

Create (and Keep) a Volunteer Culture

Some of my favorite memories of working at my company include the chores that “weren’t my job”: moving boxes, ordering lunch, restocking the fridge, doing A/Vs setup, doing customer support, even sitting at the front desk.

We now have some wonderful people who take care of things like these – but we went through a long stretch in which we had no one to do these jobs.

Things as simple as washing the dishes in the communal sink only happened if someone volunteered to do it. And it’s in the volunteering (or lack thereof) that I think our company really found out what its people were made of.

Fortunately we rose to the occasion.

We discovered how generous, considerate, and conscientious we were (and where we needed to improve). But in all of our volunteer side jobs and all of our volunteer tasks to keep operations going at our company, we learned to be capable instead of helpless. We figured out how to refill the water dispenser. We took responsibility for making sure there was candy in the right places. We made the coffee. We did all the little things that people should be able to do for each other.

And no one “had” to do it.

I love our office management team. And it’s such a blessing to be able to focus on work and come into a clean, well-appointed, well-stocked office. But at the same time, I hope we’re never so heavily-staffed (or well-equipped) that there is not anything to for anyone to volunteer for. Success is built by teams of people who do needful things freely.

Originally published at JamesWalpole.com.