

My Legislator Was Taken Away in Handcuffs Today!

by Eileen Anderson

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My legislator was taken away in handcuffs today.

Flashback to March 2005

He had just been elected to his first term in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and I was timidly sticking my toe in a new career as a small business advocate. I called his office and requested a meeting to discuss the high cost of health insurance for small business.

When the handsome, young man in a dark suit entered Eat 'N Park I knew it had to be him. We talked over coffee, both of us a little awkward in our new roles. He said he graduated from Allegheny College and earned his law degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

I told him I was a small business owner turned activist because of my experience with health insurance. I showed him the 600 business owner signatures on my clipboard and said we were headed to Harrisburg in April for a rally in the Capitol rotunda. I promised to stop in his office.

That was the start of a great friendship. We looked back several times and laughed at our first meeting. We kept in touch. Sometimes we would meet in his Bellevue office. He was one of the few state lawmakers in history to put a satellite office in our small community. I always visited him when we were in Harrisburg. I knew his secretary by her first name.

I educated him on small business issues. He arranged a key meeting for me with the chairman of the House Insurance Committee. He also came to SMC "Meet the Candidates Night" and our "Post Holiday Legislative Reception." Those were the good old days.

Spring 2008

The newspapers churned out article after article about Bonus Gate. I saw his name mentioned only once concerning a campaign check-signing incident with the former Majority Whip of the House. I made a mental post-it.

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I was in Bellevue running a few errands and turned down the side street where his office was located. The office wasn't open on Thursdays but a news truck was parked out front and a young woman with a microphone looked in the window while a TV camera panned the scene.

Then I realized what was going down. She spoke about indictments, and asked me to say something. All I remember is that I spoke too softly for TV.

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His trial is scheduled for October 7. As a friend I wish him well. As a taxpayer and a citizen I am very angry; outraged is a better word.

I am so weary of reading about Bonus Gate and according to the Attorney General his investigation is far from over. Twelve indicted for hundreds of felonies. Theft. Conspiracy. Conflict-of-Interest. Shredded documents. No-work jobs. Mistresses. Missing e-mails. 2.2 million dollars in public money spent on bonuses to House Democratic Caucus staffers for political campaign work during 2005-06. Nearly another 2 million more dollars in public money for Caucus legal fees over the past 18 months. Not only did we pay the bill for their covert multi-million dollar political operation but also we get to pay for their legal fees to provide them counsel while they are being investigated.

According to a recent Quinnipiac University poll 74 percent of Pennsylvania voters are "not too confident" or "not confident at all" that the state General assembly will be able to enact legislation to end corruption. 73 percent blame both Democrats and Republicans. Without a doubt Pennsylvanians are fed up with their legislature.

Small business owners, now is the time when we can make a difference. Voting is our great privilege. They have to clean up Harrisburg or we have to clean out Harrisburg.

"Leadership is about facing facts, making hard decisions, and having the independence and the courage to do the right thing," said Mike Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City. Harrisburg, are you listening? ▼

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Customer-Centric (Continued on page 17)

same. This remains true even within an industry that has only one real product, like a power utility. The customer-critical path may start in several places in its efforts to meet the needs of several different types of customers – from household customers that simply need power turned on to major projects that require significant project management and preplanning.

Eventually these starting paths emerge. It will occur at the point at which all customers are happy. From there they may take a different path. That is the great thing about being customer-centric. There isn't one narrowly focused value chain confining your customers. The customer-critical path allows you to easily adapt to your customers' needs so that your company can be useful to them long-term.

Truth #6 - Adopting the customer-critical path can transform every aspect of your company. This customer-critical path approach offers a significant value for organizations that adopt it. It allows them to better understand their customers, so that they can be segmented and targeted by products or services with more effective value propositions. This drives the bottom line in several ways. A stronger value proposition increases appeal, driving revenue. Better service and customer interaction improve the customer experience and increase customer loyalty, driving customer lifetime value.

The customer-critical path also becomes a vital decision-making tool for management. It provides a clear and unbiased perspective on where resources should, and should not, be spent. It defines the relative worth of projects, assets and expenditures, painting a clear picture of what results will be if the customer-critical path is not properly maintained.

If your mission and vision statements say you are customer-centric, follow the words up with real action. You'll make your strategic plan actionable, setting your organization on a path towards true differentiation and market leadership. Properly crafted, the customer-critical path becomes a pleasant stroll through the park for your customers, and also happens to be the most profitable path for your organization. ▼

Editor's Note: David F. Giannetto is considered one of the most experienced practitioners and a true thought leader in the Enterprise and Business Performance Management arena. He is the director of Cohn Consulting Group's Enterprise Performance Management Practice. Anthony Zecca is the partner-in-charge of Cohn Consulting Group, a division of J. H. Cohn LLP, one of the country's largest accounting and consulting firms. This article was taken from their book "The Performance Power Grid: The Proven Method to Create and Sustain Superior Organizational Performance," which is available at bookstores nationwide or direct from the publisher (Wiley \$27.95) by calling 800.225.5945. For additional information, visit www.performancepowergrid.com.

