

GROWERTALKS

Growers Talk Business

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The Waves of Spring

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Due to printing deadlines, I'm always wary to write an article about spring when we're right at the start of spring. And yet, by the time you're reading this, it's near the end of spring.

As we all know, a great week in April doesn't always lead to a great season and a bad month of March doesn't always lead to a bad season. Additionally, in today's fast-paced social media world, the written word is a risky proposition, but I move forward with the understanding that just like the weatherperson, you're right sometimes and wrong other times, but you keep your job either way for some reason.

I do find that when spring does hit hard for each of us, one of our main jobs as leaders is coaching. Coaching can mean a lot of things to a lot of people, but three things about coaching this spring come to mind for my team.

1. Accomplishable Goals—One of the strengths of any great live goods company is rolling with the flow and working through the nonsense we call spring. In this arena, and especially this time of year, our goal as leaders should be to make an accomplishable plan daily for each person so your team celebrates the tasks they get done versus being frustrated by the tasks they didn't get accomplished.

No matter how good your organization is, they never accomplish all of their daily goals in the heat of spring, and if they do, you didn't set the goals high enough. But when it gets crazy and we're just working day to day, it's vital everyone feels a sense of accomplishment each day, and that you take time as a leader to recognize it.

I'm struck by how many times I visit with our teams and I hear things like, "Thanks for the note you sent me two years ago after that store walk. It meant a lot to me." People, especially in the retail environment or any field role, can sometimes have a feeling of "does anybody care or know what I am doing?" By making an accomplishable goal list and then recognizing the work, you can get a lot more out of folks than they even think they can give.

2. Have a Game Plan—Nothing is more frustrating than working eight months getting ready for spring and then throwing that plan out the door in eight minutes when something doesn't go exactly according to the plan. Part of keeping your team engaged and aligned is to have a game plan for spring that charts out the weeks and lets everyone know that in the madness, there's a method to it.

Every spring is different, but there are key moments and inflection points that happen each year that you have to be ready for. If your team sees a vision of what you want to accomplish before the season starts, they'll stay focused on that vision and fight each day to make it happen in the craziness of spring.

3. Keep it to the Basics—The busier it gets, the more the plan needs to be simplified for teams to execute. Spring is when we have to make it happen, but when your team gets competing or confusing priorities, it makes it harder for them to execute. To that end, make your plans that are focused on the biggest return easy to execute.

For example, one of our biggest directions is to "control what you can control with positivity." Sounds crazy, but nothing brings down the company mood or customer mood than a disgruntled employee/associate. Our direction needs to be to let go of the things we cannot control outside of our influence.

Much of that starts with the attitude we begin with each day. If we walk into a greenhouse/store grumpy, we'll spread that to all we come in contact with. Again, keep it to the basics and it's easier for your team to execute.

Net, our team does all we can to bring a positive attitude to each day and do what we can for our customer's success. That's our game plan, it's accomplishable and it keeps it to the basics. Then, we tell everyone to take some personal pride when you look back over your shoulder at the end of each day. We tell them it always looks much better than it did when you arrived and what you did *MATTERED*. Nothing is more important than your people, and if they feel their work is valued, they will give you 110% everyday. **GT**

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