

THE FISH PHILOSOPHY



I heard shouting and turned to see a fish hurling through the air into a man's arms. A cheer followed, and the fish was expertly wrapped and given to a laughing woman. I was laughing, too. I watched for fifteen minutes. The shouts, cheers, and laughing continued—mixed with flying fish. At the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, Washington, it's another day at work. We should all learn something from them. It's called the FiSH! Philosophy.

You may not ever see yearbooks and fish in the same story again, but at Pike's, the energy and enthusiasm for selling fish can help you sell yearbooks and have more fun doing it.

The FiSH! Philosophy, inspired by Pike Place Fish Market and developed by Charthouse®, is not a rule book or five-step program. It's about finding what works, deciding what you believe in and being excited about it. It's not handed down as law from the top. From the Web site, "if you impose anything from the top, over time, that's exactly where it will remain." The book has sold more than 4 million copies worldwide in 34 languages and helps organizations of all kinds improve the atmosphere where they work. It's a way to think, which becomes the way we act and the way we communicate with others so choose your words carefully.

For every order, the employees at Pike's yell it out together, then one guy grabs the fish and high-speed pitches it to his coworker waiting with the wrapping paper. Sometimes they involve the audience. They let the buyer try to catch it (it never works and that's even funnier), or they "talk" to a customer by moving the fish's mouth (hilarious). They greet everyone, even people who are not stopping. Everyone—Pike's Fish guys and the audience—cheers for a good catch. The energy is contagious. The attitude draws people in. People come from all over the world to buy their fish. You can learn what they've done and create a FiSH! Philosophy for your yearbook program at school.

There are four parts to the FiSH! philosophy:

BE THERE

Paying attention to people makes them feel important and makes them feel involved. You know how you feel when you get fast food and the employee never even looks at you? Engage people with eye contact, a smile and your full attention. If someone is considering buying a book, a positive interaction with you can make the sale. Remember that you are the human contact between the book and the student buyer. Share your excitement! Let them know this book is for them!

PLAY

If you're going to spend time and effort on the book, you've got to have some fun! Some of the most successful companies in the world encourage fun because they know it can improve energy, productivity and attitude. For example, the famous SAS® Institute in Cary, NC, has live music in the cafeteria, an unbelievable gym and jars of candy everywhere. Employees throw Frisbees® at lunch! Playing fosters creativity, relaxes and recharges us. Playing around with something can give you the mental flexibility to find a new method.

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Playing is also seeing humor in what we do. It's making those around us enjoy the experience. Post a funny typo on the wall (if it doesn't offend anyone, including the writer). Take funny photos of each staff member and exhibit them. When others see what's going on in yearbook, they'll want to see what all the fun is about.

MAKE THEIR DAY

If you've had a rough morning, something as simple as a compliment or a door being held for you can make your day. It could be a lollipop given to each yearbook buyer, or a "bouquet" of ten to every tenth buyer, who can then make other people smile by sharing them. There are unlimited creative and inexpensive ways to brighten someone's day. It will make them think, "Hey, this is a good place to be. I want to be part of it." Making their day will make yours too.

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE

This is the most important element of FiSH! Bad things happen all the time, but how we react to them is a choice. Is it going to be "that just ruined my day" or "when people ask me about this am I going to laugh?" Choosing isn't putting on a front. It's seeing the situation for what it is, deciding what kind of person you want to be and dealing with it the best way you can. Be aware of the fact that your reaction will affect others. You can make it better or worse. You know what you'd want others to do.

Be innovative in creating your own philosophy. Your school is different from others. What will make people react positively? What should you avoid? How can you increase the fun and energy and the belief in what you are doing as a team? Look to FiSH!

Learn more at www.charthouse.com or www.fishphilosophy.com.

Contributed by:

Leah Wong

Herff Jones Sales Professional, NC

Yearbook Discoveries

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