



DAVE CUMMINGS,
broker and founder of
Cummings & Co. Realtors

Dave Cummings established Cummings & Co. Realtors 10 years ago as the kind of agency where he wanted to work, built on strong relationships and solid compensation.

The Baltimore-based residential real estate firm has offices in Canton, Federal Hill, Lutherville, Perry Hall and Ruxton, and employs more than 170 people.

Cummings, the firm's broker and founder, is this year's winner of the Top Workplaces leadership award among midsize companies.

Cummings took some time out of his schedule to answer five questions about leadership for The Baltimore Sun:

What is a leader's role in building a place where people want to work?

I feel it is critical to provide a positive and collaborative work environment in offices where I know people will want to conduct business. I always view the relationship as a partnership where I am readily available to answer questions or provide support. I view my relationships with my staff as long-term partnerships and not as an employer/employee situation.

What is your influence on your organization's culture?

I make it a point to stay consistently upbeat and energetic in hopes that the energy will rub off on others. I also make every effort to create an open environment where people feel comfortable sharing and collaborating amongst each other. There is also a sense of community through our offices because of various business development and social events such as mas-

Dave Cummings of Cummings & Co. Realtors won the leadership honor for mid-sized Top Workplaces.
Photo by Lloyd Fox

termind meetings, company-sponsored happy hours, family parties and other activities that bring people together.

How do you decide when to be hands-on and when to delegate?

I make it a point to hire experienced, honest and trustworthy employees and agents. This allows me to remain hands-off and delegate as much as possible, which in turn provides more time for me to focus on strengthening the company. However, whenever a situation arises where my support is needed, I am readily available to assist in any way possible.

What's the hardest lesson about leadership you've learned?

It took time for me to learn to give up control of the day-to-day activities of running the business. It was hard for me to learn to delegate and trust people to take over responsibilities that were crucial to operate the business. However, once I did learn to give up that control, my business grew exponentially as I could focus on growth and improvement.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in leadership?

Your reputation is everything and is what people will ultimately remember about you in the end. It is key to stay true to your core values and do not take short cuts to get ahead. You will be highly respected if you make both business and non-business decisions based off strong moral and ethical principles. This is key for anyone in a leadership role.

WaveStrike CEO Anne Wagner secured the leadership honor for small Top Workplaces. Photo by Lloyd Fox

