



Are You Committed?

By Shawn McCadden CR, CLC, CAPS

As we move our way through life, each of us has our own way of determining our goals and whether or not we have been successful in achieving those goals. If we are honest with ourselves, we know where we are with those goals, and what we are doing to complete them. On the other hand, without an understanding of someone else's goals, the purpose of those goals and the timeline they have established for attaining those goals, we can only speculate whether that person is successful or not. When we do this, it is based on our own observations or point of view. We may think someone like Bill Gates is successful, but how would he answer that question? What kind of commitments has he made to himself?

If you have been reading my articles, you might have noticed that they all discuss remodeling business theories, with personally experienced examples to back them up. So far there have been few if any actual "how to" examples for the theories I am sharing. Well, I hope it is also no surprise to you that this was done on purpose. **Let's say it was part of my "system" or "standard operating procedure" when working with other remodelers to help them improve their lives and businesses.** I do this because I am concerned about providing solutions before we all understand why or if we even need solutions. If we don't understand how all the parts fit together and why, should we start replacing certain parts, which ones first, why?

For example, has this ever happened to you? Standing outside a home, the client or prospect asks you why there are water and rust stains running down the siding of their home. Being the problem solver that you are as a remodeler, you explain the whole theory about ventilation and ice dams, how the water backs up under the roofing, enters the soffit area and then follows the sheathing until it finds a way out through the siding. When you get up into the attic to determine how to vent the space as a way to help prevent future problems, you discover that the roof sheathing above that area is soaking wet all the way up to the chimney because the flashings have been leaking. Now you need to admit you were wrong and explain the real reason for the stains. Not only that, but after you discuss the cost of the sheathing and flashing repairs, now you need to explain and justify why they should still do the ventilation work. What do you think the homeowner is thinking now? What is their current confidence rating for you and your company? Now, think about the last time you tried to do something different at your company that didn't work, or caused other unexpected problems. Regardless of why it didn't work, what was your employees' confidence rating for you and the company? All changes, successful or not, result in a learning experience. Before making a commitment to change something, be sure of what you are committing to.

As you have probably speculated, there is a standard operating procedure for suggesting or making changes. I believe that all successful learning experiences should foster an ability to discover opportunities that, when properly implemented, can provide for lasting or permanent solutions.



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Typically, this includes three basic assumptions for the activities required to make an evolution of lasting or permanent changes to your client's home, your business, or your personal life:

(1) Self Discovery:

In order to facilitate and commit to any change, we must first self-discover and then admit that change is needed. This includes identifying what should change as well as the real reason(s) we are motivated to make the change(s). When working with a homeowner or employee, your role should be to help them see this clearly on their own, rather than see it for them. By asking the right questions, we should lead them towards providing us with the information needed to help create their solutions. An example of this would be to ask a lead carpenter who is looking for a pay increase a series of questions that would help him self discover where that money will come from. Hopefully, these questions end with something like "If I do more for the company, the company will have earned the money to pay me more".

(2) Discovery of Options:

Once committed to making any changes, we must become aware of the solution options available to us. By doing this, we can best choose the option(s) suited to meet our needs, or accomplish our goals. Everyone likes to have options, it's human nature. Even a mother can provide options to a young child. Her theory is to provide the right option, as well as other options that the child won't pick. She can do this because she knows that child's best option. She's responsible regardless of what the child chooses, but knows it will be a losing battle if she dictates the solution. It is different when dealing with adults. They are supposed to be responsible for their own decisions — that's why I suggest we don't dictate the solution. For that same employee, ask him what additional roles or responsibilities he could take on to earn that raise, and what he or the company will need to do to help accomplish that goal.

(3) Implementation of Your Solution:

Discovering the solution doesn't make the change happen by itself. All changes require making an ongoing commitment to the evolution of attitudes and behaviors required to make the change happen. Then consistent reinforcement is required to encourage and maintain the path towards lasting or permanent change. How many times have we found what we think is a solution to a problem or desire, but never really followed through on the plan until we made it happen? "I need to take time management classes, but I just can't seem to make the time". Poor time management is a behavior and attitude problem. If you don't change your attitude about making the commitment, you will never change the behavior of not scheduling the time. My own experience has shown me that involving others in your solution options helps facilitate the required changes. If someone else is participating in the changes, or at least monitoring them along with you, it is more likely you will follow through. After your employee discovers his options for increasing compensation, perhaps scheduling intermediate reviews along the way with him to monitor progress would help. Not only would he be more likely to follow through knowing you will be discussing it along the way, he will also know you're committed to helping him. Another benefit might be helping him re-focus if he is going astray, before it's too late. If he is promised a raise in six months assuming he achieves the established goals, how will he and you feel at that review if he has come up short? Mutual mystification can be deadly!

Ask yourself the questions. Am I committed? What am I committed to? How will I achieve my commitments? Who will help me get there? But don't ask yourself about your employees'



commitments. Ask them! Before you ask, maybe you should share my three-step process with them. Let me know what they and you think. My e-mail address is in the bio below!

Shawn McCadden is one of the most prominent figures in the remodeling industry. He obtained his builder's license by age 18; founded, operated, and sold a successful employee-managed design/build firm; co-founded the Residential Design/Build Institute; and went on to become director of education for a major national bath and kitchen remodeling company. Today he speaks frequently at industry conferences and trade shows, consults with remodeling companies, and writes a monthly column for Remodeling magazine.

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