

Side by Side Leadership

Trust is basic to the success of any relationship. Dale Dauten, author of *The Laughing Warriors: How to Enjoy Killing the Status Quo*, provides an interesting story in support of this truth.

The manager of a car rental agency noticed something interesting: His customers were intrigued by the rental process itself.

As they idly waited while the rental agent filled out forms on the computer, customers often tried to peer over the agent's shoulder to see the screen. Well, thought the manager, why not let them?

As an experiment, he repositioned the computer on a desk and added a chair for the customer. Now the customer and the agent sat side by side and viewed the screen. In effect, they were working together on the transaction – which was no longer a secret from the customer it was meant to serve.

Customers liked the new arrangement, and satisfaction measurements improved. But there were other benefits, too. The agency also sold more insurance and rented more upscale cars.



Why? Instead of being dependent on the agents for options, the customers could scout alternatives themselves. Seeing that they could get a convertible or more coverage for a little more money was more appealing than having the agent push “extras” on them.

The manager's success follows basic leadership principles. The more people can choose to be involved in what affects them, the more control over their fate they feel. The more control, the more they trust the process and those who run it.

And the more trust ... well, you know the rest. Especially in health care.

– Beecher Hunter