

## Let's Get Practical

# Interview: Mark Williams, Brokers International CEO

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As a leader, talk is cheap. Action is what counts and practice makes a difference. Below are practical steps to improve performance.

- Stay flexible in order to remain competitive in a rapidly changing environment. Be willing to shed old-school thinking!
- Don't forget to include your own employees when gathering "The Voice of The Customer". Think of your employees as internal customers whose input not only matters, but is critical if you're going to effectively serve your external customers.
- As a leader, give yourself permission to change your mind. Make decisions, gather data and be willing to call an audible when necessary.
- Take care of yourself first! Take walks, step away, manage your stress, and do whatever you can to stay in a healthy state of mind, body and spirit. Then, create the same environment for your employees and reinforce to them the importance of taking care of themselves.
- Be transparent with your people, listen to their ideas and concerns, and convey care and respect by acknowledging you hear them. Employees will get behind you and support your decisions once they know you listened and considered their input.
- Be proactive and willing to invest dollars and creative problem-solving to improve diversity and inclusion in your business. Resist accepting historical constraints like industry- or geographic demographics as excuses to accept the status quo.
- To hire the right people into the right seats, start with a clear list of the most important accountabilities of the position, then ask yourself "where can I find this person?". Resist the urge to have a one-size-fits-all job profile and expect to have different profiles for different roles.
- Do everything in your business through the lens of your Core Values. Hire (and fire!) to them, manage to them, coach employees up to them, live and lead them as CEO and Executive Team, choose your customers and vendors by them, and let them guide both routine and complex business decisions. *"If you're going to post them on the wall, then you'd better be willing and ready to live them."*

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- Behold the power of levity! Be willing to laugh at yourself and not take yourself so seriously that you struggle to lead yourself and others through the challenges of running a business. Be fun and make it fun.
- Trust your people even when you can't physically see them working. They want to do a good job for you, so convey your confidence and trust in them. Fear-based leaders create fear-based businesses.
- Remember the importance of Work/Life Balance. Things happen that you just can't control, but keeping sight of the important things will get you through. Be compassionate with yourself and others as you navigate through them.
- Welcome mistakes and don't ever be afraid to ask for a redo! It's imperative to admit your mistakes and ask for a chance (and sometimes help) to fix them.
- Additionally, allow and encourage others to make mistakes, as well! *"If you're not making mistakes, you're not working!"* Just don't make the same mistakes over and over and over.
- In times of change, rather than hunker down and withdraw, overcommunicate instead. When things are in flux, the importance of communication raises exponentially.
- Acknowledge and reward innovation, and recognize that the best innovations often come from your own employees. Ask for them, consider them, implement them, and then reward people for it! Your business will be better for it.
- Almost exclusively, the cause of your frustration is unmet expectations, and far too often, your expectations weren't met because they weren't clear. Master the art of clear expectations.
- Invest in your employees' success, but **their** definition of success, not your own. If you help them get where they want to go, they'll help you get where you want to go.

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