



**IT KEEPS GOING!
THEY'RE NOW
ACROSS THE
COUNTRY**



**WHAT DO YOU DO
WHEN YOUR STAFF
HATE YOUR
CUSTOMERS?**



**STAY AT THE TOP OF
YOUR GAME BY
GETTING A COACH
WITH ARLP!**

AR LEADERSHIP PARTNERS NEWS YOU CAN USE TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE



From the CEO's Desk

Happy February to the ARLP Nation! There are a lot of great things happening in February. For example.

- Black History Month
- Abraham Lincoln's birthday
- Lunar New Year
- Valentine's Day
- Mardi Gras, AKA Fat Tuesday

Also, 2024 is a leap year, so we can enjoy an extra day in what some see as the most romantic month of the year.

Let's take a quick look at Black History Month. This month-long observance occurs annually in the United States and in Canada too. It's a chance to celebrate Black achievement and also the indomitable spirit of all people, despite oppression and institutionalized racism. Black History Month invites us, as a community, to take stock of our current circumstances as a society addressing complexity like systemic racism,

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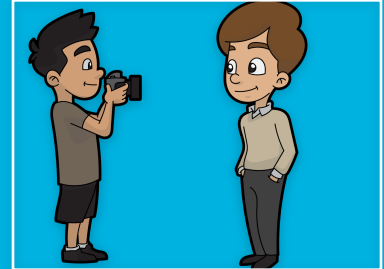
socioeconomic disparity, and other issues of equity that impact many in very visible, tangible ways.

We also take time during Black History Month to notice and disrupt inequities that are harder to detect but still impact people of all colors. These issues can include low quality public education opportunities. Black children, and young learners of all colors who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds often attend schools with limited rigorous courses, fewer electives offerings, and/or few early college opportunities. For example, the US Education Department's Office for Civil Rights recently reported approximately 35% of high schools with high enrollments of Black and Latino students offered calculus, compared to 54% of high schools with low enrollments of Black and Latino students. The trend in reduced rigorous learning opportunities for children of color begins early with Black students representing 16% of overall enrollment in America's public elementary schools but only 9% of enrollment in gifted and talented education programs. Rich elective offerings and early college access are examples of learning that expands the choices learners can make to thrive throughout their adult lives – when these choices are restricted we see institutionalized inequity and racism in effect. Let's take that on by disrupting inequitable practices impacting Black children and all of America's young learners so all Americans have the chance to succeed and make our shared community stronger.

AR Leadership Partners. Is a small but mighty community that believes all people have the right to health, safety, joy, love and genuine opportunity to engage in a life that actualizes our most creative, best selves and our fondest hopes and dreams. On our own terms. We work with Educator and leaders from all sectors to improve how we serve.

This month's journal features tools and techniques for leaders to harness the power of learning and relationships. First, we're going to revisit our friends from Improve Your Tomorrow. Also known as IYT. They've expanded while doubling down on their vision and mission to support young men of color. IYT is especially focused on African American men. Next, we'll highlight ARLP's. Leadership Performance Coaching System and how it uses tools of it's learning and leadership development framework *Quantum Learning Leadership* to accelerate transformation and sustainable, continuous improvement. Lastly we'll examine practices of

*ARLP is a small
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relationship building and the connection to effective team leadership, leaning on the work of thinkers like Jason Gaddis and Mike Michalowicz.

Thank you for tuning in with us this month and please feel free to send us your thoughts, recommendations. And the stories of your life of service, where you and your team are finding ways to make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

Al Rogers, CEO, Co-Founder
AR Leadership Partners
February, 2024

IYT Keeps Going and Growing! *How Improve Your Tomorrow has expanded its vision and reach to make a difference for young men of color*

For the past 11 years Co-Founder and CEO Michael Lynch has led Improve Your Tomorrow (aka IYT) in partnership with schools throughout California to support young men of color develop skills, relationships, and the mindset to succeed in school, college, and in life. Recently I caught up with the team at IYT. IYT is demonstrating how to change the trajectory of an entire generation of young men of color. Additionally, they inspire others to do the same, crushing the feelings of defeat and

apathy that have stolen the chance of success from so many...

Michael shared how IYT has harnessed the power of lessons learned to strengthen the vision and the range of service. IYT has learned that many of the young men they serve and/or seek to serve struggle with limited access to information. Myths like “if you don’t pay enough in taxes you won’t be allowed to attend college” have been affecting the decision of some to even pursue the dream. IYT has responded by becoming a clearinghouse of information about what it takes to succeed in college and how to access resources and support.

Other major lessons learned include the realization that, in addition to serving as a trusted, myth-busting resource for college access and success, IYT has validated key practices. Additionally, Partnerships are essential. Day-to-day serves and resources must be designed and delivered customized for the young men they serve. Program models feature language that is accessible to clients. In-person services must be scheduled to meet students’ needs and availability to be helpful. Other learning includes national partnerships

with organizations such as Americorps expand the reach of IYT. Lastly, Internal research and evaluation validates IYT's practices and informs constant innovation and grant proposal writing (essential to funding)

Organizational learning and partnerships expand the scope and effects of IYT's services. After 11 years of service in California, IYT has expanded. Today, some 300 employees support IYT's reach beyond California to Maryland, Minnesota, and other locations throughout the country. With the increased volume and range of services Lynch steers the IYT team to focus on ensuring a uniformly high-quality experience for the young men who participate in their program. Lynch explains, "IYT has become a movement that nurtures growth and development of African American men and young men of color

throughout the country. This helps them become good husbands and fathers who can then support IYT graduates to become husbands and fathers to families of their own.

IYT envisions a nation in which young men of color are overrepresented in higher education, underrepresented in the criminal justice system, and are leaders in their communities. ARLP salutes IYT for their innovative and courageous leadership. You're making great things happen for African American Men, young men of color, and for our country's future.

To learn more about IYT you can check in with them online at:

www.improveyourtomorrow.org

What do you do when your staff members hate your customers?

Let's start with a back story that kind of serves as an example for what to do with this kind of problem. This story actually happened to me and to my wife very recently in our quaint little town of Sonora in California. Our unfortunate tale involves our beloved Ford Fusion hybrid. It was a 2014 and it was a great little car! It was really reliable, except that one day it died on the side of the road. It sort of choked out, sputtered, coughed, stopped running altogether, and then flashed the feared "check engine" light on the dashboard when we tried to restart it.

Later, this fateful day when our little car died, we found ourselves that Sonora Ford in the Service Department. January 15 (the date is important to the story) we were informed of a variable voltage controller failure. It was explained to us that this is some kind of module that was maybe under warranty and that if we address that plus got a new battery (that was not under warranty) and some additional maintenance, we would get this thing fixed and at the low cost of \$367.89. We should be able to be back on the road, Also, we ended up having to pay that and a little over \$300 bucks for a rental.



Fast forward for four days; same problem. Check engine light flashes, coughing and sputtering, and the car dies on the side of the road, again. This time we make it back to Sonora Ford and there's another warranty check. They (mechanics and service managers) find that in fact there is another warranty issue that can be addressed. We were assured these simple repairs would fix this mysterious problem we have with our little car, and even better, there would be no additional charges as this work would be covered by the warranty or a recall.

Then, February 8th, less than a month from the first breakdown the car breaks down again (yes, for the third time). This time the Sonora Ford dealer told us the module installed must've been defective and that to address the problem there are other checks on the engine or the electrical system that would need to happen. It was unclear how much the system checks were going to cost but we needed to authorize the work so that we could get the problem finally solved. What choice did we have but to agree to another check on the engine.

A week later. We were told the problem must be the transmission and that while they couldn't get the engine light or the dying engine phenomena to happen again the price for the experience of the third trip to their service center was \$875.

We spoke very respectfully to the service manager and his subordinate staff. We said to them the price seems really high for a car that apparently no longer needs repair since they couldn't replicate the problems and that we've had to bring the car to them three times. In response, the manager made insulting faces at us and demanded that we had agreed to the non-service services provided and to the associate costs. He said something like, "Hey, you're changing your story, you're lying about agreeing to almost \$1000 of diagnostic service and it's your rough

luck that the original \$367 worth of services we provided to fix your car the first time didn't work. You *ain't* getting your car back until you pay." Then he waved his hands at us, dismissing us, turned his back and walked away while we were mid-sentence pleading our case.

We paid the fees and then we got rid of the car (which showed no more of the pesky coughing and dying on the side of the road things again). We vowed never again to buy from Ford. Though in truth, I have to admit I still love our other vehicle, a roughed-up Ford F-150. If it ever needs service, though, I'm willing to drive an hour and a half to find a reputable service provider. Oh, and by the way, we had to pay another \$400 to rent a car while our little Ford Fusion, was being "serviced". This strange little journey ended up costing us over \$1900 and a month of stress and disruption.

We bought a Jeep; not another Ford, to replace our beloved Ford Fusion. Not saying that Fords aren't great, but we are saying that trust and any chance for a relationship with the Ford Motor Company and Sonora Ford in particular was totally burned by this series of events and the Service Manager's hateful behavior. To say the least, we were feeling pretty salty. But also, *why was this man so comfortable being so rude and hateful toward us?* He even made sneery faces at us and turned his back on us as he had the gall to dismiss us, the annoying customers who followed his instructions and paid every bill, in apparent disgust. We inferred, this is how Ford does business and we won't allow ourselves to ever be treated like that again.

We think this story is a great example of what it looks like when employees "hate" their customers. Unfortunately, this kind of thing pops up in just about every service sector. So, what's that about? and what can be done to stop it? Every time it happens it

ruins trust, threatens business, puts jobs in jeopardy and, well, you know the rest.

Some might say when staff behave this way the short answer is to discipline them, maybe even severely so that others will understand not to hurt our customers, but we think that's shortsighted. There's something deeper going on here and it has to do with job satisfaction and psychological safety.

When staff hate their jobs they take it out on their customers. In order to understand this dynamic, we've got to start with this idea of psychological safety *among staff*. Psychological safety is present when each team member at work has the opportunity to take a risk in service to the customer and to the "cause" of the company. Also to feel safe, employees need to know they can raise objections or concerns, confident that they'll be heard and that there won't be repercussions for speaking up. People will also feel safe when they can be themselves at work without any pressure to conform in such a way that compromises their personal truth. Finally, people need to know that they have the training and the resources to do their part in a way that reflects personal integrity. It has to be the company leaders' commitment to ensure psychological safety for employees if they hope to survive.

It's difficult for staff to love their jobs and perform accordingly when their bosses or employers don't "love" them. Gallup's recent Work and Education poll found 90% of working adults don't hate their jobs, and that only 40% of Americans say they're actually in good jobs. People who don't feel they're paid fairly have a difficult time loving their jobs. Only 59% of US workers say they have experienced pay increases in the last five years but 11% say their take home wages have actually gotten worse. It's no surprise that many who are considered "top earners", those making 143,000 or more, like their jobs. People who don't love their jobs cite all kinds of issues that go beyond pay. Job dissatisfaction is also related to culture and to the conditions people experience at work:

- A sense of purpose at work.
- Influence to change things that aren't satisfying or "right".
- Personal safety and respect.

It's important to understand job quality is different between racial groups, with women of color most likely to say they were in bad jobs. Only 11% of white women saying they have bad jobs, compared to nearly three times that rate for black women (31%).

Conclusion: When employers fail to cultivate an environment or conditions that



support the staff experience with things like fair pay, purpose, influence, safety and respect., it might not be surprising when relationships between staff and customers become sour. Also, the company's days are likely numbered.... Ensure each staff member experiences psychological safety, try giving staff recognition for the hard work they give in service to the company's clients and cause. Provide support and the resources needed to allow them to do a great job. Make sure each team member has the freedom to be themselves at work and to speak up about their ideas on improvement and wellness at work. If employees experience safety, voice, and agency. They will likely become "Co-owners" AND they'll extend the "love" to your customers. If you do those things repeatedly, you will have built in partnership with your employees a culture that supports wellness, psychological safety, and almost certainly, great customer service. For those employees who still are mean to customers (and/or colleagues) despite the positive and safe culture of the company, consideration for a different role within the organization could be just the thing to validate who they are and the value they bring to the workplace community. If they still aren't fitting, it might finally be true they need to be inspired to find their bliss somewhere else.

ARLP does its best to build leadership skills among people serving in all business segments trying to make the world a better place. This most definitely includes a relentless focus on the experience of the customers as well as the good people making the magic happen for those customers. We at ARLP hope you'll join us in understanding new ways to ensure psychological safety and excellence for employees and for customers everywhere. And we hope we enjoy our new Jeep and that things at Sonora Ford get better for the staff and for their customers.

To learn more about psychological safety and great teams comprised of people who love their jobs and their customers, check out Michael Michalowicz's book *All On: How great leaders build unstoppable teams*, and you'll also want to check out Patrick Lencioni's books *The Ideal Team Player*, and, *The Advantage*.





AR Leadership Partners

JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY OF LEARNING AND SERVICE IN 2024

AR Leadership Partners is committed to service. We work with Business, Government, Nonprofits, and Education to make the world a better place. Our work often involves strategic advisory to executives and their teams as well as technical assistance on systems that need improvement, innovation, or creation. Our work always involves learning and development. If you go to our website you'll find lots of resources and a chance to partner with like-minded folks who are interested in making a difference. We hope to see you there soon:

www.arleadership.org

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Rogers". The script is fluid and cursive.

**Alan Rogers, Ed. D., CEO
AR Leadership Partners**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebekah Rogers". The script is fluid and cursive.

**Rebekah Rogers, CoFounder; President
AR Leadership Partners**