

Focus on the Details

by Mike Marchev



Have you ever stopped to wonder what makes the best “the best?” I think the answer has a lot to do with the little things, the details, and what goes on behind the scenes. I was reminded of this while in Aruba this October. I was asked to share a few of my thoughts with a group of certified

travel professionals who made the good business decision to hook their allegiance to a fail-safe destination – Aruba. I was staying at the Aruba Marriott, one of many fine hotels in the area.

On the morning I was scheduled to leave for home, I decided to take a walk on the beach before the crowd reached for their bottles of lotion. It was 6:30 a.m. On my way to the beach, I spotted the remnants of what must have been a broken glass, smack dab in the middle of one of the paved paths leading to the water. A piece of glass, once introduced to a bare vacationing toe, is all that is required to ruin one’s week, Caribbean sun or no Caribbean sun.

I picked up the larger pieces but soon realized a broom would be required to do the job properly. I caught the attention of a night watchman and I delegated my concerns to him. He too lacked the appropriate tools to deal with tiny shards of glass so I marked the spot with a tiny stone after he told me he would track down a broom-carrying Marriott employee.

As I headed for the beach I wondered if this man was true to his word or simply appeasing another picky tourist with “lip-service.” This man’s lonely shift would soon be coming to an end and the only thing on his mind for the next 90 minutes probably featured a nice warm bed.

At the conclusion of my walk, I decided to “check the stone.” It was gone. And the slivers (shards) of glass were cleanly swept away. The walk was safe for the holiday bare-footers who will never realize the potential dangers they were almost flirting with. Remember, these “slivers” were barely visible to the naked eye and very easy to miss. The Marriott, thanks to the night watchman along with the person who actually did the sweeping, was elevated to a higher rung on my “Exception” ladder. Little did they know a guy in

position to report his findings to the world via his Monday Morning Message E-zine was testing them.

I have always said, “a fish stinks from its head down.” I am not certain where I first learned this phrase, but it translates to “organizational uniformity.” Show me excellence at the bottom of any organization and I will show you excellence at the top and vice versa I am quick to add. The Marriott Aruba is smelling pretty good in my book. I didn’t get the guard’s name, nor did I get the name of the morning “sweeper.” Shame on me. If I had, I could have written a letter to Marriott’s management and made a couple of exceptional people happy and proud.

Two lessons come to mind from my Aruban experience.

*Show me
excellence
at the bottom of
any organization
and I will show
you excellence
at the top.*

1. People are always watching you and testing you and grading you with a simple pass/fail format. In the case of the glass slivers, the people involved all received a passing mark. Under the circumstances, this was definitely not a “gimmee.” It simply was the result of two caring people doing their thing.

2. It is easy to deal with the big pieces. Anybody reading this article would have stopped long enough to pick up the obvious pieces of glass. The slivers take

more effort and often can do the most damage.

Regardless of your business, there are probably hundreds of opportunities each week for you to make a silent difference, both to your organization and to its customers. Picking up and cleaning up are just two of the more glaring examples. Simple courtesies also come to mind, from not interrupting to opening doors for people. Whatever you choose to do as it pertains to focusing on the details, the little things, the small shards of glass, don’t expect people to comment ... but do expect people to recognize and appreciate.

The entire experience on the Aruba walkway took less than 2 minutes, but I will always remember how impressed I was. ♦

Mike Marchev is an internationally recognized motivational sales trainer and author of the book *Become The Exception*. To subscribe to Mike’s free weekly marketing message and to receive 7 free marketing lessons, go to www.marchev.com and submit your email address. Mikem@marchev.com (800) 508-1364.