



The

STEWARDSHIP

CONNECTIONS

Newsletter

Building an Effective Board of Directors

by **Richie Lauer**

An effective board of directors helps a nonprofit organization move forward with its mission. It does more than just govern; it creates hope for those within the organization, builds momentum for the organization's purpose, and encourages financial and volunteer support from the local community. To reach that level of impact, however, several crucial aspects are necessary.

A Call to Commitment. Serving on a board of directors is a serious responsibility. It should only be accepted after prayerful consideration and with a readiness to fully commit yourself to the work. Perhaps you already sit on a board but find your motivation has waned and attending meetings feels burdensome. If that's the case, the fair thing to do for the organization is to resign your seat so it can be filled by someone else who's able to invest themselves into the cause.

Representing the Community. An effective board of directors should accurately reflect the organization's support base (or constituency). If certain church groups have strong reasons to support the mission, those groups should be represented on the board of directors. Likewise, if an organization serves a geographic community, then all the board members should have strong connections to that community.

Skill Sets Matter

Different people are good at different things, and an effective board of directors requires diverse skill sets. If your board members are carbon copies of each other, then most of them are irrelevant. A high-functioning board needs a mix of personalities and talents.

The Visionary. Every new organization needs at least one person (but not three people) to generate new ideas. Visionaries generally aren't capable of executing their ideas without help from pragmatic doers. An organization grows with vision, but for every visionary, the board needs at least three people with practical experience.

The Numbers Expert. Every organization needs at least one board member who's good with numbers and understands how "big numbers" work. After all, this endeavor must somehow pay for itself. While numbers people might not be the life of the party, an organization which pays its bills and has money on hand to chase opportunities is far more enjoyable and effective than one that doesn't.

The Bulldog. Every organization needs one or two (but not five) board members with determination and grit: "bulldogs" who don't easily give up. When times get tough and lofty vision has collided with cold reality, board members with determination can hold

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WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

September 22-23, 2026
Human Resources Middlebury, **IN**

September 29-30, 2026
Business Succession Ephrata, **PA**

October 20-21, 2026
Business Planning Middlebury, **IN**

October 20-21, 2026
Sales Millersburg, **OH**

November 3-4, 2026
Accounting Ephrata, **PA**

November 3-4, 2026
Human Resources Millersburg, **OH**

STEWARDSHIP CONNECTIONS
with INTEGRITY

Volume 19, Issue 2 | Summer 2026

the organization together and keep it moving forward. However, too many bulldogs on one board can lead to constant conflict as each bulldog sets its teeth and pulls the organization in competing directions.

The Communicator. Every organization needs several board members who are skillful communicators and highly respected in the local community. These types of people can take a complex problem and explain it in simple terms. Because they're trusted in the community, any message or request they carry from the organization is given fair consideration. These board members possess good connections. Like it or not, "who you know" actually matters. A few people possess the unique ability to work across different church groups and with people who are different from themselves. When you find those rare gems, add them to the board.

Varied Perspectives. Seek a mix of experiences and backgrounds when selecting board members. Ministerial representation is always helpful. Preachers often possess a nuanced understanding of what is going on in a community; they can offer valuable input on what might be acceptable in a community and which individuals might make strong contributions to the work. And—without saying everything he knows—a minister can steer the organization away from individuals who might cast a negative light on the organization for reasons that are not public knowledge.

Diverse business experience is also valuable on a board of directors. Seek a mix of construction, agricultural, retail, and manufacturing backgrounds. Be careful not to pack a board of directors only with rich folks. A nonprofit board should be a cross section of the community. While the successful businessman brings certain skills to an organization, the inclusion of middle-class and working-class members creates a broader connection to the community and injects a measure of real-life experiences.

Balancing Wisdom and Energy

Experience matters, but only if it's paired with integrity. As Scripture says, *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness* (PROVERBS 16:31). Seasoned men help an organization avoid mistakes. At the same time, there's also a time for older men to step back. Some hang on far too long, tying up a board seat that could be given to a younger man with fresh energy who needs the opportunity to grow into responsibility. An effective board of directors is a healthy balance of older (experienced) men and younger (energetic) men.

Term limits are a useful tool to prevent a board of directors from becoming a "good ole boys club." There are no indispensable men. As Scripture reminds us, *The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also* (2

TIMOTHY 2:2). A mature man knows to voluntarily step back before everyone else wishes he would.

The Ideal Size. How large should a board of directors be? It depends. A minimum of five members is advisable to spread the workload. But if a board has more than nine members, it becomes too easy for some members to sit back and let others do the heavy lifting.

Conclusion. A successful nonprofit organization relies on effective board meetings, which can only occur when the board of directors is stocked with individuals of diverse skills, all of whom are invested in the organization's mission and committed to showing up. Having the right people in the meeting room goes a long way in accomplishing the important work of the nonprofit organization. So if you serve on a board, give it your absolute best. As ECCLESIASTES 9:10 says, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*



Executive Leadership Transition

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD

Effective July 1, 2026, AF executive administrator responsibilities have transitioned from Paul A. Miller to Mark Anthony Peachey.

We are grateful to Paul for his ten years of service as AF's Executive Administrator. Paul faithfully led the organization for half of its twenty-year history, guiding it through years of growth and change, strengthening AF's stewardship programs. Paul is continuing with AF in a new role of *Planned Giving Manager*. Thank you, Paul, for your leadership and years of dedicated service.

Mark Anthony Peachey has been with AF for eight years, working in the AF Foundation's charitable programs. He has served as the Foundation Administrator for the past three years and will continue to lead Anabaptist Foundation while serving as AF's new *Executive Administrator*.

Mark Anthony Peachey and his wife Shirley live in McVeytown, Pennsylvania, and attend Valley View Amish Mennonite Church. Blessings, Mark, as you serve the Lord and others in this new leadership role.

Kenneth Burkholder, Chairman
AF Board of Directors

Business & Employee Seminars

Business Seminar Schedule Update

Over the past several years, our business seminar program has experienced significant growth, expanding to 15 locations with plans underway to add a 16th. While most locations have traditionally hosted a seminar every two years, several sites are now requesting annual seminars. In addition, we are introducing employee seminars at select locations as the program continues to evolve.

Historically, both business and employee seminars were scheduled between mid-September and mid-March. With

the continued expansion of the program, this limited time-frame no longer provides sufficient flexibility. After careful consideration, we have restructured the overall seminar schedule to better support growth, accommodate new and recurring locations, and help balance the seasonal workload for AF staff.

We appreciate your understanding as we make these adjustments and look forward to the continued success of the seminar program.

Business Seminar — Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 8:30 AM

Shady Maple Banquet Center 129 Toddy Drive, East Earl, PA 17519

The Personal Awareness of a Leader *Daryl Weaver*

Why do some aspects of work that you can do so well, feel drudgery? Have you ever felt trapped in your role or responsibilities? This session will explore the way we understand and contribute to the workflow process and consider the source of our response to the challenges and opportunities that we face at work. Increasing our personal awareness as a leader allows us to more honestly assess our role in our company and when it might be time for a transition or a new direction.

Business Succession: Passing the Torch with Purpose *Ray Yoder, Jr.*

This session will explore the how and the when of handing a business to the next generation, offering clear guidance for a thoughtful transition. We'll look at practical markers of readiness-relational, operational, and financial-that signal it's time to pass the reins, preparing the next stewards while wisely preparing for the founder's future.

Business Succession: Stepping In with Vision *Gabe Yoder*

How can the next generation receive a business they didn't build with humility and wisdom? This session highlights the dangers of inheriting success unprepared and offers practical insight on stepping into leadership with clarity-especially when facing a tightening, uncertain economy.

Serving Through Selling *TBD*

This session explores how to excel in sales without carrying the stigma often associated with the role. We will see how success in business can be both ethical and honorable, and how true stewardship shapes the way we upsell, serve customers, and build trust.

Well-Being at Work *TBD*

Our health is one of the most important, yet often the most neglected areas of stewardship. This session addresses everything from low-active office habits and poor nutrition to unsafe equipment and overlooked safety practices, calling us to care for our bodies and workplace with the same diligence we bring to our business.

Presenting Well *Rick Rhodes*

This session focuses on the art of clear, confident communication-whether you're speaking to a room, leading a team, or engaging customers. We will look at some practical tools to deliver messages that connect, persuade, and inspire, helping every leader present with purpose and professionalism.

| [Continued on Next Page](#)

Serve with Excellence *Delvin Martin*

In this session, employees will be encouraged to take ownership, act like leaders, and elevate the workplace through simple, intentional actions. By noticing and addressing what others ignore, they build trust, demonstrating responsibility, and position themselves for real advancement.

What Employers Wish Their Employees Knew *TBD*

Well-being at Work *TBD*

Our health is one of the most important, yet often the most neglected areas of stewardship. This session addresses everything from low-active office habits and poor nutrition to unsafe equipment and overlooked safety practices, calling us to care for our bodies and workplace with the same diligence we bring to our business.

Serving Through Selling *TBD*

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true stewardship shapes the way we upsell, serve customers, and build trust.

Collaborate to Elevate *TBD*

This session highlights how collaboration multiplies creativity, strengthens problem solving, and elevates results beyond what any one person can achieve. We'll explore the power of collective intelligence and the essential role relationship play in building teams that thrive and win together.

Presenting Yourself in Humble Confidence and Integrity *Warren Bauman*

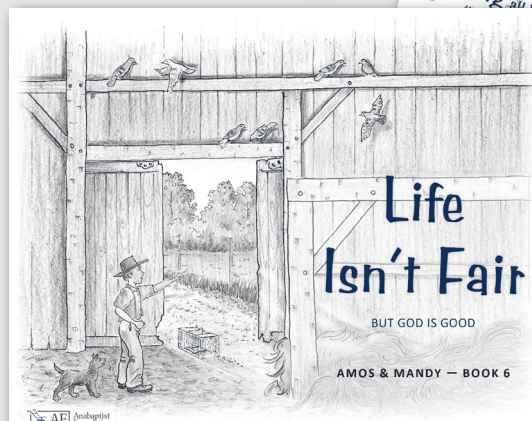
Learn how to present yourself with humble confidence and genuine integrity, using body language, eye contact, and a firm handshake to communicate credibility before you even speak. Discover how these simple habits shape trust, influence, and the way others perceive your character and professionalism.

Stewardship Resources **Amos & Mandy Series**

The *Amos & Mandy* series teaches children about money and Christian stewardship.

Anabaptist Financial provides financial education that is consistent with conservative Anabaptist belief and values. We intend to provide families and businesspeople with teaching on stewardship principles that inspires and transforms our attitudes and practices regarding the management of our God-given resources.

The sixth book of the series, *Life Isn't Fair*, follows Amos, who learns that God is good even in life's disappointments.



For more information or to request a copy.

CALL | (570) 800-2191

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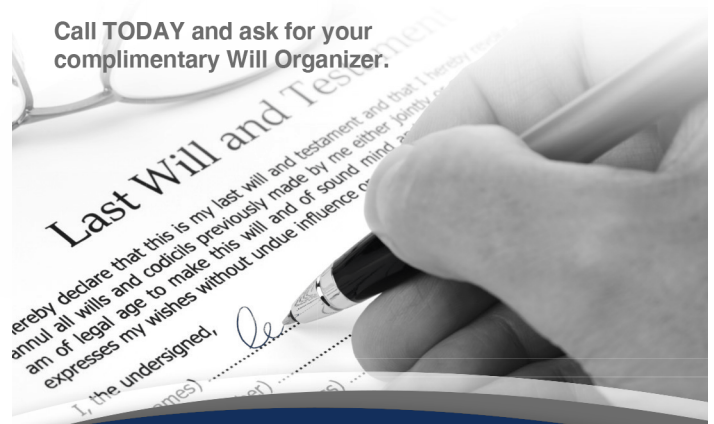
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Lewisburg, PA 17837
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- Who will raise your children? What will happen to your things?
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- If you are considering the sale of a property and expect to owe capital gains taxes on the appreciated value, don't delay calling us for more information.
- You must start this process before selling the property or placing it under a sales agreement.
- The most common reason a gift of real estate cannot be accomplished is because the donor waited too long to begin the process.

For a FREE information packet, please contact Anabaptist Foundation

Barnabas... having land, sold it, brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:37



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Deacon & Trustee Seminar Schedules

Helping church leaders and financial committees navigate adversity and prosperity.

The local church is responsible to support those who struggle financially, while also providing guidance for those in prosperity. The Deacon and Trustee Seminar is for anyone who serves in a leadership or advisory role in the church community, including bishops, ministers, deacons, trustee committees, and financial advisors.

The goal of this seminar is to support the church by offering training on working redemptively with those in financial difficulty and topics on inspiring a stewardship mindset during prosperity.

For more information or to register for a seminar, call or email.

CALL | (267) 368-4628

EMAIL | SEMINARS@AFWEB.ORG

ONLINE | AFWEB.ORG



Tuesday, July 21, 2026

Deacon & Trustee Seminar **Martindale Reception Center**

352 MARTINDALE RD, EPHRATA, PA 17522

Topics to Note

Passing on Stewardship Amidst Prosperity *Earl Peachey*

How can the younger generation be equipped to practice faithful stewardship in times of prosperity? And in what ways can the older generation be inspired to lead by example—cultivating relationships that allow them to walk alongside and mentor those who follow? This session explores intergenerational stewardship and the call to live wisely and generously across seasons of prosperity.

Origin and Purpose of the Alms Fund *Dave Sweigart*

This session starts with a brief talk on the origin and purpose of the alms fund, followed by small group discussions where participants can share how their churches approach almsgiving and learn from one another.

Transparency and Confidentiality *Paul King*

Supporting those in need calls for both compassion and discretion. But how do we maintain trust while keeping the church informed? This session dives into the delicate balance between confidentiality and transparency, offering practical insights for navigating these challenges with wisdom and care.

Blending Family, Church, and Work Responsibilities *Gid Esh*

Life pulls us in many directions—children need our time, our spouse needs attention, the sick need care, and bills need to be paid. How do we manage it all without burning out? This session offers practical tips for blending life's responsibilities with grace and purpose.

Nurturing Stewardship Discussions *Clyde Zimmerman*

What are the areas where your community is struggling with Biblical stewardship? How do you start valuable and open discussions to help your community wrestle with the questions of practical Biblical stewardship? In this session, we will see how you can use the Salt & Light course as a tool to kick-start these discussions.

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Deacon & Trustee Seminar **Siloam Fellowship**

61616 CO. RD. 35, GOSHEN, IN 46528

Topics to Note

Principles of Stewardship *Richie Lauer*

What principles should guide our financial decisions? Does affordability equal permission? In this session, we will discuss the peer pressure of wealth and what contentment looks like in a culture of abundance.

Recognizing and Connecting with the Struggling *Christ Miller*

Many who face challenges hesitate to ask for help. This session will explore how to identify early signs of struggle and examine its common root causes, offering practical steps for providing meaningful support.

The Widow that got Scammed *James Borkholder*

Saving for later in life is wise, but what should you do with extra in the meantime? Not every investment is trustworthy, and “if it sounds too good to be true,” it likely is. Scammers target vulnerable individuals—like urgent phone calls to seniors in which they are urged to make secret transfers. In this session we will highlight several common scams and offer practical steps to safeguard personal and community finances.

Nurturing Stewardship Discussions *Mark Anthony Peachey*

What are the areas where your community is struggling with Biblical stewardship? How do you start valuable and open discussions to help your community wrestle with the questions of practical Biblical stewardship? In this session, we will see how you can use the Salt & Light course as a tool to kick-start such discussions.

A Proper Response to Prosperity *Orvan Mullet*

Many in our communities have experienced financial blessing, which we recognize as a gift from God. But as the true owner of all we have, what does God expect us to do with these resources? We will look at some Biblical guidance on giving, the role of tithing, and the difference between investing in earthly versus eternal priorities.

Managing and Influencing People in Skills, Motivation, and Spirit

by Doug Ramer

Many managers have had very little formal training or mentoring in the area of people management. Some people adapt well when transitioning into a management role, while others encounter a great deal of stress and difficulty. Wherever you are in your journey as a manager, my goal is to offer insights and tools that I've learned to help you in your journey.

For some time I've had a little hobby farm. We had a pet horse we would sometimes loan to friends. One day when someone came to borrow this horse, he refused to enter the horse trailer. We tried everything: feed, coaxing, candy, and carrots, but nothing worked. After trying and trying and trying, he finally went in. The only reason we could see for his behavior was that the trailer was smaller than the one he normally rode in. He could sense the environment wasn't right.

When talking about motivating our employees, we sometimes say, "If we could just get these people to change!" We tend to think that if they would just change, all of our problems would be solved. However, changing people can be very, very difficult. Sometimes it's almost impossible. Despite this challenge, I have good news. I have discovered a method that can work. To put it simply, this method is to change myself.

Let's go back to the example of the horse. He was willing to accept one environment but not the other. In the right environment, he was a very responsive and friendly horse. The same principle applies to people. To improve an employee's skill, motivation, and spirit, we need to pay attention to the workplace environment and our management style. We need to focus on creating an atmosphere that inspires our people to want to change.

Developing an atmosphere that inspires our employees takes inten-

tional focus. It will never happen by itself. After thirty years I've learned that creating this kind of atmosphere takes time. After it's created, it requires maintenance and protection. However, it's an investment worth making. It is priceless.

We need to focus on creating an atmosphere that inspires our people to want to change.

Here are nine different ideas that can help create an atmosphere where people grow in skills, motivation, and spirit. These ideas are broad enough they can be used in any business, yet specific enough to make a measurable and lasting impact.

Nine Ways To Create An Atmosphere Where Employees Can Grow

1. Support your company.
2. Enjoy your responsibilities.
3. Love your people.
4. Create a safe environment.
5. Intentionally solve problems.
6. Be fair with your employees.
7. Create a positive environment.
8. Help everyone onto the train.
9. Develop your people.

1. Support Your Company

Your employees need to know that you have a passion for what the business does. **ECCLESIASTES 9:10** says, *Whatever you find to do with your hands, do it with all your might.* You'll find that the best people in their fields are the ones who are passionate about what they do. If you are making tables, you will make mediocre tables unless you are passionate about your

job. If you want to make and sell the best pies, you have to love baking. Your employees will know if you are (or are not) passionate about what you do. They will know whether or not you believe in your company. If you are a manager, the employees under you will know whether you support the authority above you. Support and respect for authority is critical in any leadership structure.

There's an old story told that illustrates this point well. The topic of church maintenance was being discussed at a church business meeting. A big oak tree outside the church was starting to rot and had become a hazard. Most of the group agreed that the tree needed to be cut down, but one of the oldest church members disagreed. He stood up and said, "This tree has been part of this property for a long time. I remember when we used to picnic under it in the summertime when we had fellowship meals." He went on and on. He did not want the tree to be cut down. However, the group voted and decided to cut the tree down the next Saturday. When the day came, that old man was the first person there to help with his chainsaw. As the story illustrates, we are not always going to agree with how things are handled. However, we must learn to support the decisions of those in authority over us. This principle applies to our businesses, churches, and personal relationships.

2. Enjoy Your Responsibilities

Managers are entrusted with thousands of dollars. This includes actual value, potential gain, and potential loss. As a manager you have the ability to make or break your organization. People are watching you. You have the opportunity to set an example of dedication and joy at work, or you can set an example of drudgery and minimal

effort. Leadership by example is a tremendous responsibility. When you enjoy your responsibilities, it trickles down into an atmosphere where people want to be there.

Managing your responsibilities well is important because the quality of your people is likely what will make the difference between your company failing, surviving, or flourishing. A company can have the best trucks, equipment, and computers, but without motivated and responsible people it is not going to succeed. Good people are very, very important.

3. Love Your People

Why are you managing people? Is it because you're forced to do it? Are you doing it by default? Are you doing it because the management position paid a larger salary? Are you doing it for the power and prestige that comes with a leadership position? Or are you managing people because you love them? If you are doing it for money or power, you will find it difficult to maintain a positive atmosphere. If you are doing it because you care for people, it will be much easier to create an environment where people want to stay and work. Excellent managers can be like pastors to their people. They care both about the work and the heart. They can sense when something is not going right, whether the problem is on or off the job.

I was advised in a secular business seminar once that I should stay out of people's personal lives. There is some truth to that, but it is also true that sometimes managers should get involved in the lives of their employees. Managers should show that they care about the employee as a person, not just as a resource. Part of being a manager is being an encourager. Caring for people is one way to accomplish what should be your first priority in your business—loving others and honoring the Lord. Obviously another priority is to make a profit, because without a profit there is no sustainability in busi-

ness. Caring for people supports both of these primary goals, making it a vital component of a business.

Caring for people is one way to accomplish what should be your first priority in your business—loving others and honoring the Lord.

4. Create A Safe Environment

It is important to create a work environment that is physically, emotionally, financially, morally, and spiritually safe. For example, do not remove protective shields from equipment, which can increase the risk of serious injury to your employees. Maintain your equipment so the forklift doesn't crash off of the loading dock because the brakes don't work. In short, don't be sloppy about workplace safety. Your employees need to feel that you care about their physical well-being.

People also need emotional security. They need to know that their workplace atmosphere isn't going to change daily according to the mood swings of the manager. Create emotional stability by being positive and consistent.

It is also important to create a financially sound environment. Pay your people a fair wage, and pay them on time. Don't allow cash flow problems to develop that will force you to delay payroll. An unstable financial situation can create a negative environment.

Strive to create a morally safe environment. There are many situations today where people of the opposite genders work together side by side. If you are in that situation, make sure the spouse at home is aware of it and that good boundaries exist. If one of your employees has questionable character, deal with it. Take special precautions to avoid any potential for immoral involvement at every level of the company.

We also need to create a spiritually safe environment. Your employees

should feel free to share what God has done in their lives. They should not be afraid that a co-worker or manager from a different church group or different religion will criticize them for how they practice their faith.

5. Intentionally Solve Problems

Effectively solving problems is a crucial part of developing and maintaining an atmosphere that motivates people. Problems are a part of life on this sin-cursed earth, so we need to know how to deal effectively with them. It is important to remember that problems are often opportunities for growth. Your employees should know that when there is a problem, you are going to sit down and talk about it. Ask them for their perspective and advice.

Listen carefully to what they are saying. Make sure you understand the complete problem. Then ask them to take some time to develop three solutions to the problem. This forces them to think carefully about the problem. Sometimes they never come back with solutions because they realize that the problem is very minor. Or it may be a legitimate problem and they will come up with a great solution. Delegating problem-solving might seem risky, but the rewards can be significant. Be involved, sit down and talk about problems, but ultimately make sure your employees are contributing to the solution.

When solving problems, be sure to count the cost. Before you make changes, measure the height of the potential waves. Few people like drastic change, so how can you make changes without large waves? This requires careful planning and implementation. Make changes slowly, giving people time to think about proposed changes. Sometimes they just need time to process it before accepting the change.

We recently changed our company logo. We are in the appliance business, and our previous logo was a little man carrying a toolbox. He was slight-

ly humpbacked and wore a baseball hat. It just didn't quite fit us. We hired someone to create a new logo. It was the same man, but with more spring in his step and his toolbox swinging in his hand behind him like he was really moving along. I really didn't like it until about two weeks later when I started getting used to it. Sometimes we simply need time to adapt to change.

6. Be Fair With Your Employees

People are created equal, but with different gifts. We must try to treat people fairly, but not the same. Another way to say it—to be fair to everyone, you need to treat them all differently. As we've learned from the science of DNA, no two people are quite alike. We function differently and think differently. We must learn to treat people according to their unique gifts and responses. The goal for a manager is to learn to know his people well enough to discover their unique gifts and then use those gifts.

7. Create A Positive Environment

Be the one who says, "Good morning" first. Be positive and optimistic. Maintain a sense of joy even in trials. Maintain a spirit of optimism in the workplace. Live with the joy of the Lord. In our appliance business, we have service dispatchers who receive calls from customers needing repairs. The average dispatcher in America lasts less than five years due to the stress of dealing with customers. In our company, repairmen last fifteen years, and sometimes more. This is because our people don't show up with a hangover Monday morning. Instead, they are rested and motivated to face the day.

Tell stories of yesterday's successes. Create a positive environment by talking about the good things that happened yesterday. This can be as simple as, "Hey, did you hear? We normally bake 250 pies, but yesterday we

did 270. The reason we did it was..." If you make a big sale, talk about it. Ask, "How did it go yesterday?" This type of question often leads to constructive conversation and stories that help us learn from each other.

8. Help Everyone Onto the Train

If you are traveling to a city east of you, you need to get on the eastbound train. If you are working to create a positive environment in your company, you need to get all of your people aboard the train. Some people will jump on your train immediately when they join the company. Others may take some time. Some may continue to refuse to get aboard. Life is too short for someone not to enjoy what they do. If your employees don't like the direction of your company, then help them find another train to get aboard.

Sometime the issue might be a problem in the company, in which case the problem needs to be resolved. On the other hand, some people have life-long patterns of being disconnected and emotionally distanced. These types of people may tear down the positive environment you are working to build. For the sake of all the employees, protect the work environment by dealing with negative employees. One rotten potato smells awful and will eventually ruin the whole basket. Don't let that happen at your company.

9. Develop Your People

Seek out your employees' God-given gifts. One of my long-time friends was born a gifted artist. He would draw something and I'd say, "Wow, that's really neat!" As he got older, he applied that gift to his work and started a design business. Each employee has a special gift. Identifying those gifts and assigning job responsibilities accordingly can greatly increase production and employee satisfaction.

Train, train, train, and train some more. Don't misunderstand me. If you are selling ice cream at the ice cream stand, it might only take an hour or two of training. However, if the employee is running a CNC router that requires advanced programming, much more training may be required. If you have a growing company, take time to align a specific person's gifts with a specific role, then give them enough training to master the job. Make them self-reliant so they don't require your help with their work. Work yourself out of a job whenever possible.

Most people want opportunities and the ability to make decisions. If you take away their ability to make decisions, it can destroy their motivation and joy. If you want to build a great environment with highly motivated people, be willing to give your people more authority and more responsibility.

Try to develop your people to become better than you. You may have people reporting to you who are more qualified and skilled than you are in many areas. Don't let this intimidate you; it's part of building a stronger company. Help your employees strive for excellence.

If you want your company to have a professional image, you need to have professional employees. What if an appliance repair technician came to your house to fix your refrigerator, and he walked in with crusty, muddy shoes? What if he then walked across your white carpet and slid his rusty toolbox onto your kitchen counter, creating small scratches? What would you think of the appliance repair company?

On the other hand, what if a repairman came to your home, knocked, and said, "Hi, my name is Doug from the appliance repair shop. I'm here to service your refrigerator. Are you Mrs. Jones? Which door would you like me to come in?" If he had to cross any carpet, he made sure his shoes were clean or put on clean overshoes. He had a leather toolbox to prevent damage to your counter or floor, and before setting it down he asked where it would

be best to set it down. He looked you in the eye and was respectful when he spoke. All these things matter. Project the image you want for your company.

A good company image will help attract the right kind of employees. Not all companies require the same level of professional image, but I believe that as Christians we need to rise above mediocrity. We need to strive to stand out and be the best in the industry. To accomplish this, we need to expect the best from our people. This can be challenging, but constantly work to improve performance and get rid of mediocrity. **PROVERBS 22:29** says, *Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.* Customers are looking for excellence. Employees are looking for excellence. Creating a positive and professional atmosphere will attract and keep both customers and employees.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, *Who you are is speaking so loudly that I can't*

hear anything you are saying. Regarding your company environment, who you are is demonstrated by what you do more than what you say.

In summary, a grandpa and his grandson were walking along a beach. As they walked along, Grandpa would reach down, grab a living sand dollar, and throw it out into the ocean. There were hundreds of these stranded sand dollars. After a while the little boy asked, "Grandpa, why are you doing that? Why do you keep throwing sand dollars back into the water?" Grandpa reached down, picked up another one, threw it into the water, and said, "Well, I'm saving sand dollars." The boy said, "But Grandpa, there are hundreds of them. What difference does it make?" Grandpa reached down, picked up another sand dollar, threw it into the ocean, and said, "For this one it makes all the difference."

For whom are you making a difference? Whose life are you impacting? You are entrusted with people; they

are God's gift to you. They have emotions. They are not machines with nuts and bolts held together by. Working with your people will be much more enjoyable if you learn to love them. Create an environment where they want to work, where they know you care for them, and where you make a difference in their lives. This will make all the difference in the life of your company and will give you fulfillment that you never before experienced.

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2026 Workshop Schedule

September 22-23, 2026	Human Resources	Middlebury, IN – <i>Das Dutchman Essenhaus</i>	240 W US 20, Middlebury, IN 46540
September 29-30, 2026	Business Succession	Ephrata, PA – <i>Martindale Reception Center</i>	352 Martindale Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522
October 20-21, 2026	Business Planning	Middlebury, IN – <i>Das Dutchman Essenhaus</i>	240 W US 20, Middlebury, IN 46540
October 20-21, 2026	Sales	Millersburg, OH – <i>AF Conference Center</i>	6834 County Road 672, Millersburg, OH 44654
November 3-4, 2026	Accounting	Ephrata, PA – <i>Martindale Reception Center</i>	352 Martindale Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522
November 3-4, 2026	Human Resources	Millersburg, OH – <i>AF Conference Center</i>	6834 County Road 672, Millersburg, OH 44654



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marionkuhns@afweb.org or call 800-653-9817

Upcoming Workshops and Seminars

INDIANA

Deacon Seminar

Tuesday, **August 4**, at 1:30 PM
Siloam Fellowship
61616 CR 35, Goshen, IN 46528

KENTUCKY

Business Seminar

Tuesday, **October 27**, at 8:30 AM
Cave City Convention Center
502 Mammoth Cave St, Cave City, KY 42127

OHIO

Business Seminar

Thursday, **October 15**, at 8:30 AM
Seedtime Acres
759 Stephens Rd, West Manchester, OH
45382

PENNSYLVANIA

Deacon Seminar

Tuesday, **July 21**, at 8:30 AM
Martindale Reception Center
352 Martindale Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

Business & Employee Seminar

Tuesday, **September 15**, at 8:30 AM -
Wednesday, **September 16**, at 8:30 AM
Shady Maple
129 Toddy Dr, East Earl, PA 17519

Stewardship Connections

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Phone: 800-653-9817 Fax: 866-230-6253
afweb.org info@afweb.org

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