

First Things First

Mr. Appliance® franchise owner Charles Hepburn is prepared for anything.

Charles Hepburn, the owner of a Chico, California-based *Mr. Appliance* franchise, knows how to fix a customer's refrigerator, something he did recently when he got a call at 6 p.m. and all of his employees were already either gone for the day or out in the field. Before he bought his *Mr. Appliance* franchise, he also thought he knew how to be the best

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manager he could be. Then he went to a Waco, Texas-based management training class offered by *Mr. Appliance*. He came away from the training a stronger manager and owner, he says.

“We learned a Code of Values” (see sidebar) that pertains to the way you do business and relate to customers and employees,” he says. “It's something you learn right off the bat—listening with the

intent to understand what's being said, responding to people in a timely fashion. These things make all the difference in the world.”

In a business world that never stops, management training such as the *Mr. Appliance* sessions Hepburn attends two to three times each year might seem frivolous. After all, isn't it more important to send your employees to technical training first? Not necessarily, say experts and attendees. Yes, employee education is important, but franchise owners can miss out on new business and experience a higher level of employee churn if they don't train themselves, too. For example, Hepburn recently attended training on innovative ways to keep employees happy, and how to empower them to make good decisions for customers.

Hepburn, who has trained two employees on the management techniques he learned himself, agrees.

“If you want to take time off and don't have people trained to run the business, you can't leave,” he says. “You don't have to give away all your business secrets, but training your employees can only make your business better.” **MBL**

The Dwyer Group Code of Values

A code (kōd) n. 1. any set of principles or rules of conduct.

We live our Code of Values by...

RESPECT

- treating others as we would like to be treated.
- listening with the intent to understand what is being said and acknowledging that what is said is important to the speaker.
- responding in a timely fashion.
- speaking calmly and respectfully, without profanity or sarcasm.
- acknowledging everyone as right from their own perspective.

INTEGRITY

- making only agreements we are willing, able and intend to keep.
- communicating any potentially broken agreements at the first appropriate opportunity to all parties concerned.
- looking to the system for correction and proposing all possible solutions if something is not working.
- operating in a responsible manner: “above the line...”
- communicating honestly and with purpose.
- asking clarifying questions if we disagree or do not understand.
- never saying anything about anyone that we would not say to him or her.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

- continuously striving to maximize internal and external customer loyalty.
- making our best effort to understand and appreciate the customer's needs in every situation.

HAVING FUN IN THE PROCESS!