

By Bill Guertin

The 800-Pound Gorilla

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The Unsung Hero

Everyone has a weakness. Mine is finance.

I have never been a math whiz. Give me a tough marketing or sales problem to solve, and I'm all over it. Show me a spreadsheet and tell me it's budget time, however, and I'm running for the hills screaming.

When I was faced with creating my recent department budget, I had a lot of questions and not a lot of expertise. I was told to see a certain individual at Riverside. "She can help you. Just see if she has a minute."

What I found was an amazing person willing to spend as much time with me as I needed. Her calmness about the situation was very positive. No question was too stupid. No line item seemed to faze her. We got through the process, and I felt like a giant weight had been lifted from me.

Several people helped me through the budget process. Each one had a hand in making it easier for me to complete. But there was something special about the way she spent time with me. She took on the task with no questions asked, and that made a very powerful impression on me.

Others would have questioned why I was there at such a late stage of the budget process. Some would have questioned me about why I was entering the figures I was suggesting. But that's part of what makes a great workplace... people who are willing to give each other support and encouragement instead of negativity and judgment.

There's probably someone at your workplace just like this. Someone who comes in every day, gives 100% to the tasks at hand, and doesn't ask for much in return.

They're punctual, never miss a deadline with their work, and respectful of others. When people come to them looking for help, they're willing to give it, and they do it with a smile.

Most of the time, they're involved in work that some of us would call boring. They are the unseen backbone of the company, the ones that without their diligence would surely mean trouble for the organization.

If you have one or more of these unsung heroes, I'd like to ask a favor. Take a moment to show them how much they mean to you. Send a card, a small vase of flowers, a gift certificate, or bring lunch in one day in his or her honor. Depending on the person, you might choose to do something less public, like sending something to their home, if it would embarrass them to receive something at work. Whatever you do, make sure your sincerity shows through, and let him or her know why you're recognizing them.

Every company has at least one person like this. And every company needs to make sure these people feel special.

My last day as an official employee of Riverside HealthCare is today, October 7th. I'm leaving because I have the opportunity to become a full-time entrepreneur in marketing, sales, and customer service consulting under my brand name of The 800-Pound Gorilla.

It was a very difficult decision for me to leave Riverside. I have never been prouder of an institution I have represented, and never have I worked with such a talented and professional group of people. The lessons I have learned and the relationships I have formed as a member of the Riverside family are deep and wide.

And part of the reason I'm so proud of the organization is because of the hundreds of unsung heroes that work there.

There are dozens of departments, including Nursing, Home Health, Environmental Services, Dietary, Education, Patient Liaisons, Senior Services, and Finance, that all contribute positively to our region's healthcare. You probably won't ever have the chance to meet most of them. But I have, and I've seen the amazing work that they do.

My rescuer probably thought nothing of the help she gave me with my budget. But that's just who she is. And I'm so thankful for her.

Be thankful for your unsung heroes, too. And be sure to show it in some small way.

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