



[Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classified](#) | [Customer Service](#)
| [Yellow Pages](#) | [Dating](#) | [azcentral.com](#)

[News](#)|[Sports](#)|[Money](#)|[Entertainment](#)|[Arizona Moms](#)|[Food & Home](#)|[Style](#)|[Travel](#)|[Photo](#)|[Video](#)|[Español](#)

scottsdale republic

Trucking exec airs problem fixes

Jane Larson

The Arizona Republic

Mar. 29, 2007 04:17 PM

Taking an eight-week class to tackle your sticky business problems is tough enough. But committing to do it on the radio?

When Rick Duncan, president of Duncan & Son Lines Inc., agreed to star for eight weeks on a 10-minute segment of KXAM-AM's *John Adam Show*, he didn't think about how his employees, customers or competitors would react.

He thought it would be fun.

"Rick was the most amazing pick. . . . You can get into some deep stuff, but he didn't seem to have any problems doing it on the show," said Linda Tennant, president of Scottsdale-based Attainment Inc. The firm offers programs in leadership, productivity and related topics.

The segment was a first for the year-old radio show, hosted by John Adam Kowalski and geared to small-business owners and entrepreneurs.

Kowalski, who goes by John Adam on the air, had interviewed Tennant in early January on New Year's resolutions for businesses. The two soon agreed that Attainment's eight-week courses would make good fodder for a weekly radio series.

All they needed was a client who was game for the idea.

Enter Duncan, the third-generation owner of the Buckeye trucking company. Duncan & Son has grown by specializing in transporting ocean containers between West Coast ports and metro Phoenix.

But as 2007 started, Duncan was wrestling with some of the issues that come with growth. Departments weren't working together the way they did when everyone shared coffee at the same table. More competitors were entering the market. Duncan also wanted to help employees develop their potential.

So, each week, they addressed a different leadership topic. Duncan would read the lesson and listen to a CD, then pick a problem at work to apply the lesson to. Then he would arrive at the KXAM studio to report to Tennant on the air how the week went.

One week, he began with the issue of getting his managers to work together better. Though it sounds simple in retrospect, telling them he expected them to resolve issues on their own solved much of the problem.

To keep sales up amid increased competition, he started asking for target dates, planned sales goals and specific ways to achieve them.

The lesson on delegation coincided with a two-week cruise Duncan planned in South America. This time, he trained his top executive on what to look for when signing important checks. He encouraged others to take charge of issues.

He checked his e-mail for just 15 minutes a day and called in to the radio show via the ship's satellite phone. For once, he didn't come back from vacation cranky about all the work facing him.

The radio show gave him an extra incentive to work on his leadership skills, Duncan said.

"If I didn't have the show in the back of my mind each week, I may have let things slide every once in awhile," he said. "I know I've got to keep on track here, because I've got to be able to discuss this without looking like a fool."

Beyond the show, he's thrilled with the business results.

Managers dump far fewer problems in his lap. The aggressive sales goals set at the beginning of the year are on track. A longtime employee is again a star performer, and for the first time the company is budgeting money for employee development and training.

"You could just see Rick, he had all these a-ha's," Tennant said. "He appeared to just grow with the process."

Kowalski and Tennant are ready to do it again. They've got another Attainment client waiting in the KXAM studio wings for the next eight weeks of fame.

Send news about small businesses and Scottsdale Airpark businesses to jane.larson@arizonarepublic.com or call (602) 444-6868.

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

More information

- *The John Adam Show* airs 7-9 p.m. Tuesdays on talk-radio station KXAM-AM (1310). Previous shows are available at www.thejohnadamshow.com.
- Attainment Inc.'s Web site is www.attainmentinc.com