

\$50 Bills On The Floor

Continuing our discussion on information and “ratcheting up” the emotional reaction of employees to business performance. A friend of mine once said, “Communication is not about information, but rather transformation”.

Most folks, myself included, would not walk by a \$5 bill lying on the ground without picking it up. Why? It has value to us. In that context, I want to describe \$50 bills lying on the ground and routinely ignored.

Many employees have no connection to the value of goods or services they produce or provide, or to the operating costs they consume. And, as a consequence, unknowingly just “walk by” millions of dollars of opportunity every year in your business. They do not know the sales value of what they produce, the cost of raw materials consumed, or the loss of revenue attributed to scrap, re-work or downtime. Employees get paid for time – all within a valueless environment and culture at work.

The story I want to share with you can be applied to almost any business. Several years ago, I was taking a plant tour of a machining company in New England. As I walked up to a particular machine center I notice more than a few parts lying scattered on the floor. I picked one up and asked the operator what it was. He looked at his computer screen and recited the part number. I said no, what is it really? He didn't know. I asked, “what's it worth”? He didn't know that either. Off to the office I went to find out.

A few minutes later, I was back at the machine. I told the operator, he was making parts that go into braking systems on Boeing Aircraft. I said I hoped he was making good ones, because I would be on a Boeing Aircraft later that evening! And, by the way, this little part was worth about \$50 dollars. His entire countenance changed. That bit of information changed his whole paradigm. What had been part # XYZ on the floor was now very important, tangible, and worth 50 dollars. I am sure he told his wife that night that he was making aircraft parts, not just stuff. Not just information, but rather transformation.

Think about what it might do to an entire organization if employees knew the “customer story”, the value of what was produced or provided, and the value of what was being consumed? And, if this information was frequent and universal?

Now, think about how better informed employees might be engaged if they financially participated in improving those variables... real time... every month. That's transformation. I can tell you that when properly done, the results can be truly remarkable. Exactly what we have been helping clients do for 35 years. “Dollarizing” is transformative, and an important ingredient in the Equishare™ strategy.