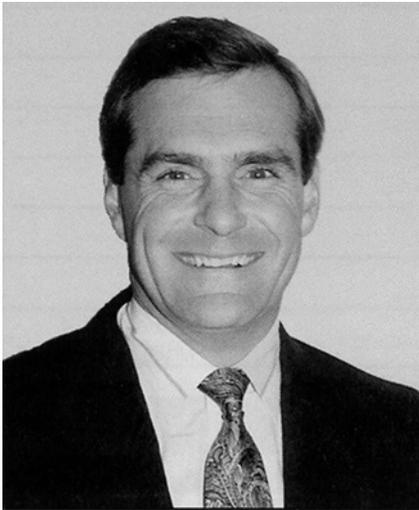


Sales, Sales Management and Customer Service Consulting and Training Services

Business Services Sales Consulting/Training

Corporate Dynamics Inc.
1630 W. Diehl Rd.
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Mark Landiak
President

BIO: Mark is president and founder of Corporate Dynamics Incorporated, a leading, Chicago-based training and consulting firm that provides training and consulting services in sales, customer service and the management of those functions. He and his firm have trained thousands of sales, service and call center employees and managers in a wide range of companies including US Cellular, ADP Dealer Services, CenturyTel, Motorola, Pershing Financial Services, and Verizon Wireless. Mark also conducts strategy sessions with senior managers to improve their sales and service operations and personally delivers over 100 presentations and training sessions per year. Mark has written business articles for various trade publications

including: INC. Magazine, Personal Selling Power, Radio Resource and Selling Magazine. He has also hosted a weekly radio program and appeared on CNN as a subject matter expert on sales and service issues. He has written two business books: [Customer Service Isn't A Department... It's YOU!™](#) and [Beat Your Best™](#) – A Manager's Guide to Coaching Performance.

[Beat Your Best™](#) is one of CDI's most successful training programs since it builds upon a positive (vs. punitive) coaching methodology that continually stretches, inspires and recognizes outstanding performance – and ties everything directly into the key performance metrics for the organization.

Prior to starting CDI in 1989, Mark won 26 sales and management awards in his 9-year career with the Lanier sector of Harris Corporation. Mark is a graduate of Penn State University.

About Corporate Dynamics Inc.:

Established in 1989, CDI offers a comprehensive range of consulting and training services in the areas of Sales, Sales Management and Customer Service.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Landiak, what is the vision at Corporate Dynamics Inc.?

Mr. Landiak: The primary focus for our organization right now is to help organizations improve the performance of their frontline personnel in an effort to retain and grow their existing customer base. Secondly, our focus is to help clients find new and creative ways to bring on new customers. It takes more energy and more creativity to keep a customer today, but it takes

even more energy and creativity to go out and get a new customer. By helping our clients to achieve that, we help them improve their top and bottom lines.

CEOCFO: How do you do it?

Mr. Landiak: Often we'll begin with a Strategy Session where we get senior management in a room to examine where they are at, where they'd like to go and what's in their way of getting there. Then we conduct a thorough needs assessment to get a good understanding of the landscape of the organization as well as the level of competence that their people have at achieving the mission. We look at the processes that they have in place. There is no sense in doing training with employees unless you have a solid process in place. We do a lot of work with frontline managers. If they do not have the right process and skills, you can do all kinds of training with the frontline sales or customer service teams, and you will not get the results you are looking for. There's got to be proper follow through procedures in place and buy-in from senior leadership. That would be another piece of the puzzle – working with those frontline managers to help them do their job better, so that the frontline can do its job better. Then, of course there is working with the frontline to improve their skills, whether it is in the customer service arena, saving accounts, expanding accounts, and keeping the relationship moving, or whether it is in the sales arena, bringing on new accounts, and doing account management with existing accounts.

CEOCFO: What are some of the common areas where companies fall short, and what might be an area or

two that people might not even realize make a difference that Corporate Dynamics understands?

Mr. Landiak: Where companies fall short is that they know what they want to do and they spell out what they want to do, but they do not necessarily set up the right processes and equip their people with the expertise and resources that they need to achieve that mission. A lot of times, they tell the people what to do, but they do not necessarily tell them how to do it. I think that is one of the biggest shortfalls for a lot of organizations – the CEO gets an idea and says they need to do something and then that starts to funnel its way through the organization and gets down to the frontline and says “you need to do this.” There is not a lot of high level

demands and in many cases, a lack of specifics. When you look at the best organizations, they are the ones that boil that focus on proficiency-a person’s ability to do their job with excellence. So many organizations are just going through the motions. Instead of pulling numbers out of the air and pushing them down, we should be identifying the help that the people who are facing the customer need on a daily basis- either over the phone, in a retail environment, or in a business to business environment? What are the resources and expertise needed to get the job done so that the organization can improve sales and secure the customer base?

CEO CFO: Are there typical sizes, industries, or types of companies that you work with?

Mr. Landiak: For us, it is all over the board. We get called in by a lot of small businesses that are struggling with some of the issues that small businesses face today, whether it is cash flow issues or sales issues. They are somewhat at the mercy in many cases of the manufacturer or the distributor that they buy from. It could be an inventory issue with them as well. For the smaller businesses, there is always an opportunity at the frontline to improve skills. For larger

businesses, there is a strategic element. You cannot just tell people to do something and expect it to happen. There has to be other elements to equip people with the skills and abilities, and then the support of the organization to make that happen. A lot of what we end up doing is working with companies on building those skill elements. That could be a training piece and it could also be a strategies piece, or building out a new recruiting process, retention program, comp plan or sales structure. Those are some of the areas of focus that we bring to the table for an organization that is trying to grow or just protect its base.

CEO CFO: Do you find that many organizations do not understand the powerfulness of the customer service

“What we find often times is that training is seen as the panacea for all the ills, but there are many other reasons why organizations are not meeting their objectives. So it all takes us back to the Strategy Session where we get in a room with the key stakeholders, close the door, hide the smartphones, and talk about their company, situation, and some of the issues that they are facing as an organization. We identify why those issues exist and we start to outline some of the strategies and actions that could help to address those particular problems.”- Mark Landiak

or the people on the frontline? Do they need to be led to understand that is a much more valuable resource than they think?

Mr. Landiak: Most companies today get it with regard to customer service. At the top of the organization, there is an understanding that we have to get past all of the slogans. Most upper management for companies – large and small – understand that customer service is important and the customer experience at the frontline is critical. They include “customer satisfaction” in their mission statements - to provide a superior customer experience. In many cases, however, that does not transfer down to the specifics at the frontline that need to be there. We are not talking about just training or the quality of the managers that are following through on this process. We are also looking at components such

as if they are actually empowered to take care of the customer, or if they are having to go up several levels, put the customer on hold forever, or tell them that they are going to call them back and then hopefully they actually do. They may not be empowered to do something for that particular customer that will satisfy them at the moment and retain them over the long term. There is the short-term element of what is acceptable to do in certain situations, and defining that for the frontline. This includes defining the procedures in these situations for getting the information that they need to resolve issues for the customer in a timely fashion. The top of the organization understands what they want to do, but all too often, it does not get translated into how to do it at the frontline.

CEO CFO: How do you work with your clients?

Mr. Landiak: We look at them from the outside-in by asking questions that they don’t normally ask themselves. We dig for the root cause and don’t make assumptions. A good example is that we have a client who just called us. They said that they need sales training. The first thing we did was to ask why they

think they need sales training. They started talking to us about some of the issues they are facing and as we started to boil that down, we found that maybe it is not a training issue at all. Maybe it is the level of quality of their hires. Turns out their HR managers have not really been schooled in what to look for, where to find them, and how to bring them on board and get them up to speed. What we find often times is that training is seen as the panacea for all the ills, but there are many other reasons why organizations are not meeting their objectives. So it all takes us back to the Strategy Session where we get in a room with the key stakeholders, close the door, hide the smartphones, and talk about their company, situation, and some of the issues that they are facing as an organization. We identify why those issues exist and we start to outline

some of the strategies and actions that could help to address those particular problems. For us, it is the Strategy Session that kicks everything off. It validates what the customer is saying or uncovers things that the customer did not realize about their own organization. I think that so often, companies wait too long to address the situation. Then, they have a longer road to get back on track. For us, it is helping them look into the crystal ball and ask about the processes, tools, skills, knowledge and training needed to go forward and be prosperous.

CEOCFO: Do you find that the majority of companies that you work with do implement the changes you suggest?

Mr. Landiak: We have some really great success stories. The companies that are committed to actually changing for whatever reason, whether the problem is so great that they have to or the fact that they are just a very progressive, customer-oriented or employee-oriented organization, they implement changes. The ones that do it for show or look at it as a program of the month and do not really hold their people accountable after the initiative is launched – those companies tend not to have tremendous results. You look at some companies that are really successful because they are so good at what they do on the front line and then you look at other companies that are not because they just talk the talk, they do not walk the talk.

CEOCFO: Are there particular types of projects you prefer or areas you would rather work on given the chance?

Mr. Landiak: We have such a diverse group of clients from coffee companies to small independent resellers to distributors of products and manufacturers. We also have large Fortune 500s such as U.S. Cellular and Verizon. I like working with them all. I think it is very fun to work with an entrepreneur from a small company because they are so excited about their own business and the

possibilities. That kind of enthusiasm is contagious. From a large company standpoint, if you can help a large company to measure some significant results, there is a different feeling of achievement and accomplishment you get from being able to help turn the ship in another direction and see something positive come out of it.

CEOCFO: You still sound excited about what you do even after all these years?

Mr. Landiak: Yes, it is funny because I have been doing it for 25 years and I still love what I do. I have coolest great job. There are some real advantages to being a CEO of a smaller company. We have been very fortunate to be around for almost 25 years and worked with many great people. A lot of them have become very good friends over that period of time.

“It all comes down to demonstrating enough value to prospective and existing customers that they would do business with, and then continue to do business with your company even if there was a cost difference. The other side of that coin is showing them how to do the same for their customers.” - Mark Landiak

CEOCFO: What are one or two things that you might have changed in your approach over the last few years?

Mr. Landiak: I would like to have repackaged our intellectual property sooner, so that companies were not dependent on our team to implement it. We are fortunate in that we have very good people to do our strategy and training work, but so do other companies. We now do more train-the-trainer programs to help them do it themselves. Part two of that is having a sustainability element built in to every single initiative that we did from early on. We are doing that a lot more now than we did in the early days. I think that having that sustainability element would have provided a much higher level of service and results to our own clients.

CEOCFO: Why should people in the business and investment community

pay attention to Corporate Dynamics Inc.?

Mr. Landiak: I think what our clients would say is that CDI gets results. We measure the impact of what we do. We have a proprietary coaching process that is so effective that we offer to implement for no up-front cost. Instead, we contract for a % of the incremental improvement in profit over the year. Our differentiator is that we focus on the whole process of first understanding exactly what the real issues are, putting together a plan in collaboration with our client, and really tailoring that plan to their situation. In other words, we do not have training-in-a-box type of solutions. We customize and tailor everything that we do to that particular client's business and to the situations that they have going on in their business that need to be addressed. We then

build the action plan or the strategic plan around making that happen, tie that in to the company's overall objectives, and meet monthly to measure it every single month for its impact on the key performance indicators that that company measures. I think those are

some of the things that we do especially well, and our clients would probably tell you that is the reason why they hire us. One more element is that we have great content. In over 25 years, we have the experience of 25 years working with clients in a lot of different industries. We have been very successful at what we do in bringing the vision of the CEO down to the frontline so that they can help to achieve that vision for the organization and have their customer feel like they are doing business with a world-class organization. It all comes down to demonstrating enough value to prospective and existing customers that they would do business with, and then continue to do business with your company even if there was a cost difference. The other side of that coin is showing them how to do the same for their customers.



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