

In addition to customers, there's one more relationship critical to the success of a brand: the relationship you have with your people. You need people who are motivated and engaged, who want to deliver the high level of service that will have your customers coming back for more.

You can't have great results without great people. I absolutely understand the challenges inherent in keeping a restaurant staffed with quality people. My Division at McDonald's included 2,500 restaurants and 130,000 people.

At McDonald's, my solution was to create what I called a "People First" culture throughout my Division. "People First" means that we do everything we can to empower our people to get the job done for us. That included setting standards and behaviors defining what we expected from our people and the support they could count on from us.

It also included a challenge to our franchisees to "Take it personally" not only to embrace the "People First" culture, but to role model behaviors to be proud, and inspire pride; to be committed, and inspire commitment. To have "infectious enthusiasm" for the business.

People pick up on your energy, your passion, more than on what you say. If you're not excited about your business, you can't expect your people to be.

Another of my key crew initiatives was an All-American Crew Competition that gave crew kids, shift managers, and maintenance people the opportunity to strut their stuff. It gave us the opportunity to recognize outstanding performance and thank the people who make it happen in the restaurants.

A second important benefit of the program was its year-long emphasis on customer service and operations excellence, since the road to the All-American finals included local, area, and regional competitions held over many months. We also used the All-American competition to select the crew that staffed McDonald's restaurants at the Olympic Games.

Think what it would be like for your customers to be served by a crew of "everyday All-Americans" who were inspired at an All-American level of excitement, pride, and dedication to "Being the Best". What would it be like if you had that level of motivation, intensity, and commitment behind your brand, every day?