You know The Buzz 'cause you've seen The Buzz. The Buzz is good for business.

Biking home, still feeling the warmth, I felt a sudden chill and a sense of foreboding. My psyche spun out of control, fear replacing joy. How can I keep the Buzz Quotient high for my management team? How can I prevent their skid into ennui and boredom in the years ahead? How can I keep the "same old, same old" from getting old? How do I cultivate The Buzz?

How now, The Buzz?

The next evening the Review and Compensation Committee sat me down for their annual review. The talk was wide ranging and amusing, serious and light hearted, focused on the past yet looking to the future. Half-way through the evening, the Vice-President gave me a look and asked a question that made me sit up and wonder. "You've been here twenty three years, you've got The Buzz, given The Buzz, preached The Buzz. We'd like you here, Buzzed, for another decade or two. However---you're almost fifty-five, been here twenty-three years and we're afraid that you'll retire on the job, snoozing each afternoon, yapping about past victories, sucking The Buzz from everyone you meet. We need to keep your Buzz Quotient high. Can we do it? Can you do it? When should you exit?" Hmmm.

How now, The Buzz?

The Principles of Buzz

Searching for The Buzz? Want to cultivate The Buzz?

Best you remember The Principles of Buzz.

Find The Buzz, Hire The Buzz: Some places, some people, some boards already have The Buzz. Best go with a proven product, an established track record, where the proof is in the pudding. Go where you see The Buzz. Hire those with The Buzz. Make sure that there's Buzz in the genes.

Make Sure The Buzzed are "Aligned": Managers, lieutenants and clubs all have defining cultures. Values that dramatize "who they are." A men's golf club. A broad spectrum family club. A formal "suit personality." An aloha shirt attitude. Make sure that the personal culture mates with the club culture. Square pegs don't fit round holes.

Buzz Goes Where Buzz is Expected: Keeping people buzzed is easy in a community with high Buzz expectations, one that demands enthusiasm, passion, ideas and excitement. A "back of the house low key manager" isn't their thing. Buzz goes where Buzz is expected.

Give Standing Ovarions: The Buzz needs to be loved. Let the world know when The Buzzed do good. Show them the love and recognize The Buzz.

Surround Them with The Buzzed: Make sure that the people assembled around The Buzzed are themselves buzzed. The cynical, the negative and the boring diminish The Buzz. Remove the Un-Buzzed with prejudice.

Get Them Out of the Club and Out of the Club Business: The Buzz comes from many sources. Too much club and The Buzz evaporates. Force The Buzzed to escape their routine and recharge their batteries. Sky dive. Surf. Kayak. Teach. Write. Coach soccer. Run the P.T.A. Force them to find a balance between work, play, community and family.

Keep the Projects Flowing: New projects create challenges and challenges stimulate. Give them "project ownership" and the resources to succeed. Those without begin to unwind, lose their edge, give up The Buzz. "I've done everything that can be done" is red flag for the Un-Buzzed and a signal that they're about to exit.

Create a Learning Environment: The Buzzed want to learn from experience, to suck in the "how" and the "why." Facilitate learning on site and off ---seminars, conferences, debriefs and upbriefs and lots of substantive conversation with people of substance.

Say “Yes” to Their Wildest Ideas: People with The Buzz want to make things happen. Let the ideas flow. Become a “Yes Mamma.” Give them some rope. Let them experiment. Salute them for doing so.

Embrace them for Having Failed: Those who try will often fail. Wild ideas will crash and burn. Laugh with them at their failures, help them lick their wounds, salute them for having tried.

Keep Them In Touch with Modernity: People change. Society changes. The Buzzed stay buzzed by pursuing alignment with the world around them. Time for women on the board. Time for a web site. Time for contemporary art in the living room. Allow them to bring what’s “out there” into “here.”

Reward The Buzz: The Buzz goes where The Buzz is appreciated. Pay well.

Give “Stuff” that Acknowledges The Difference: The Buzz goes where its differences are rewarded. “We know who you are and want to give you something special.” Maybe it’s vacation time. Maybe it’s culinary competitions. Maybe it’s doing workshops for youth directors. Maybe it’s unlimited off-hours access to the gym or golf course. Keeping good people and keeping them Buzzed has to do with affirming their personal “buzz factors” and configuring stuff---benefits---uniquely configured to the Buzzed.

Finding, keeping, amplifying The Buzz. Sounds easy? It isn’t.

The Buzz Investment

Every board, every manager, wants to locate and then cultivate The Buzz. The numbers prove it.

The headhunters are looking for it. The Buzz commands top dollar. Lots of jobs for The Buzzed. Big commissions for the head hunters. Who’s got The Buzz? Where are The Buzzed? Bring us The Buzzed!

Boards want The Buzz ‘cause the members want The Buzz. The Buzzed make “doing board” fun. The Buzz is good for business. Waiting lists grow, dining rooms fill, dues go up. Boards will pay top dollars for quality Buzz. Bring us The Buzzed!

Boards and Managers are selfish. They want to keep The Buzzed “Buzzed” and on the job for thirty years. Chaining them with The Buzz. Bring us The Buzzed!

And for those of us who have moved into their mid fifties, have caught the first sniff of eternity, have realized with a start that there are fewer years left than already lived, The Buzz moves to “priority one.” Live and live well. Buzzed. On the job, at home, on the

road, keeping the Buzz Quotient high. Buzzed until The Great Goodbye gives us that farewell kiss.

And enjoy the journey-----

