

3. Talk to Your Outer Circle

Conversations with people we don't usually talk to about our work lead to ideas we wouldn't think of on our own. That's why conversations with others are indispensable idea-generating tools. They get us unstuck, cause new connections to fire in our brains and help us discover new possibilities.

4. Improve the Mix

People find improvements worth making by adding valuable new elements, and removing less-valued elements from their "mix" until everything seems to fit. Difference-makers don't just add the first idea that comes along. They play with ideas mentally to discover which combination has the potential to create the biggest difference. Then they make it.

5. Deliver the Difference

Finally, people who do award-winning work are obsessed with positive outcomes. Their work isn't over until people love the result. That means the definition of job completion shifts from "my work is finished" to "I made a difference." And that takes learning, adaptation

and seeing our work through until a difference is made.

Practiced together, these five skills for great work are a better predictor of success than all the personality traits we tested combined. Maybe the "War on Talent" has been a tough battle simply because we're looking at only a subset of the factors that drive success—wondering how to attract rock stars to our team, without considering that they may be sitting in the cubicle next door. **PE**



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Journey to Excellence

It is exciting, inspiring and fun

 By Christine Chen

“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.’” **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

I absolutely love this quote by Dr. King. Every time I read it, I can clearly hear this great man's booming voice filled with passion as he inspires all to excel at every task, no matter the size.

One of my favorite workshops to teach, "Journey to Excellence," is all about providing world-class customer and client service. It's a noisy business environment. Today's customers have unlimited options to choose from. How will you be heard? How do you keep your customers and clients coming back? These are important questions to ask and to focus on regularly.

Here's the reality. Customers today are different than those of years past. They are savvy, smart, and have no time for poor service. And, yes, we all are serving someone. Whether we sit in the back office, wait tables, own a small business, teach students, or run a multi-billion dollar enterprise, we all are judged in lightning speed whether or not we are worthy of our customer's money, time, and loyalty.

It's been proven that providing stellar service brings big rewards. However, this fact seems to be a secret to most. There's a service crisis in our country. A whopping 41% of Americans believe they receive below average service and only 3% say they receive world-class service

Along with the obvious rewards of delivering exceptional service such as loyal customers and financial gain, there's a greater reward to doing your best. Self-worth. Respect. Pursuit of excellence. A job well done.

Most of us are at our jobs most of our waking hours. We can choose to drag ourselves to work with a rotten attitude that affects

us and all those around us. We may loathe our jobs, our colleagues, our boss, or our customers. Doing the bare minimum to get through the day seems to be the goal for most. However, it really doesn't have to be this way.

What if we made a choice to change how we face each day? What if we decided to make a difference? What if we faced each day with an attitude of excellence? Pursuing excellence and doing a job to the best of our ability not only creates a positive environment but can be exciting. Think about it. Each day could actually be thrilling with these thoughts in mind:

- How am I going to WOW someone **today**?
- Where can I go above and beyond in my job **today**?
- What can I change about my job to make it better **today**?
- Who will I help **today**?
- Will I be an answer to someone's need **today**?

Mediocrity is boring. Just getting through the day is depressing. Complaining about circumstances is discouraging. Make a change. Start a new journey. Take the step toward being the best **today**. The journey to excellence is exciting, inspiring, and fun. At the end of the journey, Dr. King's words, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well," are what truly matter. **PE**

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