

Business with a Heart

*a novel about
balancing your head and heart for
astounding results*



Crystal Thomas

CHAPTER 1

Life as She Knows It

“**W**hat does that mean to you?” Mr. Hatcher asked. Janine grimaced as she looked at the performance review containing feedback from her direct reports and a feeling of dread settled into the pit of her stomach. This wasn’t good considering that it was her first evaluation in the position she had now held for a year.

“Nothing!” Mr. Hatcher almost shouted, his face expressionless. “I don’t care about this.”

He pulled out another piece of paper, the fiscal summary for the southwest region for the previous year. He jabbed his finger at the summary, “This is what matters, Janine. I don’t give a rat’s you-know-what about what your reps think about you.”

Janine sat in her chair, motionless.

“I don’t do this job to win a popularity contest, do you?” he prodded.

Janine shook her head hesitantly, a little crushed by the comments from her reps.

“NO!” Mr. Hatcher exclaimed crumpling up the performance review and tossing a three-point shot to a trash can in the far corner

of his office. “I showed you that so you can see the HR bull we have to deal with. Work hard, do your job, get me this . . .” he circled the gross revenue Janine’s region had raked in the previous year, “. . . you’ll keep getting this . . .” he tossed her an envelope with her semiannual bonus check, “. . . and I’ll take care of HR.”

“Thank you,” Janine replied, relieved that he had not yelled at her about the negative feedback.

“Don’t thank me. Just do even better this year,” his expressionless face turned sour, “and get Paul’s numbers up. His region has been underperforming these past several months.”



As Janine recalled the recent meeting with Mr. Hatcher, she again experienced the same sinking feeling in her gut as she relived his displeasure. Getting the bonus check was the closest thing to a compliment she had ever received from him. Yet, despite what he had said, she couldn’t stop thinking about her results on the performance review.

She nodded at the security guard behind the desk and took the elevator to the eighteenth floor where she made a right and headed to the offices of Hatcher and Hastings, Inc. Though not a huge company, H&H was a strong competitor in the accounting software industry with just under five hundred employees in offices across the country. The southern California office at which Janine worked, housing one hundred and fifty of those employees, was the company’s headquarters.

At twenty-seven, Janine was the youngest sales manager in the company and was responsible for twelve sales reps and two administrative assistants. She had worked hard for four years in the field to get the job, but she didn’t like that she was now expected

to play an enforcer role in overseeing others. She maintained a tough demeanor because she was supposed to, but she had never felt good about it. *It's business*, she tried to counsel herself, but the advice never quite stuck. Recently, motivated by the negative performance review that she had become aware of several weeks ago, she had tried improving the way her reps saw her in the field; but at the office, she still felt and acted like Mr. Hatcher's puppet.

Janine shook her head to clear the maze of thoughts. She managed a sincere smile as she walked by the receptionist before a faint whisper triggered her back into her authoritarian position. "She's coming," Tessa, one of the administrative assistants who worked for her, quietly warned an unseen visitor at her cubicle. Janine kept walking as others scattered from one of the cluster of cubicles in the center of the room.

Janine toughened her expression as Mr. Hatcher's advice penetrated her mind, "You're not here to be friendly. You're here to make sure you get value for the money we're paying them. They're here to work. Period." The guilty turned their heads to avoid her look of disdain. She quickly turned her scan to her other assistant's cubicle. Sarah's fingers flew softly on the keyboard like a master pianist as she glanced up with a smile. Janine gave her a slight nod, but chastised herself for not smiling as she fumbled for the keys to her office.

Stepping into the spacious office, she barely noticed the beautiful California vista visible from the bank of windows lining the perimeter. Closing her door, she walked to her desk and let out a little sigh as she relaxed into her large, leather chair. Dropping her briefcase on the floor, she closed her eyes and wished for Saturday night—the usual start of her one-day weekend—as she quickly braced herself against the tears she knew would come if she sat still for too long. And then the phone rang.



The rest of the day was hectic as Janine took calls from and made calls to clients, other departments, and her sales reps. Between phone calls, she worked on everything that needed to be done before she headed into the field the next day, Wednesday, to spend one day each with three of her sales reps. Her twelve reps were spread all over California, Nevada, and Arizona; she spent at least one day a month with each of them while they made sales calls.

Between other tasks and interruptions, she crammed in the weekly review of her sales reps' expense reports. It was the same drill every Tuesday: Make sure to get the reports by noon so that she could get them to Mr. Hatcher by 3 p.m., so that he could scrutinize the company's expenditures. If she had her way, she'd have expense reports due once a month to help cut down on time and paperwork. She wistfully drifted into thinking about what she could do with almost nine extra hours every month. Her pen drifted on the paper as she jerked back with a start. *Sleep, that's what I could do.*

Each time she had to scratch through an item, she felt a sinking sensation in the pit of her stomach. If it was up to her, she would have approved more expenses, but she knew Mr. Hatcher would just reverse her decisions. Sales reps were allowed a lot more back when she was in the field. "We pay them a salary plus a good commission on their sales," Mr. Hatcher had stated. "In a down economy, everyone has to tighten their belts." *Good luck tightening your belt,* Janine's mind had retorted as she observed Mr. Hatcher's losing battle with his bulge.