

"The Time Clock" - A sample from Managing By Storying Around

We had just acquired Everlasting Valve, a union shop with a traditional type of labor-management relationship, and our managers wanted to show the employees how we did things. Without consulting anyone at Corporate, the managers decided to remove the time clock. "If we really believe our people are our strongest asset, then we should treat them as if they are," the managers said to themselves. "Why should we have a time clock that humiliates them? They're adults.

They know what time they are supposed to be at work. They know what's expected of them." The managers went into the shop and took down the clock. Talk has always been cheap, but here was a group of leaders who, through their actions, were making it clear to their people that they believed the people they worked with were important and trustworthy.



How did the union employees react?

They were shocked. At first, they expected the time clock would be used as a negotiating tool during the upcoming contract talks. But the fact that management wanted nothing in return proved to them that they really were trusted.

They've proved they're worthy of that trust. We haven't had a problem with people coming in late. In fact, some people are now coming in early.

People know what time it is. If they don't, a time clock won't get them to work on time.

The Moral Of This Story



Do the right thing - willingly. Don't turn issues of respect - eliminating the time clock, unlocking closed doors - into bargaining issues. Do what's right. It will work. People still came to work on time and gave us a full day's work, even without having to punch in or out.

Time ticks on. Your people know what time it is. If they don't, no time clock is going to help get them to work on time, or convince them to give you an honest day's work.

Delegate. It was the people on the front line who had the responsibility for making sure the Everlasting division was productive, so it just made sense for them to handle the time-clock issue as they saw fit.

Listen. The leaders at Everlasting had heard their people complain about the time clock. It symbolized they were not trusted. Not only did the leaders listen to the message, they took action.

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— **The
Moral Of
This
Story**

Treat people like people. Life is easier, and you are more productive in the long term, if you show respect for the people who work for you. A "do it or else" attitude works only in the short term.

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