

**THINK LIKE BUSINESS  
OWNERS: FROM HR COMPLIANCE TO  
CULTURAL CURIOSITY**

# MY STORY

An open notebook with blank pages lies flat on a light-colored surface. A silver pencil with a gold band is positioned diagonally across the right page. The background is a smooth gradient from light grey to dark grey.

It all started on 9-11...

PAY ME....

TO PAYROLL

As a business owner:

Balance the priority of customers and employees coming first

Establishing roles and responsibilities (mini-me vs anti-me)

Processes

Delegation

Reminding myself it's a business

About **MY** employees:

Their priorities

Backgrounds vs expectations

Aligning values and mindset

Showing appreciation, but...

Reminding them it's my business

**Early lessons – moving from EE to Owner**

# Let's talk ownership











## Signs you might be thinking like an owner

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You start to see design and intention.

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You think, "I could do that!"

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You don't see things as static.

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Evolution and revolution excite you!

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Everything is a question: WWWWW&H



ECONOMIST  
FORECASTER  
RISK MANAGER

AND...HR PROFESSIONAL



# How does this translate to HR?

Put on your own oxygen mask first.

Remember, your first priority: Protect the company (but not at the price of jeopardizing the people and culture)

Don't only focus on the here and now; think about the "there and when"

Think about what you need to model to and expect of others.

Build your employee engagement strategy:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledge employee value</li><li>• Listen and respond</li><li>• Plan and communicate</li><li>• Delegate and empower</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train to values/culture</li><li>• Teach, don't preach / 3 then me</li><li>• Celebrate failure</li><li>• Recognize and reward</li></ul> |
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# USE CULTURE

Feel passionate about  
their jobs

Are committed to the  
organization

Put discretionary  
effort into their work



# Acknowledge employee value

Set clear expectations that align with company goals and vision

Set employee goals that allow for “stretch and achieve”

Trust in the reasons you hired them

Allow for autonomy

Compensate for knowledge, skills, and abilities

Compensate equitably and consistently through a transparent comp plan

# Listen and respond

Conduct surveys, do listening meetings, conduct orientation/stay/exit interviews

Invite employees to be part of the solution through helping design the solution

Create a safe environment that promotes and rewards ideation, WWWWW&H, and constructive disagreements (the egg; yes, and...)

Acknowledge ideas not only verbally, but through body language and eye contact

Recognize and teach that listening is not just with your ears – respond to all the cues



# Plan and communicate

Share information (financials, long-term strategy, decision-making processes, the WHY)

Share consistent information throughout the organization

Build and model productive and effective communication and expect it from everyone

Have a plan but be prepared to pivot

Encourage WWWW&H

Conduct regular check-ins

# Empower

Delegate and empower – explain it, “constrain it,” then let ‘em go

Expect (and demonstrate) accountability

Create a culture around “Be curious, not judgmental.”

Encourage initiative

Keep the faith



# Train to values and culture

Share the big picture

Reinforce values and culture

Tie actions and words to culture and values

Be honest and transparent

Give the WHY

Remove barriers so employees CAN work

Shut down negativity

MBWA

# Teach, don't preach / 3 then me

Invest in your employees – help them see their future

Telling isn't learning – demonstrate/model what you want

Encourage managers and supervisors to use a “3, then me” approach; encourage the “figure it out factor”

Ask probing/open-ended questions

Give feedback regularly

Debrief to learn and revise

# Celebrate failure

Failure is:

- A learning opportunity – we learn what's missing
- Resilience building – we learn how to respond
- A chance for self-reflection – we learn what matters
- A motivator for change – we learn how to start again
- A crucial part of growth and development – we learn what's next

# Recognize and reward

Acknowledge efforts

Say thank you

Reward initiative, even if it doesn't go exactly to plan

Utilize incentives, bonuses, recognition, and career advancement (vertical and horizontal) to motivate continued desirable performance



It's less "work to live" and more "live to work"

It's more about stepping up than stepping out

They've embraced the egg

They simultaneously think 5 steps ahead while working out steps 1-4

They own and learn from their failures

They equate risk with opportunity

They collaborate and help pull others along

They're present and turnover is reduced

Work quality increases



***And when your employees take ownership, managers are freed up to MANAGE***

# What do "owner" employees look like?



**Thank you!**

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