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SHOULD YOU PROMOTE BASED ON SENIORITY?

NO TWO EMPLOYEES ARE EVER TRULY EQUAL

HOW do you decide which employee deserves a promotion? If you make promotion decisions using seniority as the sole criterion, you're making a major mistake. If you run a union shop, maybe you have to, but otherwise promoting based solely on seniority is not just an imperfect solution – it's a terrible solution.

Plus it's also a cop-out – everyone I've ever talked to who promoted based on seniority eventually admitted they did so not because it was the most objective way to make the decision, but because it allowed them to avoid having that difficult conversation when they had to tell people why they weren't selected for the job.

If that's the main reason you promote is based on seniority, shame on you. Your employees – especially your best employees – deserve better.

There are a number of problems with seniority-based promotions:

They stifle motivation. Why should people work harder? As long as they meet job requirements, all they have to do is wait their turn.

They stifle initiative. Why should people volunteer? Why should people step up? It doesn't help them.

They fuel resentment.

Some employees will still work harder. Some will still step up. That's how they're made. Then they watch relative slackers get promoted. They have such a solid work ethic, they still work hard, but boy do they resent those who don't, and yet are still rewarded.

They hinder recruiting.

No superstar wants to work in an environment where their talents aren't rewarded. Promote based on seniority and soon, the only people you'll attract are those who are attracted to a seniority-based system – and you don't want those folks.

They create a culture of mediocrity. How you treat your employees is often how they will treat customers. If you don't expect and then reward excellence, why would your employees think your customers deserve excellence?

Besides that, seniority is already baked into the process. An employee with three years on the job should be a better candidate for promotion than an

employee with one year. He or she has had more time to gain skills, to achieve more, to build better connections with



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customers and vendors and other employees. The longer-term employee has a huge advantage.

If a newer employee is still the better candidate, either the employee with more tenure didn't put their time advantage to good use, or the newer employee is a superstar, and, either way, deserves the promotion.

Of course that means you need to really know your employees.

But that's okay; nothing is more important than how you treat your employees; everything follows from that. So if you think it's too much trouble to know your employees, to know their skills and talents, to know their strengths and weaknesses and put them in spots where they can showcase their strengths and improve their weaknesses, then you need to get someone else to run your business.

And if all this doesn't convince you, here's one more reason.

Say your company competes with businesses that have greater "length of service." Imagine how you would you feel if a potential customer said: "We're going to go with ACME just because they've been in business longer."

In your mind, customers shouldn't care about the fact you're newer; they should choose you because you're better.

In short, you want your market to be a meritocracy.

Shouldn't you treat your employees the same way you want your customers to treat you?



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HOW TO CUDDLE UP WITH "NO"

By **DAN ROCKWELL**
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DREAMERS swim in an ocean filled with doom and gloomers who love pointing out danger.

Dreamers start with "Yes". Everyone else seems like a kill-joy. Dreamers see resistance when others don't fall in love with their ideas.

Doom and gloomers seem resistant to optimistic dreamers.

CUDDLE UP WITH "NO"

"No" comforts doom and gloomers. They won't get in over their heads. They're protecting current wins. They need a clear path to the end, before they begin. (All good stuff)

Don't offer flippant answers.

The worst thing you can do is minimise real concerns.

You can't win hearts and minds by pressuring reluctant people into conformity.

Bring ideas to doom and gloomers. Listen to concerns. Say: "Thank you. Let's think about that." Walk away. Don't offer solutions.

When you flippantly answer the real concerns of doom and gloomers you invite them to dig into their bucket of doom. They're compelled to convince you that you aren't seeing reality. Frankly, their concerns may be justified.

When you trivialise the concerns of others, you seem ignorant, out of touch, closed, and stubborn.

Stay open to the possibility that a doom and gloomer is at least 10% right.



7 QUESTIONS THAT DRAW WISDOM FROM DOOM AND GLOOM:

Engage doom and gloomers early. Say: "I'm thinking about this new initiative. What comes to mind?"

What's behind your concern/reluctance? Listen for things they're protecting. You may agree.

How might we test this idea? Who might know more about this?

What happens if we do nothing? This question assumes your idea is a legitimate offer to solve a real problem.

What might a pilot program look like?

Can we make this better? "Yes" to

this question invites people to find ways to make new ideas work.

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