



FISH Philosophy

Stephen Lundin: Fish! Philosophy (video available from the Office of Student Life)

When we entered The World Famous Pike Place Fish Market we have come to realize how deeply the work world longed for an image of a place where fun, joy, energy, productivity and incredible teamwork drive out stress, boredom, toxic energy and burnout.

We had an exciting formula that would allow any team to create the incredible atmosphere we discovered in Seattle. We call it the Fish! Philosophy. And the following are the four guiding principles.

Play

The fishmongers of Pike Place Fish Market are known around the world for throwing and catching large slippery fish, to the delight of their customers. It is one of the many ways they play. You and I might do serious work and we take that work seriously, but we can choose not to take ourselves too seriously. The advanced team understands how to harness the power of fun to lighten the atmosphere and create an environment that nurtures innovation.

Make Their Day

On entering the market you could think you were just being entertained. Wrong. The fishmongers are dedicated to making your visit memorable, and they do that by finding ways of making the customer's day. You may find yourself catching a fish or being involved in a harmless practical joke.

Our workdays are full of opportunities for making the day of our customers and our fellow team members; a small kindness or remembering a name; a word of support during difficult times. When you "make someone's day" you are focused on serving another. The advanced team has a bond that can be created only by serving customers and one another.

Be There

The fishmongers have discovered the power of focusing on one person and one thing at a time. As David Whyte puts it in one of his stories, the antidote to burnout is not necessarily rest - it is wholeheartedness. It is the halfhearted things you do while juggling other things that wear you out. When advanced team members interact they are not just physically present, they are wholeheartedly present.

Choose Your Attitude

At the market there is a great deal of discussion about choice - a reminder of what the fishmongers have discovered: you choose your attitude. If you find yourself with an attitude you don't want, you can choose another.

Members of advanced teams understand and discuss the notion that each member has the power to choose his or her attitude, and that each is responsible for that choice.