



Making Excellence Routine

Excellence is a rare experience. It can be defined as doing the right thing and the right time in the right way. It had been described as "a journey without end." Many corporations are using modern methods to make that journey, such as Six Sigma, LEAN and others. The Oakland Raiders football franchise has long posted signs on their stadium that read "Commitment to Excellence." What does it take to commit to excellence in our lives work and families? Wouldn't it be great if everyone took pride in their productivity and charted their own course to excellence? Here are Seven milestones to use on your journey to Making Excellence Routine.

Resource Use - Eliminate wasted time, space, labor, information and steps. Learn to work smarter, as apposed to harder. Many speakers today say to work smarter, not harder, but I like what Ronald Reagan said best, "It's true hare work never killed anybody, but I figure, why take the chance?"

On-time Dependability - Doing what was promised when promised in production, service and other functions. No one remembers when you got it done -- unless you were late. You've probably seen a cartoon in print shops that have a bunch of characters laughing with the caption: "You want it when?" Woody Allen says "Eighty percent of success is showing up," but I say, "One hundred percent is showing up first."

Unwavering Flexibility - Rapid response to changes in the market and customer demands. Companies that have stayed on the cutting edge are the ones that believe in responsible flexibility above all else. A friend of mine in Atlanta calls it "Responsi-flexibility." Good name for a simple action.

Team work Development - Maximum use of each person's abilities in the right position on the right task. Human resources are a key asset of any company, yet many struggle day in and day out with the same HR problems and never seek to develop their most important asset: people. In the end everything is done by people, made by people sold by people and used by people. Don't waste them in any phase.

Innovation - Always advancing in production and process. I remember growing up in Atlanta and seeing the slogan on boxcars as trains went by: "Southern gives a green light to innovation." Makes you think about how many companies have gone under while Southern merged with Norfolk Western and expanded.

Companies that grow green light innovation and welcome it to meet the demands of the market and consumers.

No Defects - Internal quality control that has zero tolerance for defects, rapid identification and correction of errors. Baby Boomers grew up with planned obsolescence, but have shifted to low tolerance for mistakes in a competitive world. As long as your rivals can do it better with fewer mistakes, they will defeat you in the market place. There is a basketball t-shirt I saw one time that says it all: "Somewhere someone is practicing right now. And when you meet him in competition, he will defeat you."

External Quality - Pleasing customers. Developing relationships with your customer base and servicing their needs promptly. Our van got stalled in Florida just before we were to board a cruise ship. The local Chevy dealership not only repaired the van while we were gone, but delivered it at no extra charge to the parking lot we would arrive at when we got back. Clark Howard, Consumer radio talk show host refers to most Customer Service departments as Customer No or Dis-Service. I called the customer service hotline to get my lawn mower repaired last year. When I asked the Customer Service Rep on the other end why their number was not published in the owner's manual, he responded, "We really don't want people to call us all the time." Enough said!

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