

Interview with Ben Buben Continued

When working with a challenging customer, how do you decide what approach to take?

When faced with a challenging customer, I prioritize empathy, flexibility, and problem-solving. I assess the situation, empathize with their perspective, and evaluate options. Tailoring communication, remaining calm and professional, and seeking win-win solutions are crucial. I follow up to ensure satisfaction and gather feedback for improvement.

Describe when you bent one of your core values or beliefs during a bad time.

During a high-pressure project, I momentarily compromised my core values of honesty and integrity. Feeling overwhelmed, I agreed to manipulate data to meet a client's urgent demand, rationalizing it as a one-time exception. However, I later realized my mistake and confessed to my supervisor, taking full responsibility. This experience reinforced the importance of upholding integrity, even in difficult times.

Describe your management style. Please give an example that illustrates it best.

My management style centers on empowerment, collaboration, and servant leadership. During a challenging project, I fostered open discussion and empowered each team member to take ownership of specific tasks based on their strengths. I provided guidance and support while allowing autonomy for decision-making. This approach led to a motivated, cohesive team that overcame obstacles and exceeded client expectations.

What is your strategy for getting a high standard of work from your team?

My strategy for ensuring a high standard of work from my team involves setting clear expectations, establishing SMART goals, providing support and resources, encouraging autonomy and ownership, offering feedback and recognition, promoting collaboration and communication, and leading by example. By implementing these principles, I create an environment where excellence is expected and consistently achieved, leading to overall team and organizational success.

What is the most challenging part of negotiation for you?

The most challenging part of the negotiation is balancing assertiveness and collaboration. Advocating for my interests while fostering rapport and finding mutually beneficial solutions is crucial. This requires effective communication, strategic thinking, and emotional management. Despite its challenges, negotiation presents opportunities for growth and relationship-building, continually driving me to refine my skills and strategies.

What is the most exciting/easiest part of negotiation for you?

The most exciting part of negotiation for me is the opportunity for problem-solving and creative brainstorming to find mutually beneficial solutions. I enjoy exploring various options, considering different perspectives, and devising innovative approaches. Building rapport and positive relationships with the other party is also rewarding, laying the groundwork for successful agreements. Additionally, I thrive in the dynamic nature of negotiations, where quick thinking and adaptability are essential, keeping me engaged and energized throughout the process.

Give an example of a change you saw coming and how you planned for that change.

One example of a change I foresaw and prepared for was the transition to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the evolving situation, I closely monitored developments and assessed our team's readiness for remote work. I communicated transparently, provided resources and support, implemented flexible policies, and continuously monitored and adjusted based on feedback. This proactive approach minimized disruptions, maintained productivity, and supported my team effectively during this challenging transition.

Describe the way you handled a specific problem involving others with differing values, ideas, and beliefs in your current/previous job.

In a previous job, I managed a situation where team members had differing values and ideas regarding a proposed project. I began by actively listening to each perspective, seeking common ground, and facilitating constructive dialogue. Through compromise and consensus-building, we agreed on a project direction that balanced conservative and innovative strategies. Emphasizing trust and respect, we implemented the decision and remained open to adjustments based on feedback. This approach fostered effective collaboration and unity within the team.

Describe the best and most helpful constructive feedback you've received in your career.

The most helpful constructive feedback I've received emphasized the importance of active listening and empathy in communication. Initially proficient in expressing my ideas, I learned to enhance my effectiveness by better understanding others' viewpoints and acknowledging their feelings. Implementing techniques such as paraphrasing and asking open-ended questions significantly improved my communication and relationships. This feedback has profoundly impacted my growth, enriching my ability to connect with others on a deeper level and fostering more meaningful interactions in both personal and professional settings.

Walk me through a critical goal you set in the past and your process for ultimately meeting or exceeding it.

One critical goal I set was to increase customer satisfaction scores for a product I managed. I began by analyzing current scores and understanding customer needs through surveys and feedback. Developing actionable strategies, I collaborated across departments and continuously monitored progress. Investing in training and celebrating milestones kept the team motivated. Evaluating results, I adjusted plans and set new goals, ultimately exceeding satisfaction targets. Proactively identifying needs, collaboration, and strategic implementation were vital to success.

How do you establish a vision for/with your team?

Establishing a vision with my team is a collaborative effort, aligning individual goals with organizational objectives. I begin by understanding the current state through SWOT analysis and market trends. Engaging team members, I organize brainstorming sessions to encourage dialogue and idea-sharing. Defining purpose and values, I articulate why our work matters and what principles guide us. Painting a vivid picture of the future, I craft an inspiring vision statement. Setting SMART goals, I translate the vision into actionable objectives. Creating a roadmap, I break down goals into tasks, set timelines, and assign responsibilities. Through regular communication and reinforcement, I keep the vision alive and celebrate achievements. Lastly, I remain adaptable, open to feedback, and iterate on the vision to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with our goals and values. This collaborative approach empowers my team to co-create a shared vision that inspires and guides our efforts toward success.

What have you done to support diversity in your unit?

Supporting diversity in my unit is a top priority, and I've implemented various initiatives to foster an inclusive environment. Firstly, I've organized diversity training sessions to raise awareness and promote understanding. Secondly, I've ensured fair hiring practices to attract diverse candidates. Thirdly, I've created safe spaces for dialogue where team members can share experiences and ideas. Additionally, I've established mentorship programs and affinity groups for support and networking. I've provided opportunities for professional development for all team members and organized events to celebrate diversity. Lastly, I hold myself and other leaders accountable for promoting diversity and inclusion, integrating diversity metrics into evaluations and planning. This approach creates a culture of inclusivity and belonging where all team members feel valued and empowered.

What strategies have you used to respond to diversity challenges?

Addressing diversity challenges requires a comprehensive approach, and I've utilized various strategies to tackle these issues. Firstly, I've implemented diversity training programs to educate team members on DEI topics such as unconscious bias and cultural competency. Secondly, I've facilitated open dialogues within the team to allow members to share their experiences and concerns. Thirdly, I've revised policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and equitable. Additionally, I've provided support and resources to employees facing diversity challenges, including access to mentorship and counseling services. Furthermore, I've promoted allyship and advocacy among team members, encouraging them to speak up against discrimination and supporting colleagues from underrepresented groups. Moreover, I've collaborated with external organizations specializing in diversity and inclusion to gain insights and access resources. Lastly, I've implemented mechanisms to measure and monitor progress in addressing diversity challenges over time. These strategies aim to create a work environment where all team members feel valued and empowered to contribute.