



AUTO PARTS

CENTRAL MOTOR PARTS, INC.
3080 S. Pacific Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85365
(928) 341-9540

December 20, 2005

My introduction to Rapport Leadership International was after I was considered a success in the Auto Parts business. I was four stores strong making a profit and surviving, when my neighbor approached me with a challenge. He asked me to go to leadership training and if I did not feel it was money well spent he would personally refund every dime. How could I lose? I packed my bags and was on my way to a life changing experience.

My neighbor's money was safe. I felt like Rapport was just what I was looking for. It validated the direction I was already on and inspired me to raise the bar in my business. The only way to achieve this was to get my entire management team on the same page. They attended Leadership Breakthrough One, Power Communication and Leadership Breakthrough Two and learned to understand who they are and how we come together as a team.

It was enjoyable to watch the change in my staff as the training was received. We would meet at my house after every graduation and discuss the most recent graduate's experiences. While business success was not the only reason for attending we were pleased to see double digit increases in sales during a time that the Auto Parts industry was averaging less than 2%. We also were able to increase profits to the point that we instituted a profit sharing and bonus program. Our five and ten year budgets were fun to look at as our numbers accelerated past our predictions.

I attribute these results to the leadership style adopted by our organization. All members of staff knew that they were responsible for the entire company's performance. They started contacting each other discussing sales growth, problem customers and expense control. My monthly meetings became conversations of what we did do for the business and each other in place of what we should be doing.

The result of the training was amazing we all became closer and more focused on our goals as expected. What I did not expect was the reaction by my suppliers and financial supporters. My suppliers enjoyed our enthusiasm and wanted to be part of our success. Extra discounts, dating terms and more working capital became available because of the numbers we were generating and because of the strength of our people.

Then disaster hit we were doing well and trusted to buy an operation equal in size to ours in another town. The business venture unfortunately failed causing financial losses that should have shut us down. My team did not panic. We spun off the venture and went to work to rebuild our balance sheet. I asked my managers to give up bonuses, freeze their pay and work harder than they ever have to overcome our situation. They all agreed and assured me that we are all up to the task.

Two years later, we are stronger than ever because we stayed together. I am convinced that most businesses could not have survived and flourished with the obstacles we were up against. My financial supporters told me just last month that they never lost confidence in us because of our drive and enthusiasm. They were always confident of our success because of the people.

I continue to have other storeowners question the money I have spent on training. I know our successes, our reputation in the industry and our survival after a large financial blow is all directly attributed to the training we have received. I answer my counterparts question to "what if you pay for their training and they leave you" with the only thing more dangerous is if you don't train them and they stay.

Russ Clark, President
Central Motor Parts