Independent Banker  
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Portfolio

[tag] Leadership at All Levels

[hed] Relishing anticipation

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There’s something about this time of year. The changing of the seasons, the anticipation of time spent with family and friends, the chance to pause and create memories. And when it comes to making positive changes, the end of the calendar year is also approaching, bringing with it resolutions. If you want to leave something behind, it’s a good time to look to the new year and new opportunities.

It’s all about anticipation, a word that has multiple meanings. Merriam-Webster defines it as “a prior action that takes into account or forestalls a later action; the act of looking forward; visualization of a future event or state.” It’s all those things, and many roles at the bank have a natural connection to the act of anticipation: customer service, business development and risk management, for instance.

But there’s more to anticipation than planning ahead. For a leader, anticipation can be a powerful skill to use as you navigate different situations, discussions or projects. It’s not always a skill we leverage, but being able to anticipate a response, reaction or need has many benefits.

* Anticipating a future need allows us to make the sale or meet a customer’s needs before a competitor does.
* It demonstrates to teammates and colleagues that you’re thinking about the full picture and what may come of a situation or discussion.
* Looking forward can help defuse a problematic situation before it becomes negative or hostile.
* Studies show that when we anticipate something, we tend to focus on the positive aspects and ignore the negative ones. That isn’t *<i>always*<i> a good thing, but a positive way of thinking does have considerable benefits for a team and leader, not least in terms of morale.

Anticipation should be part of any planning process and any strategy discussion, but how can you channel your skills into anticipation?

1. Look for cues in nonverbal language such as facial expressions.
2. Listen to the exact words that others share. Silence can be your friend if you give others the space to speak, but only do so if your goal is to listen and then respond.
3. Ask questions. Learn the thoughts of the team members involved in the process or decision.
4. Stop and pause. Give yourself time and space to think about the scenario.
5. Run through the “what ifs.”

If you do anticipate a certain response or reaction, act before things get out of hand. This allows for goals to be reached earlier and results in increased satisfaction from those involved.

As the upcoming holiday season reminds us, there’s a lot of beauty and optimism in anticipating the future. In fact, for many, the act of anticipation is almost more fun than the actual event. So, tap into that feeling—and keep looking forward!

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