

Business

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□ Their firm unites the growth of technology with employee valuation

By CATHY MCKITRICK

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A pair of Davis County men are trying to change a trend. Tim Border and Doug Nielsen, co-owners of Self Management Systems, have found that fast technological growth has caused the devaluation of the individual in the work force, replacing the American dream with unfulfilled entitlement.

That's why they're conducting seminars for schools, training centers and major corporations in Utah and across the nation. Their fresh approach is changing the way many think and do business.

"Burnout sets in when employees feel unappreciated and start asking what their company will do for them," Border said. "At that point, they need to evaluate their own skills and ask themselves what they have to offer to the company."

With the current move in industry to help employees be happier in their jobs, Border and Nielsen see ownership as a major part of personal happiness in the work place. "Technology has little value if we ignore human development. Corporations that tap their human resources will have the competitive advantage in the 21st century," Border said.

Nielsen agreed. "Employees need that buy-in. When they're given the opportunity to make things happen, they'll invest themselves in their work. They'll have a sense of purpose and feel their efforts make a difference."

Nielsen and Border teach a process called the "VIP phenomenon," which combines the synergy of "vision, insight and personal accountability" to maximize individual happiness and performance.

"We believe in this process and are passionate about it," Nielsen said. "I'd be doing it even if there were no money in it."

"People sabotage their dreams with their own belief systems," Border said. "We help them identify the 'obstacle illusions' that breed fear and despair in their lives."

During a recent seminar conducted at the Ogden Eccles Convention Center, participants discovered their own obstacle illusions, such as anger, fear, negative relationships, money, peer pressure, procrastination, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Border likened becoming aware of obstacle illusions to the scene in "The Wizard of Oz" when Toto exposes the wizard. "It's a classic, because the message rings true that we each have the power within ourselves to reach our dreams. We don't need a wizard to give us what we think we lack," Border said.

Kent Streuling, human resource director for America First Credit Union, said the credit union has run all its management through the VIP seminars and planned to have the rest of their employees begin the training this month.

"About 18 months ago, we identified 11 values we wanted to maintain in our company and employees. We discovered the VIP seminar, and realized it would reinforce what we're trying to do," Streuling said.

Those values include trust, respect, integrity, communication, common sense, a clear sense of service and purpose, selflessness, supportiveness, enthusiasm, fun and personal ownership.

"When you're working with employees who have been with your company a long time, some can be skeptical of new programs. But our managers enjoyed this seminar and bought into it. Otherwise it would have been dead in the water," Streuling said.

Mike Perez oversees about 130 employees as director of facilities management at Weber State University. Last November, he included the VIP training as a pilot program for his staff.

"We're moving away from the traditional boss/subordinate hierarchy, to a more progressive self-directed work force," Perez said. "Our goal is to empower all our employees so they can make decisions in their areas."

Perez said the training offered by Border and Nielsen energized his staff. "It means a major paradigm shift, but they're developing a spirit of ownership. As a result, they're more productive and the value of the greater whole is enhanced," Perez said.

"I don't know if this is a calling," Border said, "but no other job could bring me this much fulfillment and happiness. It's as if this work were scripted for my life."

You can leave a message for Cathy McKitrick by calling 625-4245.

