



—TWENTY-TWO—

Job-Career-Calling

Boutique hotelier Chip Conley was known for instituting a unique theme at each of his properties in northern California. His design methodology was to create a hotel experience that would appeal to a specific demographic segment, which typically resembled the readers of the magazine. This was really clever as a marketing approach. “In an industry where every location is essentially a box-shaped building, you have to take a different approach to differentiate your offering” he once told me.

His very first, the Phoenix Hotel, was located in a less desirable part of San Francisco, yet became popular among touring rock bands with its Rolling Stone magazine theme. He was extremely proud of the three thousand plus employees spread out across twenty hotels, “half of whom clean toilets for a living.” His lessons on management and leadership have become role models for an industry where turnover rate rang-

es between 75% to 100% (meaning that an entire hotel staff could change every twelve to sixteen months).

Chip Conley did more than theme his hotels; he gave a lot of thought and effort to how each employee could find deep meaning in their work, no matter their role. In fact, he decided that his employees were just as important as customers and shareholders, and that if he created the right culture, his hotels could generate profits that were sustainable (i.e., without the need to advertise) and higher than industry averages. He was the rare hotel executive who understood that developing a strong culture with the right values would lead to more loyal customers. In the hospitality industry, he created competitive advantage by empowering his employees with the knowledge and training to serve customers better than other hotels would.

He engaged an entire hotel's staff in offsites, educating them and then asking employees—including, bartenders, housekeepers, and front desk staff – to come up with a strategy for their hotel. His view was that by providing service employees with a sense of calling, this would lead to higher employee satisfaction and better overall experience for guests. It worked. Employee satisfaction scores were off the charts and the employee turnover rate during the 2001 recession was in the 20-30% range, far lower than the rest of the industry.

Conley documented much of this success in his book *PEAK!*, which puts a twist on Maslow's hierarchy of needs by applying it to work. His hierarchy of Job-Career-Calling serves as a good framework to hire and develop employees in your practice.

At the base of the pyramid is the view that work is a job that offers a paycheck in exchange for performing work. The next level up is when the role is viewed as a career, with the employee feeling like they could stay and grow in the practice for years to come. And at the top is when the employee sees their role as



their calling, the fit between what they have to offer (passion, skill) and what you as their employer can do to help them fully realize their gifts. This leads to a work environment for that person that is far beyond having a job.

Your role as leader of the practice is to identify and attract more team members who view their job as their calling.

THE EMPLOYEE PYRAMID

