



tips we can learn from Santa to enhance our management skills



Santa has a lot of responsibility on his shoulders during the Christmas Season. But every year, he seems to run a flawless mission to deliver millions of toys to children all around the world on one magical night. What is his secret to success? The secret is out, and it is not magic. It's management! Santa is a Holiday Season Management Guru. Here is a list of 8 things we can learn from his masterful management of the Christmas process.

1 Santa makes a list and checks it twice

Santa is very organized and knows the importance of reviewing data to ensure accuracy. Wow, if something on that list was wrong and Santa didn't catch it, a nice little boy might have ended up with coal in his stocking. Unacceptable!

This management skill can teach us a lot about compiling and reviewing data. Total quality management reports are useful to gauge volume trends and forecast future trends. However, when these reports show inaccuracies, or are not used to help us manage our operation, it can cause problems. When compiling data, be sure that the data is accurate and fluctuations in production can be explained or corrected.

2 Santa speaks many languages

Remember in the movie Miracle on 34th street when Santa spoke Dutch to that little girl? How could Santa communicate with her if he just knew English? Santa knows how important speaking many languages is to the success of his business.

Managers must also learn to speak many languages. This doesn't mean that every manager must quickly learn French or Japanese, although if you do international business, it may not be a bad idea. Managers must speak many business languages such as the HR language, the IT language, or the Executive language, each pertaining to the audience or message. If a manager must deal with a human resources related issue, speaking the HR language can help resolve the issue in a compliant way. If there is a technical issue that must be reviewed with the IT department, speaking the IT lingo help get the message across. Try to get your Chief Financial Officer to approve a purchase of an expensive piece of equipment without talking about the return on the investment. When a manager communicates within all these sectors of business, speaking the right language is the key to success.

3 Santa oversees production of toys

Santa knows that being involved with production can boost employee morale and build leadership skills. If there are too many toy trains being build and not enough dolls, some little girls may not be happy with a substitute toy because Santa ran out of dolls. With Santa overseeing the production, this does not happen.

By being involved with employees and their work, managers can be better engaged in the workforce to build relationships and resolve conflicts. Showing employees that you can roll up your sleeves is a motivating factor for front line employees. It also gives managers the ability to get involved when conflicts arise and be better able to establish leadership qualities.

4 Santa trains new recruit reindeer and elves on their duties and responsibilities

Santa knows the importance of training and development and being involved in the process. New elves are trained on the proper use of tools and cross trained on how to make each toy order. Rookie reindeer are trained on proper flight methods and new flight patterns. Do the new recruit reindeer know the proper flight patterns? They'd better, because we all know our GPS systems can sometimes be wrong.

Training and development is a proven method to ensure employees understand their role and build the necessary job skills to succeed. Managers must get involved in the training and development process to gauge employee progress and give proper coaching and guidance. Cross training employees is also a value to managers that can lead to greater teamwork and employee empowerment. Succession planning is also an important key to the advancement of personnel for future positions.

5 Santa knows all his customers by first name

Santa always asks for a name when a child sits on his lap for the first time. Santa may have to ask the first time, but you better believe that when he compiles that list, he knows exactly who Tommy is and what he wants.

Knowing your customers helps build their loyalty to your product, service and organization. Addressing them by first name and understanding what their needs and expectations are give the impression that they are a unique and

valued customer. By knowing who our customers are and what they like and need, we can provide a personal touch to our service.

6 Santa knows when to ask for help

We all know the story about what happened that one foggy Christmas Eve. Santa knew he had a difficult challenge to navigate his team of reindeer through the dense fog. So he asked an under-appreciated, young Rudolph for help in guiding his team during the Christmas Eve flight.

Being accountable for everyone and everything has its challenges. No one should have to face those challenges alone. Great managers know when to delegate and when to pull the team together to complete major projects. As Santa did with Rudolph, asking for help also means utilizing employee strengths to complement the team. By placing employees in positions to succeed with the skills they have, everyone feels a sense of value and pride for what they bring to the team.

7 Santa completes his mission on time, every time

Santa completes his world tour every Christmas with every child knowing there are presents waiting for them under the tree when they wake up. Imagine if a child woke up Christmas morning with a message that Santa is running a bit late and will arrive by the afternoon. Kind of ruins the Christmas morning feeling, doesn't it?

Meeting deadlines shows a level of commitment and responsibility, and it will keep your customers satisfied knowing that commitment will stand the test of time. Deadlines mean a lot to

the customer. And while some deadlines may seem unreasonable, we need to understand how missing those deadlines can affect the customer experience. Meeting deadlines keeps our customers confident in our ability to service them, and keeps their customer experience a positive one.

8 Santa remains positive and cheerful at all times

Have you ever seen a grumpy Santa? Of course not. Imagine the stress of manufacturing millions of toys, preparing a naughty/nice list and distributing those toys around the world all in one night. Santa knows that a positive image and a positive attitude, even in the face of a heavy workload, is the number one key to success.

Positive energy is contagious. It also sets the right image for ourselves, our employees and our organization. If Santa can remain positive and cheerful through all his responsibilities, you can certainly find motivation to keep a positive attitude through your work day, no matter what your work load is.

By incorporating these 8 characteristics into our management skills, we can build a team of highly motivated employees driven to produce and provide the best quality products and services to our customers. This Holiday Season, and all year 'round, remember to manage like Santa.



May you and your family enjoy peace and happiness throughout the Season



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With additional insight provided by...
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