

A 5-Step Process for Investing in Your Front Line Team Members

I recently facilitated in a 3-day gathering of Guest Experience leaders from 15 of the largest churches in the U.S. There were many differences in our group when it comes to Guest Experience practices, but a common thread soon developed: **the critical importance of the front-line volunteers.**

One of the resources we discussed was a book by Chris DeRose and Noel Tichy entitled [Judgment on the Front Line](#). During a study of some of the leading companies in the country, the authors developed a set of principles for moving well beyond the basics of customer (guest) service by **putting power, resources and trust in the hands of front line personnel**. By doing so, these companies have enabled their employees to more rapidly address customer problems, anticipate unarticulated needs and drive customer-facing innovation.

DeRose and Tichy discuss their findings in an article on [HBR.org](#); here is an excerpt outlining an important process for church leaders to use when investing in their front line team members:

> **Step 1: Get Started: Connect the front line to the customer strategy.** Senior leaders need to help match their customer promise to the capabilities of the front line while listening closely so they can help align the culture, training, work processes and reward systems.

> **Step 2: Empower Your Workforce: Teach people to think for themselves.** Employees at every level need to understand the customer strategy and they also need simple problem solving frameworks that are used throughout the organization to promote cross-hierarchical dialogue.

> **Step 3: Experiment to Implement: Grant front line workers latitude to experiment.** Teaching front line leaders the basics for designing simple experiments enables organizations to test many more ideas than could ever be orchestrated centrally.

> **Step 4: Eliminate the Barriers: Break down the hierarchy.** Freeing front line capacity requires frequent, diligent effort to eliminate decision processes or administrative work that gets in the way of enabling the front line to expeditiously serve customers.

> **Step 5: Invest in Your Frontline: Put budget behind it.** Too often, companies reserve big budgets for senior management training while spreading funding thin for front line personnel. Similarly, too many companies are content to hire front line staff without carefully considering whether they possess the right attitude and values to represent their brand.

Delivering a great Guest experience is a fundamental that every organization needs to practice, and organizations that excel in this area focus on how to get the most from their front line. As organizations reconsider how their team members interact with customers, they will be challenged to move beyond just rhetoric.

If they are truly serious about turning their people into their greatest asset, they'll invest in the front line.

Read the full article from HBR [here](#).

Download our SUMS summary of *Judgment on the Front Line* [here](#).

Want to know about Guest Experiences in your church? [Contact me for more information](#).