

## A DIFFERENT BOTTOM LINE (Part II)

How well are you doing at developing your people? Besides looking at the initiatives our people are starting and new ideas they're generating, we also want to see in a more general sense whether our people are growing.

**Pushing and Pulling.** Do you feel like you're pulling your people along as your company grows? Or, are they pushing you forward? If you feel like you're constantly having to reach back over your shoulder and pull your people along as your company grows, like you're dragging a heavy object along the ground, maybe you're not giving them growth opportunities. Or, maybe you've got the wrong people on board.

Too many times we subconsciously sabotage ourselves by hiring marginal employees who won't threaten us by pushing us out of our comfort zones. We tell ourselves, "Anybody who's any good is already working. All that's left is the bottom of the barrel." But the reality is that too often we're simply not willing to make the changes in ourselves or in our companies to attract the high quality people who will drive our companies forward. It's easier to complain about not being able to find good people, or to continue playing unproductive cat-and-mouse games with our non-performing people.

**Measuring the Bottom Line.** I agree with Larry's comment, "*You won't remember when you retire what you did in the first quarter or the third.*" Now, before you accuse me of getting soft in my old age, please hear me out on this one. I interpret his comment as meaning it's easy to place an overemphasis on the short-term financial performance of your company. If you focus on your financial performance at the expense of your people, it won't work out long term. After all, it's your people who produce your financial performance. You cannot sustain great financial performance and short-

change your people at the same time.

As I've stated many times before, your company will grow at the rate your people grow. And your people are a reflection of you. So, tell me how much your people have grown from year to year, and you'll know how effective you've been as a leader.

Recently one of my clients had their top executive announce he would be leaving their organization later this year. It turns out he's going to follow through on his life-long dream of opening his own restaurant. He stated that because of the business and leadership skills he had acquired at my client's company he felt confident to set out on his own. It's hard to congratulate someone for a job well done when they're losing a key executive and a close friend. At the same time I wanted to recognize my client's achievement in one of his key responsibilities as the leader of his organization...developing his people.

Larry's right. At the end of your career you won't remember how much money you made from one year to the next. But you will remember the impact you had on people's careers—good and bad—when you run into them at the grocery store, at the local Wal-Mart, or at their restaurant. You'll know how you did as a leader when you read about their accomplishments in your local newspaper. And when you watch them pass along your leadership lessons to the people they're now leading.