

# Walking the Talk is Crucial in the Business Arena

*Woodall's Campground Management – From My View – July 2001*

A minister recently told of an incident that I think illustrates as well as possible the importance of walking the talk. He is pastor of a 5-year-old Sacramento-area church that holds a Saturday evening and three Sunday morning services to accommodate the growing congregation that numbers several thousand. It is the only church I have ever visited where one or two highway patrol officers are on duty to direct traffic in and out of the parking lot.

Here is his story:

Having several younger children who are active in various sports, one of which is soccer, he found himself with about two hours between matches. To kill time, he decided to visit the nearby shopping mall. After finding the items he needed in a well-known department store, he proceeded to a checkout counter. He was second in line behind an elderly lady with a large number of items.

As the sales clerk was ringing up the woman's items, a couple of friends or relatives were adding more items on the already large stack.

Now the minister admitted that he is not normally overly patient, since he is an action Type A person. However, on this day he figured he had time to spend between the games and began to converse with another lady who has now joined him in line. As the items are each processed one item at a time he remarked: "Guess we got in the wrong line."

As several minutes dragged by, finally the sales clerk rang in the last item and the elderly lady handed the clerk a credit card. Guess what happened? The card was declined.

After a short conversation the elderly lady turned and walked away. Now the sales clerk had to delete each item from the register one item at a time, since they must also be put back into the stores inventory. The minister looked at his watch and decided that since he has waited this long and it is still a while before the next match, he might just as well stand by until the process was completed and the sales person could take care of his three items.

Finally his task was completed and as he began to move towards the exit he was startled by a voice that said: "Pastor Ray, you passed my test." He inquired as to what the person meant and the lady said: "I happened to notice you standing in line there and also what was going on. I decided I would just stand here for a while and watch to see if you practiced what you preach, and you passed the test." To this the pastor simply said "God bless you" and continued on his way.

Most of us have heard the old adages: "Practice what you preach" and "What you do speaks so loud I can't hear what you say." It is important that as owners/managers and leaders in our industry we "walk the talk." We must set the proper attitude for our employees not by words but by our actions.

If you expect your staff to treat your guests with cheerfulness, respect and courtesy then you must set the example. And you must also treat them with cheerfulness, respect and courtesy. Remember that a picture is worth a thousand words. Lead by example. Perhaps it would be a good idea to post these words on your office wall: Walk the Talk.

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