

# Feeding off energy

How David Magrogon translates enthusiasm into success at Kildare's Inc. **By Brian Horn**

**E**nthusiasm can sometimes be hard to master but owner and CEO David Magrogon makes sure he is always upbeat about his business, Kildare's Inc., a chain of Irish pubs.

He cut his hours at his chiropractic business after six years because he found himself watching the clock and decided to move over to the restaurant business. Couple that with having enjoyed the energy that the restaurant business brought him in his youth and college years, it was a natural transition to Kildare's.

"I always make sure when I walk into one of my buildings I have energy and I'm smiling and interacting with the staff," he says.

Magrogon employs over 300 workers and made about \$14 million in 2006 and about \$11 million in 2005.

*Smart Business* spoke with Magrogon about consistently maintaining enthusiasm and using it to communicate his vision.

**Q: What does a CEO need to do to be successful?**

Have a very clear vision and be able to express that vision on a daily basis. A clear vision you can inspire people with through the ups and the downs.

Second, the ability to trust people and delegate. If you want to grow, you need to find the people you can trust and delegate to them and believe they are in union with your vision.

**Q: How do you communicate that vision?**

We do a monthly newsletter and monthly training talks. We visit the stores on a regular basis. I'm present in my pubs throughout the week.

When you are there, it's making sure you are hitting on the same basics. It's really a lot of doing the same thing every day with enthusiasm. When the CEO walks in, I want my staff to know the four or five things I am going to look for. It's actions, too. How you follow up on things. How you walk your walk.

Our core values include positive and

effective communication, teamwork, open ideas. What we're doing with the core values is protecting the employees from mean owners, bosses and co-workers. We are letting them know, in order to protect a quality brand, you have to protect quality employees.

It's also to protect the managers. If an employee is not doing their job, it's easy to identify, train, reprimand or dismiss the employee.



**Q: How do you stay enthusiastic?**

I read a lot of different success books and motivation books to keep fresh. I'll go back through and relive stories of how we built this company. That, in itself, will build a lot of enthusiasm.

It's really finding the things to praise and celebrate. We just had a fabulous review and it's great to celebrate that review because it puts energy into everyone and people say, 'Even though we have been around for a couple of years we are still

pretty damn good.' You have to convince yourself. Your mind doesn't know the difference between doing the task or you making it believe it did the task. If you tell your mind you feel great, you've got great energy and are positive, then your body starts to release the hormones, energy and everything it needs to get going in that direction.

We've all known people that are always sick and always miserable because that is what their minds keep telling their bodies.

**Q: How do you know if the mission is carried out?**

We use a secret-shopper service. Each location has one secret shopper per month. It's an intense one that does higher-end hotels and restaurants. We went with them because of their nitpickiness.

We praise and reward with this, and we have also terminated in this. As an example, if we have a server who isn't doing the proper greeting — and we don't want them to be robots — but we try to give them 10 to 15 things to say to a table to greet the table. If they don't use any of those and if we found they did that in previous ones, we may terminate them. When we have a server do everything great, we'll give them a \$100 gift certificate to somewhere.

Also, the presence of some of my lead executives. Everyone at the corporate level is still involved in going to the pubs. It's not uncommon for my director of marketing to be working the host stand on Saturday night because he wants to see how the marketing is working.

**Q: How do the rewards help the company?**

People love to be noticed. It motivates them and keeps them around. It just doesn't become about money. It becomes about satisfaction.

They might be able to go to another restaurant and make \$20 a night more. But, do they want to do that and work for a mean boss? It's important to smile at them, hug them and celebrate their success with them.

**HOW TO REACH:** Kildare's Inc., (610) 431-0770 or [www.kildarespub.com](http://www.kildarespub.com)