

Part 7 of 7 (the final section)

FUELSTREAM
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FUELSTREAM # 54:

- Top 5 Ways to keep employees on their toes
- Another 3 Management Rules
- 14-Day FREE trial period for e-learning

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Top 5 ways to keep employees on their toes

Let's face it, although we want to believe that our employees are hard-working, diligent and honest all the time, the moment we're off site or out of sight they will probably relax a bit. Here are "Top 5 ways to keep employees on their toes":

- Refer to CCTV footage
 - CCTV can be an extremely helpful tool, but it is only as effective as the people who watch it. If no-one checks the footage, employees won't be concerned about what they do in front of the cameras. As with any type of control, employees must be aware of it.
 - Whenever possible view footage on the CCTV cameras. Then, whenever you talk to an employee mention what you've seen on the footage. It doesn't have to be positive or negative. The point is to make them aware that the CCTV footage is being checked.
 - E.g. you can say "I saw a white Mercedes at pump 3 on the camera, this morning, do you know the customer?" or, "I could see on the cameras that you helped the customer in the blue Mazda very quickly, well done"

- Follow up stock count variances
 - As with CCTV footage, stock control is another area that needs to be visible to be effective. We've seen over the years that sites that count daily have fewer stock losses than sites that count once a month. However, just counting daily is not enough, employees need to see that you're counting and they need to get feedback on the results.
 - It doesn't help you to count stock and not follow up, you need to ask questions about missing stock. By asking questions and reminding employees they have to explain, makes them aware that there are consequences. This doesn't mean you will never have stock losses again, but it's a way to reduce it.
 - E.g. if you're counting cigarettes, it's critical to tell the cashiers what the results are. And you should ask them to explain stock losses. Even if they don't have an answer, the fact that you're asking makes them less likely to take stock or not scan items. You can also remind them of good stock security when you speak to them e.g. keeping store rooms locked, keeping areas neat and tidy, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions
 - We all know that there isn't a lot of time during the day. And often we jump to conclusions because we think we have all the information. One simple trick to use is to ask more open-ended questions when speaking to your employees.
 - Closed questions are questions that can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. E.g. Did you count the energy drinks?. The employee can simply answer "yes".
 - Open-ended questions are more effective because it provides an opportunity for the employee to give you more feedback, and possibly make you aware of things you didn't know. Also, they need to think a bit more carefully and concentrate a bit more to answer you. E.g. What was the result of the energy drink stock count? or Tell me about the stock counts today?
 - Another example could be when a fuel mix happened. A closed question would be to ask the Attendant: "Did you confirm the grade of fuel?". An open ended question could be "Tell me what happened?"
- Break your routine
 - There are 2 main reasons to break your daily routine on site. First, it is more dangerous, from a safety & security point of view, to follow the same routine every day. E.g. driving the same route to work every day, spending the same amount of time in the office every day, visiting the bank at the same time every week, etc. Criminals like it when you follow a routine because this makes their job easier.

- The second reason is that employees will also learn your routine. And they will know when you are more likely to do a site walk around, or check up on them. E.g. at ABC service station, John the manager, never arrives earlier than 6:45 so the night shift knows that by 6:40 they should all be on the forecourt, otherwise they will get into trouble. But, before 6:40, they can basically do what they want.
- Another example is that Rachel, the Dealer, always sits in the office from around 8am until 10am. So the day shift knows that between 8 and 10 they can take longer tea & smoke breaks.
- Be where customers are
 - The last tip is to "be where customers are". What we mean is that you should be constantly looking at your employees performance from the customers point of view.
 - E.g. we often stand behind the cashiers desk looking towards customers and we evaluate customer service from that point of view. But, that is not the view that customers see. We should "be where customers are" and evaluate the service from their point of view, from the other side of the cashier desk.
 - Another example is on the forecourt. Often the Dealer/Manager will stand in front of the shop or at the cashiers window when supervising the forecourt. But, that is not the view that customers see. We should "be where customers are" on the forecourt and evaluate service from their point of view, at the pumps.

Another 3 Management Rules (and 1 extra as a bonus)

Here are some Management Rules that you can consider:

1. Systems – No list no life
 - a. Service stations are lifestyle businesses. That means they have a big impact on our lifestyle, especially the hours we work and the impact on our families, weekends, holidays, etc. We have to carefully manage this to ensure we still maintain work-life-balance. Dealers and Managers who try to remember everything will always feel more overwhelmed than those who use checklists, to do lists, action plans, etc. E.g. checklists allow you to check the details, and help you to remember all the critical steps.
2. People - Manage by walking around
 - a. Managing by walking around is a concept that's been around for decades. it simply means you can't manage people from your office. You should walk around the site at different times of day and use this opportunity to ask questions

and motivate your staff. You should go where employees are busy working to see how things are really being done.

3. Strategy - Critical and non-critical tasks

- a. There is a question about the difference between what the Dealer should do, and what the Managers should do. We suggest dividing it into critical and non-critical tasks. Critical tasks have a specific date and time and should be allocated to management. E.g. cash ups, banking, ordering, rosters, issuing stock, etc. Non-critical tasks don't have a date and time and are allocated to Dealers e.g. improving profitability, generating new business, marketing, etc. Critical and Non-critical tasks are equally important and neither should be overlooked or avoided.

4. Strategy - Ask the dumb questions

- a. Don't EVER think that asking questions is a sign that you don't know what you're doing. It's completely the opposite. Some of the best leaders in the world are those that ask the most questions and make the most notes. The best managers ask open-ended questions about the basics. These are often called "dumb" questions, but they definitely aren't. This is a very sophisticated way to check for understanding and it shows tremendous emotional intelligence. In other words, you don't assume to know EVERYTHING, you are always checking to see if you can understand things better.
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