

Accounts of Achievement...

A Case Study Featuring McCluskey Chevrolet

The Company...

McCluskey Chevrolet is a multi-generational Chevrolet dealership located in the heart of Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1980, 21-year-old college freshman, Keith McCluskey, took over the helm of the dealership becoming the youngest franchise dealer in his history. The company was struggling at the time and was ranked last in the Chevy dealerships in the Ohio, Indiana, and Northern Kentucky areas. But Keith was persistent and driven to create a positive transformation. He implemented changes with the help of a leadership team headed by president, Mike Kelsey, and as a result, McCluskey Chevrolet made dramatic improvements. By 1997, they were ranked the number one volume Chevrolet dealership in the market place. They were recognized as the largest volume General Motors dealer for eight out of nine years. And for five consecutive years McCluskey was the “Number One Big Truck” dealer in the world for General Motors. McCluskey Chevrolet considered themselves to be on the cutting edge with respect to growth and development. They were on the right track; moving forward in the fast paced automotive sales industry. McCluskey believed their biggest hurdles were behind them, but they would soon encounter an unforeseen obstacle.



*Mike Kelsey, President
McCluskey Chevrolet*

The Challenge...



*Mike Kelsey facilitating weekly planning sessions
with his leadership team.*

In January 2002, McCluskey Chevrolet was, like many organizations across the country, faced with the challenging economic times created by September 11. Mike turned his focus to the key players in his organization. Keeping morale high and focusing on ways to economically overcome the country's tragic events were imperative to the organization's future. Five months earlier, Mike participated in an *Effective Personal Productivity* showcase facilitated by LMI Partner, John Kieffer. Mike found the experience to be a life-changing event and was convinced the *LMI Process* would prove beneficial to his team. So he called on John Kieffer again and together they introduced McCluskey's eighteen members of the senior management team to *Effective Personal Leadership*. The *EPL* was designed to maximize leadership potential by building on strengths, overcoming obstacles of leadership and developing a written, specific plan of action. The results were impressive. Mike stated that everyone involved experienced personal and professional growth. The improvements in communication and teambuilding

were significant. Management team members, who at one time showed little support for one another, became united and respectful creating a positive work environment. Some of the managers were skeptical in the beginning, but soon they noticed the optimistic effects of working together as a team. The senior managers quickly began practicing lessons learned in the *EPL* and continue to do so today.

“I've always been goal oriented, or at least I thought that I was, but my thinking changed. My goals became SMART and I wrote them down. I began tracking my behaviors and performance. The change was permanent. I had never experienced a life change of this depth and magnitude.” - Mike Kelsey

“Leadership leads. Mike Kelsey not only leads but constantly strives to grow so that he leads more effectively. He is never going to come out of the “arena” second in any area of his life.”

- John Kieffer, LMI Partner

The LMI Process™...

After the positive experience in the *EPL*, Mike began to think about long-term planning for McCluskey. He talked to LMI Partner, John Kieffer, now fondly referred to as “Coach” Kieffer, about *Effective Organizational Leadership* and *Strategic Analysis* to develop a clear vision and plan for the future. Mike wanted the leadership team to be part of developing the company’s strategic plan. The main objective was getting six retail facilities working together. The strategic planning with clearly defined goals turned this into a reality. Mike and his leadership team set *S.M.A.R.T.* goals and began to implement them daily. They tracked their progress for each work-day, which is considered a revolutionary concept in automotive sales whereas most sales are measured monthly. Mike says, “*We know where we are every day. We high-five the hits and suggest encouragement when we miss.*” Next, Mike focused on another level of leadership in his organization. He invested again in the *EPL* process for the organization’s middle management team. Mike personally follows up with each participant and draws out the best from them. His presence in the sessions have been positive. Being involved reassures his employees that their success is important to him as well as the entire organization. Employees have said that the way Mike lives his life inspires them to set and progressively realize their goals in all areas of life.



The Difference...

When Mike Kelsey first met John Kieffer in 2001 they had an instant rapport because of their similar missions of helping people grow and prosper. Today that relationship continues and the plans for progress and development continue as well. Mike initiated *Effective Selling Strategies* for underperforming salespeople. He is assisting in the facilitation and mentoring process along with his general sales manager who is providing weekly coaching. They are confident that the sales goals they have defined will “lift the floor” in their organization to a minimum of eight cars sold per month per salesperson. This *S.M.A.R.T.* goal will have a substantial impact in the overall productivity of the company. McCluskey still holds the title “Number One Big Truck” dealer in the world for General Motors. And most recently, Mike Kelsey accepted the LMI Client of the Year award on behalf of his organization. McCluskey Chevrolet is an organization that believes in its people and is willing to make the investment of time and money in their development. McCluskey knows the importance of investing in people and the downside cost of not doing it. This culture is a result of leaders like Mike Kelsey who values and drives growth consistently through both good and bad economic times. Mike is committed to the organization’s success and believes the accomplishments of the organization are a credit to owner Keith McCluskey and the dedicated team members. Mike says that McCluskey is blessed with an outstanding staff. The senior management team averages twenty-three years experience, the middle management team averages ten years, the sales team has minimal turnover -which is uncommon in the automotive industry - and the service technician staff averages 15 years. The staff believes in challenging themselves to accomplish greater success in both their personal and professional lives. Mike stated: “*I have the easiest job in the store; create and maintain an environment to foster this type of thinking.*”

“Good people doing good things will create good results. Good people doing great things will create even better results. But good people who buy-in to challenging themselves to be the best they can be will create the greatest results.” - Mike Kelsey