

## Business Lessons I've Learned From Dogs...

My husband Roy and I work together. I guess you could call Precision Printing a family business. We started it in 1983 six months after my daughter, Wynter, was born. My brother, Randy, works there too. Our kids, Aaron and Wynter have worked at Precision part time through their high school years and again during their summer's home from college. But a couple of years ago we started taking our dogs to work with us, Haley, a golden retriever and Ty, a Brittany spaniel. They're family too. It first happened during the tornado season that ripped through Renick and left havoc in its path. What kind of dog owner would leave their dogs outside during that kind of weather? ....Or....maybe it was really the fact that our kids had both left home and it was an adaptation of "empty nest" syndrome. Whatever it was, I've learned a lot of "Business Lessons from Dogs".

### Lesson 1:

- Be as excited to come to work in the morning as you are to leave at night. The dogs can read us like a book. When they see me go for my coat and purse, turn off the light switch and lock the door -- they go crazy. It doesn't matter if it's 6:00 o'clock at night or 3:00 in the afternoon. They know that you stay at work, patiently, until it's time to go. They don't wear a watch, you know. But the most intriguing part is that they are every bit as excited to come to work as they are to leave. They greet every new day with total excitement. Sometimes I think they are disappointed on Saturday's that they don't get to ride in the truck and come do their job. I wish every one I worked with showed that much enthusiasm...at least every other day.

### Lesson 2:

- Don't be afraid to let people know what you really mean. If Haley is hungry, everyone knows it. She walks up to her food bowl, gives it a whirl with her paw and looks the nearest person straight in the eye until she gets what she wants. More to eat. Why pretend she isn't

hungry? If you hear a whine by the door, you know what that means too. Why speak in code? Those kinds of games aren't in her bag of tricks. Maybe the rest of us ought to be more clear in our communications to those around us.

### Lesson 3:

- Look out for your fellow dog. There are actually 2 food bowls. One for Ty, and one for Haley. Neither will eat until **both** bowls are full and their **fellow dog** has nourishment for the morning. Do we care as much about the guy sitting at the desk next to us?
- Always look your best. There's nothing like a fresh grooming to bring the dogs alive. Clean them up, give them a haircut, add a touch of toenail polish with a bandana and they prance around ready to face the giants. The same thing applies to most of us. If you take the time to be healthy and look your best, it shows in your face and comes across in your voice as well.
- Participate in group activities without complaining. We've all been asked to participate in a "team building exercise" or "group activity" that took us a little out of our comfort zone. Now if you were a dog, it wouldn't bother you a bit. Did you ever dress up for Halloween, that is – after you were 30 years old? Take a look at how this works out in a business environment. Well, I guess maybe dogs don't enjoy it so much either.
- It's OK to have fun at work. Now, my dogs aren't hunting dogs. Actually Ty, the Brittany, flunked out of bird school. But I've seen working dogs. There's nothing more beautiful than watching them catch the scent, make the point and tremble with eagerness waiting for their hunting partner to take the shot. If you have a retriever you've seen the same anticipation when you throw a tennis ball or Frisbee. I guess we all should remember that you really can have a passion for what you do!

Let me throw out a few more basic principles to help you get the idea...

- Barking a lot is annoying, so don't do it often. That way, when you do bark people spring to attention.
- Biting someone never leads to anything good.
- Don't confuse your tail with a goal worth chasing.
- Always greet customers with excitement and enthusiasm **even** when you just saw them three minutes ago. They never grow tired of thinking they are the **most important** thing in your life.

This is one of my personal favorites:

- When the big folks are feasting, if you know how to work things, you'll be able to feast, too.
- Continuously learning new tricks keeps you young.
- Fool your masters into thinking they are in charge.
- The more you show that you don't need a leash, the less you have to wear it. Conversely, if you're always tugging on your leash, you'll always have to wear it.

Now you can't take this whole dog lesson too far. There are definitely some things that don't apply. Dogs don't clean up their own messes and it's usually best if you help fix things when they go wrong.

And... it's only OK to sleep with the boss --- if you're a dog.  
Thank you!!