



R-E-S-P-E-C-T

I've decided that I lead an insular life. The other day I had to head out to a, shall we say less well-endowed socio-economic area to collect some goods I had ordered.

Now I would like to think that I have been exposed to nearly every stratum of society over the years. But when not exposed regularly, sometimes when confronted with a difficult situation I admit it... I just occasionally might squirm... a little. Let me explain.

While I don't like it, I'm OK with the guys that wash your window then ask for cash. I enjoy chatting to some of the guys who sell the big issue magazine. They provide an insight on life that keeps you well grounded.

But doing this collection the other week I was surprised to see a group of guys just hanging out in an industrial estate, exuding the "don't mess with us/we own this place" vibe.

I've seen this sort of group before. Once in the US and once when I took a wrong turn in the wrong part of Paris (just before some race riots a few years ago).

The number one lesson I was taught when faced with a group which seems intent on rearranging your anatomy was: (a) don't show fear (b) don't back down unless you are at fault (c) don't fight it out if you can't win and (d) show some respect to these guys – after all, typically that is missing...

Respect.

There are deep problems that have been growing for a long time, a decline in responsibility, a rise in selfishness and a growing sense of individual rights above everything else

The British Prime Minister, David Cameron summarized it well following riots in London in 2011: "There are deep problems in our society that have been growing for a long time: a decline in responsibility, a rise in selfishness, a growing sense that

individual rights come before anything else."

In my (overly) simplistic view I summarize what was being said as "there is a fundamental lack of respect". Respect for yourself, respect for others and respect for property.

So when faced with a confronting situation the other day, I chose to provide respect. They had a right to congregate, a right to be heard, and it was on this basis that I engaged and chatted with them. We talked about the area, where I was going, if there were jobs around and about cars.

Some may call me crazy, but I felt that by engaging and showing these guys the same respect as I would anybody else, I would get out alive without having body parts handed to me.

The situation made me stop and think more about employee engagement. What is it (really) that our staff want?

Last month, we looked at employee engagement surveys as a way of "taking the temperature" in your office. It is

quite common that these sorts of surveys to throw up some unexpected (and sometimes challenging) results.

Employees often say what they *really* think under the cloak of anonymity. It can be quite confronting when (what you thought were) loyal staff give you feedback you would rather not hear.

Remember, when you decided to complete an employee engagement survey you asked for it. You asked them to tell you what they think, and why. You asked them to critique things which you may hold dear.

How you respond to this situation is what makes the difference between a boss who is disengaged (lacking in respect for their workforce) and a boss who deliberately goes out of their way to respect the opinions of the team, and to do something about it.

You have to be emotionally detached from the business and clinical in your approach when dealing with feedback from engagement surveys.

Why? Your staff will study you and your responses to see not only what you do, but how you do it. This applies to positive

and negative feedback.

So, we suggest following a five stage process to deal with engagement survey findings:

1. **Divorce yourself** emotionally from the results (good and bad).

... don't back down... don't show fear... don't take on fights you can't/don't need to win and show some respect

2. **Take a step back and analyze why.** Why do you staff feel positive or negative about the business? Are you doing something different which is impacting their attitude towards you?
3. Ask yourself **what messages are they trying to send?** Look behind the headlines to what's driving criticism or praise
4. Now **what exactly are you going to do about it?** Are you going to change? Does it make good business sense to do so?
5. **How are you going to share the results?** What are you going to tell them and how?

Surveys don't answer all your problems. They are designed to provide you insights that could help you modify behaviors, business direction and your personal level of engagement with your employees.

In some cases, the results might align with your gut feeling. In other instates you will be genuinely shocked at the results. Your challenge is to do something constructive with the information.

Remember, your staff may not always be right. They don't always know the big picture and they may not be aware of some of rationale behind your decisions.

What and how much you share with them is up to you, but in the words of the soul diva, Aretha Franklyn you might need to give a little...

What you want:
 (Ooh) Baby, I got.
 (Ooh) What you need
 (Ooh) Do you know I've got it
 (Ooh) All I'm askin'
 (Ooh) Is for a little respect hey baby...(Just a little bit)
R E S P E C T (find out what it means to me)...