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THE SBRA COMMUNITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION (WHAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?)



By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association

Many thousands of years ago two young men were standing in a field arguing about a gift they had just given and which one was the best. Because they had never been taught the art of conflict resolution the seemingly small disagreement resulted in one brother killing the other and thus settling the dispute. This might seem like an extreme way of proving one's point but in reality, hasn't the need to win one's opinion been the root of arguments, fights, separation, loss of jobs and personal property, rioting, destruction, imprisonment, racism, serious injury, civil disobedience, resurrections, revolutions, regional and world wars and worse yet, the loss of countless lives.

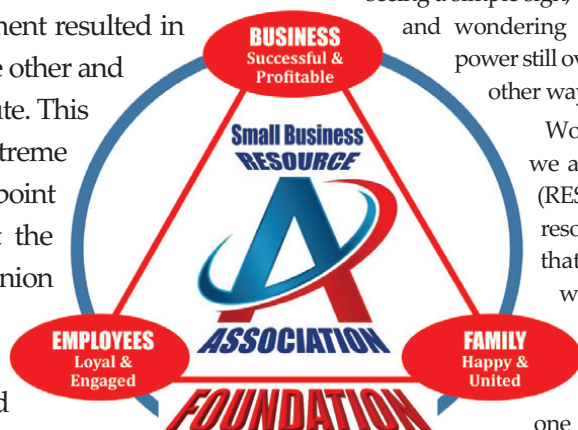
Last week, as I was driving home from work and listening to the news, I passed a local printing shop in Exeter that had a sign in front of the building that read "When the Power of Love overcomes the Love of Power the World will find Peace". I actually stopped my car, backed up, and read the sign again as I did not want to forget what I had just seen. At the same time as my radio was speaking about all sorts of horrific events taking place across this country and around the world, I was seeing a simple sign, with such a simple message, and wondering why after all these years, power still overcomes love rather than the other way around.

Wouldn't it be so much better if we all exercised a form of love, (RESPECT), and took the time to resolve our differences in a way that both parties walked away with an understanding of the others feelings and a mutual agreement that would allow them both to respect one another. Think about how many friendships and family relationships might be healed, how political parties could work together in the best interest of our nation, how employers and employees could work together to produce a better product and service, how different ways of thinking could be respected and not rejected,

how kindness and understanding would replace hatred and bigotry. Sound like a fairytale, it's not. We just have to want it and then work hard at it. Here are a few strategies provided by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann on how people often deal with conflict.

- 1. Avoiding** — When people just ignore or withdraw from the conflict. They choose this method when the discomfort of the confrontation exceeds the potential reward of the resolution. When conflict is avoided, nothing is resolved and the conflict will most likely resurface worse than before.
- 2. Competing** — Often used by people who go into a conflict planning to win. They are usually very assertive and not cooperative. The premise is that one will win and everyone else will lose. This method does not allow for different perspectives nor a well-informed total picture. Competing may very well work in sports and war but it's rarely a good strategy for group problem solving.
- 3. Accommodating** — A strategy where one party gives into the wishes or demands of another. They are both being cooperative but not assertive. This may appear to be a gracious way to give in, but, like avoidance, it can result in unresolved issues. It can also lead to one party developing more assertive skills and thus dominating the discussion leading to a new level of conflict.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION (WHAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?)

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4. **Collaborating** — The method used when people are both assertive and cooperative. This method allows each party to participate and make contributions with the possibility of co-creating a shared solution that everyone can support. The world needs more collaborating.
5. **Compromising** — Another strategy where parties are partially assertive and partially cooperative. The concept is that everyone gives up a little of what they want, and no one gets everything they want. The best outcome is when they split the difference (win/win). Compromise is perceived as being fair, even if no one is particularly happy with the final outcome.

Like the sign I read on the way driving home, I believe that in order to deal with conflict appropriately we have to make a choice. Do we choose the "Power of Love" to help us resolve our differences with others or do we lean on the side that calls for the "Love of Power" to win the conflict at whatever cost? Next time you find yourself in a dispute with someone, think about how you might use collaboration and compromising to resolve your differences. Choose to have a fair and amicable result, don't try to win but rather RESOLVE and then, go have a cup of coffee or lunch with your new resolution partner. Chose the "Power of Love" and not the "Love of Power" it will give you Peace.

SBRA Business Spotlight

AMITY DIGITAL WEB DESIGN AND DIGITAL MARKETING

The purpose of Amity Digital is to build and strengthen the web presence of small to medium-sized businesses through Google-conscious web design and diligent digital marketing.

Our motto is simple: "We build websites that work for you" and we follow that motto by collaboratively applying our expertise in web design, and your specific business experience. We determine your super-power (that unique service or mindset that separates you from the competition), define your audience, research your industry, determine your competition, and create a web presence that proactively attracts business.



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Tune Up Tuesdays

9:30-10:30AM

- 12/1/20 The Law and Small Business.
- 12/15/20 Is Your Tax Information Ready?



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HOW TO COMPETE AGAINST THE GOLIATHS



By Tom Hubric, Hubric Resources, Proud SBRA Member

You've seen the advertisements from Amazon, Target and other industry giants promoting starting rates of \$15-\$20 per hour and, as a small business owner, you know that there is no way that you can come close to those rates without ultimately going out of business. That's the bad news but you already know that anyway. The good news is that with an open mind and a little creativity, you can use your small size as a competitive advantage. Here are some cost-effective ways that small business can compete:

• **Part Time & Seasonal Employment Options:** many of our small business clients have split full-time positions into multiple part-time positions. These positions are highly desirable for parents, students and retirees thus you are significantly expanding your pool of potential candidates in a tight labor market. Keep in mind, part-time and seasonal employees don't need healthcare benefits and they are less likely to incur overtime, so you could actually save money.

• **Flexibility:** this is the key area that small businesses beat the behemoths every time. When able, allow employees to flex their shifts to meet their family obligations or allowing a parent to work from home when a child is ill. Consider 4-day work weeks and flextime. Remember, a healthy work-life balance boosts employee morale and reduces stress. Not sure how to be more flexible? Ask your employees and have an open mind to considering new things. Businesses that are unwilling to be flexible are likely to lose out in the war for talent.

• **Coolness Factor:** What fun things do you do at your company to make people want to come to work each day? Remember, you are not able to compete with wages with the giants and, like it or not, a paycheck is not a privilege anymore. Some fun ideas: put some fun games in the breakroom, have the President take an employee to breakfast each week, give your lowest level employees the best parking spots, allow employees to bring their pets to work, do impromptu fun things such as celebrating birthdays and life events, surprise everyone with a Friday afternoon picnic and give everyone some "playtime" to burn off some steam. Consider piping in upbeat music, bring in a food truck for lunch or have a massage therapist come in for a day. These are things that the big companies just don't do. People want to enjoy coming to work so create an environment that makes them want to be there.

• **Truly Care About Your Employees:** When is the last time you have had lunch with your staff or just spent time with them to see how they are going, both personally and professionally? Do you know the names of each of your employees and what is happening in their lives? If not, you are missing a tremendous opportunity that costs you nothing! As a small business owner, you have the ability to nurture relationships and connect with your team in ways that big employers can't. Develop strong relationships with your team and they will be happier, more productive and want to stay with you. Plus, they will be more likely to share their ideas if they are comfortable with you.

• **Practice What You Preach:** Like it or not, your employees watch and mentally record everything you do at work. Do you handle personal business while at work, take personal calls and texts throughout the day, take extended lunches, have the reserved parking spot or bring your dog to work when others can't? If so, I promise you that your employees think you are a hypocrite and do not respect you as their leader. You employees should enjoy the same perks as you do, if not more! Just remember, the best way to lead a team is to get on it and you need your employees more than they need you!

Keep in mind, many of these suggestions will also work with your customers. Be that cool company that is fun to do business with, stay connected with your customers and hear what they have to say. Don't take your employees or your customers for granted as you need them both to survive.

To learn how Hubric Resources can help you compete against the goliaths, please contact Tom Hubric at Hubric Resources: tom@hubricresources.com or 610-670-7878 x101