



Turning over another leaf...

(part one of two on management)

By Chanon Collins

For Allen Pritchett & Bassett, LLP

As the year draws to a close, most of us are anticipating the changes we will make in the new year. We all probably have resolutions we have created in hopes of making the next year better and more successful than the previous. In keeping with our claim as the “reading capitol of the world,” I want to share a thought-provoking book that is a must for a manager who wishes to make a change in the new year. Blaine McCormick has penned an intriguing review of Benjamin Franklin’s rules of management called **Ben Franklin’s 12 Rule of Management**. While these rules might appear to be antiquated, the theories of management still hold true today.

McCormick begins with Franklin’s first rule of “Finish better than your beginnings.” Franklin’s beginnings were quite humble and he offered this as his most important piece of advice. Along with this rule, he held that one should never accept the status quo, never wait for something good to happen, and never wait for the generosity of others. We are all responsible for our success and our failures.

Franklin’s second rule is “All education is self-education.” This theory of continued education is essential to any manager who wishes to ensure the success of his or her team. Daily reading of industry activity and innovations will offer a continual connection to the progress of your company and your competition.

Before managers can manage others, they must first manage themselves. This is Franklin’s third rule – “Seek first to manage yourself, then to manage others.” Managers who are able to control and orchestrate their surroundings will serve as a prime example for emulation to team members. Adapted self-management skills offer potential for improvement, both in the company’s bottom-line and in the spirit of the team’s success.

The Southern adage of catching more flies with honey than vinegar comes to mind when exploring Franklin’s fourth rule of management – “Influence is more important than victory.” Managers are responsible for many activities, least of all conflict resolution. It is during this activity that Franklin’s rule offers the most assistance. Successful

ALLEN PRITCHETT & BASSETT, LLP
POST OFFICE BOX 349, TIFTON, GEORGIA 31793
229.382.6960 FAX: 229.382.6992
WWW.APBCPA.COM

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managers are those who listen to the problem, explore the situation by asking probing questions, and then lead team members to the desired outcome. People are much more likely to conform to a decision when they derive the end results on their own volition.

Franklin's fifth rule of management is a foundational thought for all successful individuals – "Work hard and watch your costs." With a strong work ethic and realistic expectations of expenses, success is in the making. For those who doubt this cornerstone of success, look to the stories of Sam Walton and Herb Kelleher.

Every manager must have the capacity of reason as a tool for managing the team. The sixth rule of management, "Everybody wants to appear reasonable," offers sound advice. Managers wishing to change the direction of their company and team should examine their mode of action. Are you one who relies on force or intimidation to get results? If so, you should take this opportunity and see the error of your ways. Reason has its place in a successful workplace.

Regardless of the rule of the day for Franklin, he chose to begin each day with this driving thought – "What Good Shall I Do This Day?" A positive choice in attitude is a small step for those on the path to greatness.

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