

Improve Your Management

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SPEAKERS

Ralph Peterson, Halie Morris

H Halie Morris 00:32
Hello, everyone, and welcome to the business of cleaning. My name is Haley Morris. I'm your podcast coordinator and host today I have with me Ralph Peterson. And Ralph is going to come in to help us talk about our structure of our management teams and how we format our business for success. So I'm going to go ahead and let Ralph introduce himself and we'll jump in from there.

R Ralph Peterson 00:52
Hi, thank you so much for having me. I own a housekeeping management company. And actually, my forte is in teaching so I teach a lot of housekeeping management principles and tools in healthcare. So my main industry is healthcare, nursing homes, long term care, assisted living hospitals, that kind of thing.

H Halie Morris 01:10
All right, well, thank you out of curiosity, how did you get into this type of business?

R Ralph Peterson 01:14
Completely by accident, actually, my first I grew up I grew up wanting to be a housekeeper No, I actually got in the house got I got my first housekeeping job. When I

was 16. And I got a job, my friend got me a job working cleaning condominiums in a ski resort. And they would be rented out for a day or two or three for people coming up for skiing. And it was one of the greatest jobs I ever had. And it's so funny to think that it would be, it doesn't sound like it'd be a good fit for a 16 year old man during housekeeping but a couple of things. One, I was the only guy that was very helpful. And I know. And, and not only that, but um, but you you get a lot of, of people leave stuff behind. And so it's that time when this was, you know, 25, 30 years ago at this point. But at the time, if they left something behind, you got to keep it, you know, you had to wait like 30 days, but I got like the best pair of sweat pants in the entire universe. And you could you they would leave beer and vodka and you know, unopened bags of potato chips, and it was just like one fun. And not only that, but I was a pretty good worker, we could work on my own. And so I quickly got asked if I wanted to be an inspector, which is somebody who just goes behind other cleaners just to make sure that the condo was clean, as you know the way it's supposed to be. And that little bit of authority was enough for me to just absolutely love it. You know, and then that's really how it started.

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Halie Morris 02:50

I could probably, I think dive into that so much, because I'm sure you have so many interesting stories. I'm very curious, what brand Do you wear these sweatpants that they were so nice. So they were 80's style condominiums to be specific. They were very-

R

Ralph Peterson 03:02

Like, how dare you? They were Reebok actually. They were blue. They're Reebok Absolutely, yeah, they were. This is this is now you know, this is 1986, 1987. So long time ago, long time ago. of course, of course, they were the cutting edge at the time. They were- you know what it was nothing like I had ever seen before. I didn't even know housekeeping was a business I would have never applied for the job had my friend not told me about it. And it was just one of those things where it was fun. It was easy. You know, housekeeping is easy. You know, that's the best part about housekeeping. It's not hard work. It's busy work. And so if you got a good routine, and you can stay busy, if you have somebody who can stay on task, it's really not that laborious of a job. It's just busy. It can be gross sometimes too, which is, of course, of course part of the challenge.

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Halie Morris 04:07

yeah, we have somebody who comes over once a month because I live with my parents in our house is huge, is ginormous. And she's like I love cleaning your house like she gets so excited and I was like this cleaning but she and you know kind of listening to you now I

have started to like picture why she might like it especially because we are the people who tidy up to make her job easier. My dad's like the cleaners coming tomorrow, you have to pick all your stuff up. And then I'm like um, she's coming to clean and then I'm over there picking everything up and making my room look nice for her.

R Ralph Peterson 04:44

yeah, let me say on her behalf. We appreciate that because picking up is not exactly cleaning and the more you pick up, the easier it is for us to clean.

H Halie Morris 04:52

Mm hmm. We always laugh though because my dad would come come through the kitchen spraying

R Ralph Peterson 04:57

Well, no, that's cleaning

H Halie Morris 05:00

He's gotten better about it, but he would actually start cleaning before she came. And we could just sit there and watch. I'm like, What are you doing? She's gonna wonder what we brought her in for. Yeah.

R Ralph Peterson 05:12

Yeah, we never want to. And you know, the other thing about the cleaning industry is it's the type of job that you can get instant satisfaction from you immediately see, it's clean, it was dirty. Now, look at this room. Now you don't I mean, you walk into a room and you're like, Oh, my gosh, where do I begin here and you start in the back corner and you start working to it, you turn around, you're like, hey, you're that instant? You get to see the impact you just made right then in there. And it's so great. It's

H Halie Morris 05:40

my room get messy before I clean it for you. It's higher satisfaction. Definitely, why? Sure. And not because I have too many pillars. I just hate picking them up off the floor after I started them off my bed. So nothing to do with that. But no, that's it's very interesting. So you've definitely seen like both sides of it. And that gives you that leg up and a position

like this now where you're teaching people

R

Ralph Peterson 06:07

and I work in healthcare, and so in healthcare, housekeeping is different in that it takes on a different focus. So there's two, there's two focuses of housekeeping really, in any industry, whether it's home cleaning, or office cleaning, and one is the straightening up. It's the presentation, it's the making sure things look good. And then the other part is the cleaning the actual soap and disinfecting, and you have bathrooms and counters and all that until in. In healthcare, it's even more of a divided line where you have to you start with a presentation like let's just make sure the pillows are where they're supposed to be on the couches, and the chairs are where they're supposed to be because for some reason, they're always moved at night. And so when you come in in the morning, all the lobby chairs are somewhere else. So that that straightening up, so it's all presentation, make sure it smells good, you know, so it always has to smell good. So it's a weird thing. But housekeeping is the type of industry that everybody in the world knows whether or not you're doing a good job, whether they've worked in the field or not, whether they're an expert or not. Everybody thinks they are an expert. And of course they only do two things to tell if it's clean their eyeballs and their noses. And so if it looks dirty, it is dirty. If it smells dirty, it is dirty, even if it's not dirty. There are times when orders happen without it place being dirty you can imagine. And there's also a time when you can have the cleanest building or cleanest home and pillows are on the floor for some reason. And the whole house looks like a mess. You couldn't find high dust anywhere. But because the pillows are on the floor the whole house looks like a mess. That's the challenge.

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Halie Morris 07:48

That's how my room is if my pillow well, and again, I have too many pillows on my bed but I haven't found the will depart with them yet. So when they're not on my bed, my room looks disorganized. If they're on my bed, my bed is made. The room can have stuff scattered throughout it. And it looks a lot cleaner. It's a magic magic switch.

R

Ralph Peterson 08:08

It is it is you just talked about the most important housekeeping focus. And that's the floor. floors are It doesn't matter if again, if it's a home a hospital and nursing home, go next time you go to a shopping center go to Target or Walmart just pay attention now how the floors Look, I guarantee their floors look amazing. And there's only reason one reason why their floors look amazing because they know what's necessary. They know how important it is people shop more people feel more comfortable in a store that's got bright lighting

shiny floors. That is there dust Yes. Is there spills. Yes. Or is there some disorganization? Yes. Do customers care if the floors? I mean, if the floors look good, and it's nice and bright, the customers care? Nope. But if you make those floors doll, if you take out some of those lights, everybody notices the smallest thing out of place, because they're just looking for more dirt. So floorcare Oh my gosh, it's the number one. Most floor cares more important than cleaning toilets.

H

Halie Morris 09:13

I believe it because I've been to I have a dog took her to the vet. And the floor was sticky. And like it might not have even been dirty, dirty. But it was sticky. And it felt nasty just walking on it like you felt like you were walking on something dirty and disgusting. And it was back when I got my dog and I was still like younger. So my dad come with me. He's like, we're not coming back here.

R

Ralph Peterson 09:37

Just because of that law. And just because the floor goes to the floor. That's such a great example. That is 1,000,000%. Exactly. And you wouldn't believe how many people push back against that. People and especially in health care. They really think they really really think that. You know, there's a there's a big question about infection control. not to get too Far inside baseball, but how does infection control spread? There's the real way it spreads. And then there's the thought way it spreads. The real way it spreads is through hand to hand contact, it's from people not washing their hands. How is COVID spread because people are not wearing masks, right because they're breathing on each other. However, even though it's from hand washing and from breathing, I can't tell you how many people believe it actually is from surface to surface touching. As if if my desk touched your desk, both desks would come down with the Coronavirus. It's simply not the case. Nine out of 10 times it's actually person to person contact and breathing. So you would say, if you have, you've only have one housekeeper show up, and you can only do floor care, make the floors look good or clean and disinfect, like a clean a room, people would say cleaning the room is most important and it isn't. Washing your hands is important. Let me do the floors.

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Halie Morris 10:55

But the clean the floors to your people are gonna believe they did the rest of the claim for us.

R Ralph Peterson 10:59
1,000,000% that tray. So if you don't have clean floors, everything, everything dirty, looks even more dirty, clean floors, everything dirty, looks less dirty. It's so true.

H Halie Morris 11:12
and I didn't realize it until you said it. But that is

R Ralph Peterson 11:16
floorcare the number one most important. In any in a bank, at church at schools, everywhere most important is floorcare.

H Halie Morris 11:28
I'm gonna remember that as I start looking at houses here shortly. Alright, so you've got this experience, you really understand the industry inside and out and you've worked it I'm very one last question before we dive in just because I'm curious. How did you go from cleaning condominiums at a ski resort to working in the healthcare side of the cleaning industry?

R Ralph Peterson 11:51
I got recruited. You know what's funny is I I, I took a job as a housekeeping manager with a company when I was so I stopped working in housekeeping when I was 18. I only worked in it for a couple of seasons. Prior to being an ATM, then I worked in construction. And then I went to night school and I got an associate's degree, then I got a bachelor's degree, then I got another bachelor's degree. And then I eventually got my master's degree. But after I got my second, I earned my second bachelor's degree, I got a call from a recruiter who was recruiting for a management company that he said was growing by leaps and bounds. And I just got out of the Marine Corps and they were looking for people who could lead teams and make decisions. And and I mean, it was like a 45 minute conversation. And to be honest, I was in I thought everything he said matched with what I wanted to do about leading teams and being in charge and developing people. Everything sounded great. And then right at the last minute, right before we're about that hang up and I'm I'm literally accepting the job over the phone sight unseen. He goes, by the way, this is in housekeeping. But that doesn't matter, does it? And for a split second, I just thought it's housekeeping. Sounds like it really doesn't matter. If housekeeping is this great. If there's that much opportunity in housekeeping, sign me up. I'm in. And I

remember talking to my friends and saying I just took this job at this housekeeping company and the looks. They're like, Are you crazy? You just graduated with your second bachelor's degree you just got in the Marine Corps, you're going to work in housekeeping. Like Yeah, but i think that i think it's going to be really great. Nobody, everybody thought I lost my mind. And that was you know, 15 years ago, 20 years ago. So I've been doing it ever since. And it was right. It was working in nursing homes, and I still am in it once you start working in nursing homes, if you like it, because it's not for everybody. But I love it. I just I love it. It's so it's challenging. And it's fun. And there's routines and you can develop relationships. And of course, I've met some of the most incredible people that we've served, you know, residents who have lived there, and it's rather a real big impact on me. So I really enjoy it.

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Halie Morris 14:10

That it's the stigma that people have for the industry is really sad sometimes especially I'm coming from I came out of college, and I've been working for this company for a year and they offered me a marketing position. They said we want you to create a podcast. And they're like, well, no two podcasts one for our JM side of things. So with janitorial manager, we're have integrated ourselves into the cleaning industry, our team that works for that product really considers themselves part of the cleaning industry has fully jumped into it and committed and what's cool is watching it as new people come on sales reps or customer service and they start to learn the industry and get into it and it's like it is this whole world. But everything that you see in any other business at all exists here. And it's like you said it doesn't matter if you're doing those kind of coaching And those management type roles in, you know, like this big marketing agency where a cleaning industry, like, actually, I probably wouldn't be the clean industry because sometimes the marketing people get a little. I don't want to say like this, it's it's got its own stigmas, you know, and if they're dealing with social media, so I like that I can post on social media. Yeah, but I don't have to, like, completely wrap myself around that world. My world is podcasting is the cleaning industry. And this is where I'm having the most fun out of two podcasts I'm running, this is the one that I can get into. And there's people like you out there that just have this plethora of wonderful knowledge, and are so willing to share and help others come up and learn that stuff as well. So,

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Ralph Peterson 15:50

yeah, it's amazing. You're absolutely right, I understand, especially if you're thinking like, the clunkiness of industries, right, and how it's so easy for people in my industry to get pushed on the outside. But I gotta tell you, I meet some people in my industry in housekeeping. And I'm just like, man, it is that everybody else has lost that they're under

estimating that person because they are so amazing and smart. And if you think for a minute, you know, let me put a little number on it. housekeeping is the eighth largest industry in the world.

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Halie Morris 16:23

That's crazy in the world. That is huge, like people are understanding,

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Ralph Peterson 16:28

right industry, world wide. Every building. You see, every commercial building you see is being cleaned by a housekeeping company or housekeeper somewhere. Most homes are being cleaned by independent housekeepers. Every school is being cleaned by independent housekeepers, every hospital, every nursing home, it is humongous, and into you think for one second, that we are not smart and driven and educated. You're, you're you're you're, I mean, it's a billion dollar industry.

H

Halie Morris 17:00

I think the most brilliant people finding a way here because honestly, like just the people I've talked to through here, so brilliant, and taking advantage of such a great opportunity. But it's not just that, like they don't just like take any opportunity they they kind of spread it like they really want to raise their business up and do great. And then to go out there when they're actually out doing the job. They're still kind of on the fringes you know. It's been an interesting year for sure for like that visibility aspect. But no, I this is a really cool industry. I'm excited to when COVID stop and I can start to push my way to in person events and getting to see people in person. So

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Ralph Peterson 17:39

we're hosting in person events. Now we're not even waiting anymore, because we work in because we work in long term care. Here's the truth. We've been around the Coronavirus, working with people who have the Coronavirus, since the Coronavirus, started in March of last year. And we know how to handle it. We know how to deal with it. We know how to manage it, we go to restaurants we go out to eat, we're going to the grocery store to say that we can't have an in person event and we were all done. Listen, I work in a nursing home with 500 other people, I can go to an event with 20. Okay. You know what I mean? I'm going to a grocery store with 200 people that I can go to event with with 20 people.

H

Halie Morris 18:15

Certainly if I'm going to go to an in person event, one for the cleaning industry is more likely where I'd like to be then you know anyone else you at least know what you need to do to keep playing and not spread a virus 1,000,000% or at least need to clean.

R

Ralph Peterson 18:32

Probably more clean because everybody's got a product they're trying. Yeah. demonstrating your product. That's funny.

H

Halie Morris 18:37

Right? Right. All right. So what we did come together to talk about today, though, is with all of these cleaning businesses, and there's all kinds of various ones, whether you're in health care, whether you're cleaning commercial business buildings, or you're in private homes or schools, there is the management aspect of how everything gets done. And one thing I've learned talking to so many different people is there is like no set way that cleaning businesses are structuring their actual businesses to grow and handle their workloads. And so I wanted to kind of get your thoughts on how you think we're doing overall with that and where you would like to see more businesses go to improve their management.

R

Ralph Peterson 19:19

Okay. Well, I, I have been, I've written a bunch of books on management, I would say that I'm, as well read on the topic of management is, most people in my position where I've read an awful lot of theory, I read a lot about aggression and how to read people and how to talk to people and how to hire people and how to get the most out of people, how to motivate people, how to engage people how to communicate with you all of this big, circular kind of bubble of this is how you manage and I have found that none of it matters. It's completely irrelevant, if you don't have a system that you're managing until I always, it's, you know, it's kind of like that chicken in the egg theory, like what came first the chicken or the egg. A lot of times people talk about Management Development, about how to handle difficult people how to have tough conversations, how to communicate and engage and all that without ever taking the time to first learn about what you're managing, which is a system. Normally it's a system a process. And I think it's always backward. And I think that's what gets most people in trouble. you promote somebody to a leadership position. And the first question they have is, you know, I've never done this before, what should I do? And you say, you say, get everybody to work just like you do,

and you'll be fine. Well, that's not helpful at all. I mean, I just solved world hunger. If that was the case, I don't know. Just everybody eat the way I do. Okay? Could you imagine if that process worked? And so the truth is we teach we teach what we call a leadership system. And it's not. It's not anything complicated. It has three components, we break down the components, but it's super easy. Number one, make a decision? What are you trying to do? Trying to clean a living room? Great. I would ask a bunch of questions. How are you going to clean the living room? What are you going to use to clean delivering them? How much time are you going to give the cleaner living? And what time? Are you going to clean the living room? And of course, who is going to clean the living room? Who's going to check up on that kind of thing? The next step is communicate. Who are you communicating to you're communicating to the person who's supposed to be cleaning the living room? What are you going to be asking them, you're going to be curated? How are you going to communicate, you're going to communicate one on one in person, or you're going to communicate through somebody else, tell somebody to tell somebody else you're going to pull up, hold up flyers, you're going to make phone calls, you're gonna send a text message, how are you going to communicate. And then the third thing is real simple. Follow up, make sure it was done. That's, and then once you follow up, you're gonna find out one of the three things, either it's all good, everything got done, you want to get done, it's half good, meaning it's some of what you want to get done and got done, or it's not good at all, nothing got done. And what are you gonna do with art with any of those responses, you're gonna go right back to the top of that leadership cycle, you're going to make a decision, if it's all good decision is move on to the next project. If it's half good, your decision is, let's go finish the other half. If it's not good, your decision is let's rework the whole thing. But that leadership system, decide, communicate and follow up. If you don't learn that first, if you don't start and you can, literally, with that model, it's just three, a circle with three little points on it. I can insert anything on there, go to the store decisions to go to the store. Okay, how are you going to get there? Right, communicate what follow up? Did you get what you're supposed to be getting, you know, build a bridge. All right, that's the decision, let's break it down how we're going to build the bridge, I communicate to who we're going to build a bridge, follow up as a bridge built, here we go on a cross, right. So anything can be put in that. So that leadership says that's what's the most important. And I think, what I find, that's the biggest thing lacking, people are managing without even taking in paying attention to the system that they're trying to manage. So they're not given enough thought to what they're managing to. Because they're all like, I know how to motivate staff, your job is not to motivate staff, you know what a manager's job is to make sure the job gets done. That's it, that's it, the manager doesn't have the responsibility to change the job, they don't have the responsibility to come up with the job, they don't have the responsibility to make decisions about the managers job is to Hey, I need this building clean, I need this home clean, I need this factory clean. This is how we're doing it, I need you to make sure it gets done. That's

all a manager's job is manager's job is to manage the system using people to manage the system. If you don't know what the system as you've never heard of a leadership system, then you're gonna have a real tough time managing.



Halie Morris 24:00

I feel like that's so true in the way that a lot of people just say, okay, we're gonna go out and clean now. Like they don't stop and think about it. And that communication well, too, even if you can get to the decision, you make the decision, everybody's really good at, you know, deciding to do something or other. Communication is a huge hole for most people, in most places, whether it's home or professional, and then that follow up and follow through, like, you know, just where are you at what's going on what happened? It's, I took a really great change leadership type class back in college, and one of the big things was your measuring thing. everybody forgets to measure and assess what they've done. And if you don't do that, then why do you even do it? Because you're not going to look at it. It's like painting a picture not looking at the final piece. Okay.



Ralph Peterson 24:58

So nerves are important.



Halie Morris 25:01

I can come up with a lot of metaphors, very photographic person.



25:08

All right?



Halie Morris 25:10

When, okay, so say a company has been chugging along, and they realize they're not growing, or they're not able to handle the work well, whatever it is, they actually take a step back. And they, they look at their process and they said, this is not working. How do they get to that point where now they're actually looking at that leadership model? They're looking at like that management model of decision communication and follow up? How does a company that's already established processes, learn to switch and adapt something like that learn to actually operate more smoothly and do all the steps they should be doing?



Ralph Peterson 25:50

Well, I'll tell you the the first thing that as far as finding out whether or not you're doing a good job or not, do you know the only people who can tell you whether or not you have a good management team? Do you know who it is,



26:00

it's your team. Okay?



Ralph Peterson 26:02

Well, maybe the customer, your team is not a good indicator. It's actually the worst indicator, your team could be full of people who really like you, it would stick up for you and defend you from you know, held to high water, but your customer, customer don't care one thing about you, you know what the customer cares about, that. They care about themselves, and their money and what their value they're getting for their product or service. And so in housekeeping, if you have a if you have a home cleaning business, and you find yourself losing business, you're able to get the business. But if you're not able to keep the business, I'm telling you, it's because you don't have a good leadership system in place. Because it's all about leadership, you are not doing a good job with you've really got to make a good decision, we're gonna clean that house for these people for \$75 every two weeks great good decision, communicating you to the person who you're who you hired to clean it, all the rules and regulations, what the expectations are, and then following up, and then making that counter decision. That's the piece you're not doing. That's there's one of those pieces that are not being done not being met. And that's the reason why you're losing business. That's the reason why you're getting poor reviews. That's the reason perhaps why you're not getting any referrals. referrals are a good indicator on whether or not you're doing a good job as well. Because it takes a lot for somebody to refer somebody else. How many times you refer somebody, right? Let's say you go to Target and go I love this target. I'm gonna tell everybody I know about this target supermarket supermarket, and they're gonna come, never, never right? You You hardly ever do it. But if somebody comes up and says, Hey, you come in, come in here getting your hair cut here for a couple of weeks. Now, how do you like and you're like, No, I'm just really great. Would you tell your friends about it? Like, Oh, right, I will. But you don't feel comfortable doing it, not because you don't like the place but because given referrals, it's tough. So just imagine if somebody is giving you referrals, how much they like your service. And then imagine how many people are not giving, you're giving your referrals, even if you ask how much they're not very impressed with your service. And not only that, but not to get too much into the psychology of people. But people are terrible about

breaking up relationships. People are in relationships for years, that they have always wanted to be out of. But they nobody wants to hurt somebody else's feelings. So instead, they internalize it. And they think that well, because I said, till death do us part, I'll just suffer. Alright, well, good for you, you know, you're gonna be the martyr of your own life. That doesn't make any sense. But that's what people do. And so that's how a lot of companies hold on to customers, even though the customer is not happy, because the customer is a little bit, you know, doesn't like the idea of having that confrontation conversation about how bad of a job you're really doing. But really, your customer is the only one you can listen to. So that leadership system i think is the most important thing that you need to be following up on. And if you really want to grow, do a good job with what you're doing. And ask for referrals. Say, Hey, how can we get better, you know, just start growing in your own neighborhoods or growing in your own facilities. Or, of course, I'm a big fan of cold calling, too. I know a lot of people are not a big fan of cold calling, but I'm a big fan of cold. I don't like doing it not to be misunderstood, but I do know it's effective.

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Halie Morris 29:13

Oh my gosh, if I had to be in a role to cold call, I would probably lose my mind. If I have to call somebody I don't know and who doesn't know I'm calling. I get so much anxiety. I will sit around all day and be like, staring at my phone introverted at heart I if somebody puts on my calendar, oh, we're going to talk at this time. Like, okay, I'm calling right on time. Right on the diet. I'm ready for it. If somebody else is like, oh, call this person like, do they know I'm calling? No, but call them don't do that.

R

Ralph Peterson 29:46

Yeah. It's really challenging. I'll tell you that. The reason that I do it other than because I know it works. That's the reason I really do it. But what makes me comfortable and doing it is I know that I have a great service. I have a great product and my product and my service helps a lot of people. And most of the time, I'm not calling Hey, buy from me, I'm calling Did you know that this product or this service exists? A lot of times they don't know. I mean, could you imagine if you have the greatest, you could have the greatest product that solves cancer. Nobody knows about it. And you're tube unwilling to tell them about it. Nobody's you can't cure anybody. Right? So being known is way better than being best being known as better than being best. Yeah. Well,

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Halie Morris 30:30

and to I was studying, I'll be sending you like, somewhere at a bar or wherever, you know,

right now, it's a little limited. But I'll be talking to somebody and they're talking about their business, they own a business, and somebody is keeping track of all their stuff on pen and paper. And I look over at them, and I'm like, Oh, really? Is that what you're doing? Because I work in a software company. And we use our own products every single day. And I'm like, I will never go back to pen and paper in my life. I'm just like, I'm about to enlighten your world over here.

R

Ralph Peterson 31:03

I do like I do like the the tablet. I do, like the tracking tools that your company utilizes for, for tracking and maintaining schedules and inspections and reports and all that I really do I at the same time. The learning curve is sometimes

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Halie Morris 31:26

very daunting

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Ralph Peterson 31:29

yeah, because I do a lot with paper and pencil. I'm not afraid to use a highlighter and a crayon either. It doesn't matter to me. But it's because we are constantly having our challenge in housekeeping. Not only in house, I'm sure it's a challenge and everything but I only know how scarce my field. But our challenge is things change constantly. And unless I'm going to have every housekeeper have a tablet that gets a notification of every change, whether it's a schedule change for next week, or something we're doing today, or just a notification about something tomorrow. All I'm doing is taken away from their ability to keep working. I mean, I'm already combating their phone, their phone is already a taken up. They should they should get paid based on their phone users. They'd be mad.

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Halie Morris 32:19

Oh, man, it'd be that'd be interesting. Yeah, social media influencers would be like the all powerful right now.

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Ralph Peterson 32:26

Some of them are.

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Halie Morris 32:28

They are, they are as soon as they like hit like 20,000 followers, they just keep going. And you're just like, how

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Ralph Peterson 32:38

I like I do like it. I like the electronic versions. For managers. It's just, we in long term care, nursing homes, and hospitals, we have to post stuff. So you can't just come up with a change of a schedule, you have to post it. And so it's a it's sometimes a challenge to create a schedule today. Post it today have a change tomorrow, reprint the eight schedules, go back out, replace them all. There's another change, go reprint, it's much easier to grab a piece of whiteout, little whiteout stick, go to the schedule make the change in pen. Why did I?

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Halie Morris 33:15

Yeah, no, I get that I am. Like, I still take all of my notes on pen and paper, even though we have like a million different note taking things. And I bet you couldn't read them because I still take notes like I did in middle school, which is that papers for some reason rotating as I go. And I'm filling in spaces, because I refuse to flip the page. I hate wasting. Um, so I get it. But it's always fun to like see where people are at and things like that. And I get the learning curve here too. Because I joined I worked in a call center. But we had outlook has OneDrive. I had no idea what that was until I joined. But I had used it used it before because we had a shared folder that we use in my last company, all applicants went in there. And then you pull them out and you drop them into your own folder. And it was always fun when somebody forgot to take out the ones they call it already. And then you were calling them twice. But I will never go back to that system. tell you how many times you called somebody that was like already called. You know, I'd never done anything in software. I grew up at my great grandma and my grandma's house. I grew up on the same toys that my grandma grew up on. And yeah, it's my favorite bonding experience to be at an estate sale and see a woman in her 60s or 70s. And we're talking about playing with the same toys. But, you know, our computer game was like the little Harry Potter thing and I probably couldn't even tell you how to open it up. I would just go in and press the little arrows. And that was the most exciting thing in the world and then came here and they're like, do you have experience with computer so I was like well, like I've used bird and Excel. I think I was typed in an equation for for biology class. But yeah, sure. Biggest learning curve ever. So I get people's fear when it comes to it, especially when it comes to the timeliness because like you said that communication aspect is already hard enough without adding in an extra element, sometimes too. So kind of going into that though that communication aspect, you know, the follow up, and the assessment. It's forgotten, but it

can actually be really simple and easy to do, you know, looking at the job isn't done looking at your customers, are they happy, but the communication part isn't always the easiest. So what are some things that you would tell somebody like some tips that you would drive home to make sure they actually nailed down that part of the job?

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Ralph Peterson 35:50

I gotta say one of the biggest learn lessons that I've learned over the years is to be transparent and open and forgiven with things not getting done exactly the way we asked them to get done. Because we asked our housekeeping staff to be open and honest with what they did and did not do. And sometimes what they did not do is more than you wanted them to not do. In other words, we gave you these 20 rooms, or this area to clean fully. And we want you to be honest, did you actually clean them all? Or did you miss three? Now imagine being the housekeeper, and you're being asked if you cleaned them all? You missed three, you're gonna say no, I cleaned them all hoping Why do people lie? By the way, the reason people lies because you don't think you're gonna check. That's the only reason. If they know you're gonna check, nobody lies, nobody, like you're gonna stop lying in a heartbeat. If you stop being lazy. That's the truth of management. So if you always checked, nobody would ever lie to you. Instead, they become super transparent. They will be like, I did actually, you know what, I didn't move the shoe. So I know there's dirt behind there. But I didn't move. You don't mean like they'll look inside. They're like telling you exactly. They know exactly what they missed. If you're always checking on them. In in long term care we give, we give a housekeeper say 25 rooms to clean. So it's easy. There's not a lot of work. It's busy work. Again, it's not hard work. It's busy work. But there's a lot of rooms you can't get to it, you know, because you're walking into a room and they can't you know, they're getting care from a from a nurse or a doctor that something's you can't go in the room. And you also can't remember, like if you had to go pass room for at nine o'clock this morning. At 230. This afternoon. Do you remember it was room for? Probably not you're like I don't know, it was on this unit. There was one room I didn't get to she don't remember. So we created a form, asking our housekeepers to check off the rooms that they cleaned, and not check off the ones that they didn't. And the biggest pushback I got from that is they felt they were going to get in trouble if they didn't check off every room. And so they would lie there, check off every room is not helpful for them to lie. Because what I'm trying to do is ensure that we get every room clean. If you didn't. And you say you did, I can't insure that right? So that being that open communication, being that transparent, saying listen, we want 100% of the rooms cleaned today. But if you only got to 80% Be honest with me, you're not gonna get in trouble because I know how easy it is to get off of off of your schedule. And it's not always their fault. Most of the time, it's not their fault. housekeepers are good hard working people. They're not slackers, and out to just get paid for doing nothing. I don't know any

housekeepers that are like that. A lot of people have that idea, but it's not true. So I say if you didn't get five rooms done, tell me what five rooms you didn't get done, you know, I'm going to do as a manager, I'm going to say, hey, tomorrow morning, let's start with these five rooms. So that I can ensure we didn't get to him yesterday, but we'll get to him today. Right? I can't do that if you're not honest with me. And so I have to do so learning how to have that kind of culture where I'm expecting them to be honest. And they're expecting for me to be understanding. And I am

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Halie Morris 39:22

that's great. It's a hard thing to to create because you have to get over their own ideas of what management anxiety it's very good. And we had them sign it. You know, we have

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Ralph Peterson 39:31

them signed the bottom that I certify that the rooms I said I cleaned I clean. Also, by the way, I'm signing the rooms, I didn't say I didn't clean I really didn't clean them. And I hope I'm not in trouble. Don't get me in trouble. You know, because you're essentially saying I didn't do some of the work I was supposed to do.

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Halie Morris 39:48

Yeah, it'd be different if you know you give them 25 rooms and they clean 12 of them. They take they take the whole time right and that that would be apparent. painfully obvious, but if they miss a couple, and you know, it's like you said, especially in the type of environment, urine, that happens, you know, you're not going to always be able to get in there. And it's like the cleaner who comes to our house, I we make sure in our house if there's couple people home that we kind of circle around and vacate the spaces that she typically does first, and get rid of that. She's really good at communicating. She's got called for trouble like asking now,

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Ralph Peterson 40:27

you out of the room, I'm trying to clean it here. It's really not in there. I'm

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Halie Morris 40:31

like, yep, all yours for now. And she loves it. But when she first did it, you know, she might have just skipped those rooms and been afraid to ask and it wouldn't have been her fault. It's just because she doesn't know where those boundaries are. And, you know, she's not

going to come in and intrude. Especially because like right now I'm home. Not at the moment. But when I'm home, I'm working during the day. And like my Nana, she's on a walker. So you know, nobody wants to make her move fast. Except for probably me because she's always in the same chair. And I like to, I like to give her a hard time because I've seen her get up and Amish buggy that has a step that's big. So I always give her a hard time like I know you can do it, what are you doing? This so but we're people we understand, right? And management's job is to remember that you to remember that, if you can understand for other people that you interact with, whether it's your family, or it's other management members, or it's your own boss, then you can understand for those people who are reporting to you that when they're honest, and they tell you, I didn't get to this job, there's a reason for it. 99% of the time.

R

Ralph Peterson 41:37

Yeah, there is. And there's another reason for it as well. And, you know, I'm, if you look at the way we just the way that I feel during the day, if you had me starting to clean at 7am I'm raring to go, I probably do, I probably I know I do, I know I do a better job at 7am than I do at 3pm. By 3pm, I'm beat, I'm tired, I'm sick of doing this. So I'm kind of calling it in. And so that's also, that's actually how we started making our shift we started doing where we were always having the housekeeper start at room one and go to room 25. And then we're finding out that room 2223 2425 they were not as clean as room 1234. Actually, room 1234 were the cleanest rooms in the building. Why? Because they had the most energy. They always got to them, they never missed them. That's why. And so we said, okay, let's come up with this alternating schedule where one day you started your room one and then the next day is done in your room 25, then the next day is starting a room one thing, you know, because you're going backwards. That way, it's kind of even right, because my job as a manager is to make sure all the rooms get cleaned consistently. So I'm just like, have that consistent piece. But because there are rooms in the middle that get missed because the showers in Caribbean done. We can't do the one side, you know, start one day at one the other day at 25. Instead, we go alright, what rooms Did we miss? Let's start there. So we missed 911 21 and 15. Fine. Those are the rooms are gonna start with earth. And we just pardon me, and we just make sure that those rooms that we didn't get yesterday are done first today. And you just again, we're just managing the job. I don't want 100 I don't want 80% of the job done. But I do know that 80% is pretty good.



43:28

It's pretty good well,

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Halie Morris 43:29

and if you know you're not going to get perfect out of everyone every time. In fact, most nobody can give you perfect all the time. You

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Ralph Peterson 43:37

know what I'd like to challenge even the idea of perfection in housekeeping. It's not even what you should be going after what you should be going after is clean or dirty, clean or dirty I had years ago, nursing homes like to do inspections of everything. And so we had a housekeeping I mean, administrative or nursing home, give us the rating was a one to five. So a one to five is everything is excellent. And a one is is the worst thing you've ever seen in your life. And she gave us a three on most areas of the nursing home, which is not good. It's definitely a poor performance. And I had no idea why. So I went and I met with the administrator. I said, Can we please walk the building and you can show me what it is you're after? And she's like, Sure, I'd love to so we set up a time we started walking and I say so this lobby this front lobby here. What would you like different? You know what, what shows? No, this lobby is great. Great. It's not the word. It was immaculate. It looked amazing. The floors were shiny. There was no dust. I mean, it would look amazing and very pretty. And I say no, no, hold on. You gave us a three. She's like, yeah, there's no such thing as perfect. I go, No, no, no. The forum says a five is clean. A one is not clean. You gave it a three which means you expect us to do something else to this lobby. And she says you can't do anything more than this lobby I'm saying I think the same thing so maybe this should be a five she was nothing's ever And so I even wrote a whole article about I said is at the new 100, then is 80%. Now the new one, if you can never get a 100, then why even have 100? if you're if you're saying that the hallway looks great, and it's an 80, or a three, then threes my goal the idea that well, nothing's perfect. That is a that is the opposite way to look at housekeeping. opposite way to say that nothing can ever be perfect. That is a ridiculous. Not a ridiculous notion. It's a ridiculous standard, even having housekeeping. We're talking about clean versus dirty. That's it. It's either clean or it's not clean.

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Halie Morris 45:41

It takes me back to like, high school and middle school, when you'd have those teachers who were real pleased that their tests were so hard that nobody could get 100. And you're like, you should ask if we know it. Or if we don't know you're not supposed to trick us. And like we had so many teachers that and even in college, you get to those creatures, they were so pleased to challenge you and trick you want to test. I was like, No, I want to be challenged in the classroom on a test. I want to tell you what I know, I can't do that. If you just threw me an obstacle course and not a test. Mm hmm. And then like, nobody gets 100. And then you're like, wow, I knew this stuff. I just can't remember every single detail of

this one thing that you really didn't even teach us. Or you worded this question in a way that nobody really quite knew what you were saying. It was just, you know, it's so weird.



Ralph Peterson 46:36

Yeah, that mentality is really?



Halie Morris 46:42

Yeah. And like I was I have a friend who's a teacher. Now she's a high school teacher, she teaches freshmen. So she's battling the, you know, we're remote work environment effect. There's kids that just, they're not going to get the stuff done at home. And you know, she's almost left with response to the teaching them. freshmen come in physics, and how to have a good work ethic at home, which is I just taught



Ralph Peterson 47:03

to ninth grade classes this morning.



Halie Morris 47:06

Oh, Jose, you're familiar then. Yeah. So she just gave a couple tests this week. Yesterday, and today, actually, I think and she told me that she had no student get 100. And she had one student that was two points shy, it was 25 point test. So she curved it up. She's not really had to carve before. And she took questions off, which she's had to do before. And then when she was talking to me, she admitted, those ones she didn't feel she clarified well enough. And she, you know, that's so rare, I think on at least from somebody who's not teaching to hear. After years of like, especially in the sciences, she teaches science. I've had so many teachers that won't say, Oh, I didn't teach that well enough. They'll tell just say you didn't learn it. You're supposed to know it like this. And it was kind of cool. Yeah, she's, I'm super proud of her. She's a super cool. She'll be 25 this year, and she's doing amazing in her second year of teaching. So yeah, good for teaching during a pandemic too.



Ralph Peterson 48:13

Yeah, no question.

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Halie Morris 48:14

But yeah, it's the same thing, though. When you're managing a team, though, it's the same thing when you're grading someone on how well the job they did. Why can't you hit like a five out of five? Why is it? You know, it's like you said, perfection isn't. It's not a realistic expectation, but it's also usually not the point, either. The point is, did you do the job? So

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Ralph Peterson 48:42

I know, it drives me crazy. isn't new mantra. I don't think it's a new mantra. But a lot of places. I'm hearing a lot where if you're having trouble staffing, so you don't you can't find anybody to work with you. And company say well, that's, that's too bad. You know, we're not using that as an excuse. Again, with starving children. Imagine saying, Well, why are you starving? And they're like, well, we don't have any food. We're not using that as an excuse. We're not accepting that. It's so stupid. But companies are saying it all the time. They're saying it all the time.

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Halie Morris 49:17

Well, it's, you know, like, I didn't have food growing up. And it's kind of it would just be funny if somebody walked up to me. Why are you hungry today? Why don't have food? Why don't you have food? Okay, so I have no money. I'm a child. So, like, it's the same thing. You wouldn't go up to somebody like Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you clean this? I don't have a mop.

R

Ralph Peterson 49:41

Yeah, the mentality out there. Yeah, sometimes lacking but that's business that's asking.

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Halie Morris 49:51

But the point is, though, with like this industry, if you can't change the way your customers are going to act, you can't go up to her And being like, well, you're not allowed to give a three on a job that's actually done right? Like you, you know, you can try to rectify it, you can come to the conclusion that she's reading that scale completely different than you and her standards or some, like mindset about those standards are completely different. But you found out that you're doing your job, and you're doing it well. And she appreciates it.

R Ralph Peterson 50:21
I'm scoring it well. That's all.

H Halie Morris 50:23
Yeah. So you can set the standards and you can set the expectations and you can communicate and make decisions and do all of that while in your business. And that's really the point of it is affect what you can and set yourself up for success.

R Ralph Peterson 50:40
Yeah, and the other thing is, what's really great about being an entrepreneur like me is I get to choose my customers. And so not everybody makes a good customer. And you know, not everybody makes a good client. And so that's, that's good.

H Halie Morris 50:55
Mm hmm.

R Ralph Peterson 50:56
I'm happy that I'm in a position where I can choose my customers.

H Halie Morris 51:00
Yeah, you'd be like this relationship is not working out. And you get to make a decision. Yeah. Yeah. All right. Well, I think this is a good place to start closing out. So I wanted to ask, did you have any more advice or anything that you would like to leave us with,

R Ralph Peterson 51:15
the only thing that I would like to say is that there is a real, just a highlight that there is a real need for people who step up into leadership roles and leadership, it's one of those things where most people fail at seven out of 10. First time managers fail in the first 90 days, and they fail for all kinds of reasons. And most notably, they fail for inexperienced, they just never have done it before. And the expectation on the manager, whether you're brand new, or you've been doing it for 30 years is not is the same, everybody expects you to be really great even when you've never done it before. So it's very easy to get overwhelmed, it's very easy to get, get to do it wrong and make big mistakes. But it is the

greatest profession in the world managers all across the world are the every time you hear somebody impacting somebody else's life, it's always somebody in a position of leadership, it's always somebody who decided to take the time and to teach, instruct, to show to care for to commiserate to listen to. And so there's no higher calling in my position in my in my opinion. So if you want to be a manager, there's all kinds of people hiring managers, if you the position, the job you have right now is not looking for managers, and they don't think you have what it takes go get another job. Because there's positions out there for people, we don't have enough people who are willing to step into a leadership position. And so our biggest thing is, we need more people to step up into a leadership position. And so please do if you feel like it's something you want to do you ever wanted to give it a try. Do it. That's my little PSA.

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Halie Morris 52:47

All right. Well, thank you, Ralph. I greatly appreciate that. And that's where I'm going to end this episode today. So I want to say thank you for coming on. We really appreciate it. And I think this is a great episode, so I can't wait to share.

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Ralph Peterson 52:58

Well, thank you so much. It was nice being here.

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Halie Morris 53:00

Thank you. All right. And then thank you everyone for tuning in and listening to another episode of the Business of Cleaning. We will of course, see you next week. But in the meantime, go ahead over and read the blog post if you haven't checked out the transcript, if you would like and we'll see you next week. Thank you!