

Sounding Board

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Who do you work for, anyway?

Leadership consultant addresses Board of Trade, April 29



Jim Bagnola addresses The Board on April 29.

BY GARRY FOSTER

There's a myth surrounding leadership that needs to be cleared up.

How many of us tend to look up the ladder to satisfy our supervisor? After all, your manager may have hired you, defined your responsibilities, may supervise your work, and worst of all may dismiss you. So aren't you 'informally expected' to satisfy them?

"Not so fast," says **Jim Bagnola**, an international speaker and corporate educator

with the **Leadership Group** in Austin, Texas who coaches leaders to dissolve this myth of 'informal expectation.'

Bagnola has learned to quickly recognize the symptoms of a corporate culture whose inverted priorities aim to please upper management. With clients on several continents, he sees the pattern: high staff turnover, employee dissatisfaction, poor management results, poor employee performance; and an increasing number of customer complaints, high stress and an inability to cope with change.

"Often there is an informal expectation within a company for employees to focus on managerial satisfaction rather than customer satisfaction," says Bagnola, whose client list includes NASA, NATO, Shell, the United Nations and Scotiabank. "While this informal intention may make a manager look good, it does little to promote employee or customer satisfaction."

He points out that satisfying customers is the reason why we're all in business. Customer satisfaction is often overlooked in our rush to finish the job, to file the report, or in planning for the next meeting.

There are subtle dynamics at play between management, employees and customers and

it's important to understand the mechanics of this relationship to make sure your attention is where it should be at the right time.

Based on 25 years of experience training executives, Bagnola encourages leaders to examine and change their thinking patterns. A leader with trained "influence skills" can satisfy employees, increase productivity, and lower stress in the workplace—which directly impacts customer service. Within this three-way relationship between management, employees and customers is the hidden key that dissolves the myth of leadership and clarifies who you work for.

"Leadership roles are the key," says Bagnola. "When it comes to the customer experience 'leading is everybody's business'. Every employee is the face of the organization."

Jim Bagnola will address a **Vancouver Board of Trade Managers Toolbox®** on Tuesday, April 29 with highlights from his workshops on leadership and customer relations. Visit www.boardoftrade.com for more information and to register for this event.

Garry Foster is president of *Enlightened Communications*, a speakers' bureau and public relations firm. For more information, visit www.encomm.ca. 