

Tuxedo in a Manhole

Back in the 1920s, an executive of the New York Telephone Company stopped in amazement one evening to observe a man in a tuxedo emerging from a manhole at the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway.

The man turned out to be Burch Foraker, head of the Bell Telephone system in New York City. On that cold January night, Foraker had come out of a theater and descended into the manhole as though it was part of his job.

Was there a crisis? Was he worried about some serious difficulty in the system? Nothing of the sort.

“I knew there were a couple of my cable splicers working down there, so I just dropped in on ‘em to have a little chat,” said Foraker.

In time, Foraker became known as the “man of 10,000 friends,” due in part to the fact that he made a habit of visiting his men at their work. It was his way of showing that he considered their jobs important.

What about in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home? Does that same message get delivered in meaningful ways?

Good executive directors and managers show their associates that they respect their ability. They display a genuine interest in what they are doing. They drop by, chat a bit, ask a few questions, listen carefully to the answers and perhaps make a good suggestion or take away an important idea.

It’s a practice worth following. It never does any harm, and it can do a lot of good.

--Beecher Hunter