



**Just A Moment...**  
Business Commentary

## Value: The Service Hallmark

*by Leon A. Enriquez*

Do you aspire to be the leading innovation-driven company? Are you committed to making a difference to the quality of people's lives? Or can you make a real contribution to make the world a better place to live in?

You can achieve this by consistently delivering the highest possible quality of service in your industry vertical. To succeed, you need to focus on a few key values in order to create an environment where:

- ◆ Everyone is proud of her or his work, and committed to the company;
- ◆ You can capitalise on your cultural diversity and varied experiences; and
- ◆ You can influence behaviour in ways that build your competitive advantage by achieving excellence in performance.

The pharmaceutical company, Aventis (created through business combination of Hoechst and Rhône-Poulenc in December 1999) has a service hallmark or value system – that is aligned to improving life through the discovery and development of innovative pharmaceutical products – which translated in simple terms, includes the following:

*Respect for People:* Value diversity, transparency, listening, trust, openness, fostering personal and professional development.

*Integrity:* High ethical standards, honesty, fairness, commitment to health, safety and the environment.

*Creativity:* New ideas, unconventional thinking, fostering breakthroughs, risk-taking, right to make mistakes.

*Empowerment:* High autonomy, decisions made at the right level, entrepreneurship, commitment to agreed goals, accountability, rewarding for results.

*Networking:* Inside and outside the company i.e., customers, community, stakeholders, teamwork, eliminating barriers, sharing knowledge.



*Courage:* Decisiveness, difficult decisions made on a timely basis, effective implementation of these decisions, telling the truth.

*Sense of urgency:* Focus on priorities and value-adding tasks, speed, fighting bureaucracy, delivering.

All these values are crucial to create the company culture that is unique, and which can make a difference to your bottom line. Regardless of the specific situation, each part of a business or function must focus on the basic priorities.

Begin by asking yourself this simple question: What do you offer your customers or clients that is absolutely unique? If you are not unique, then you're ordinary. How can you be unique? In fact, your uniqueness comes from your values, i.e., what you care about passionately or deeply.

Write the answer to the above question on a piece of paper. Then, take each word or phrase, and make it tangible. What does the idea look like, sound like and feel like? Picture yourself doing these ideas with your clients.

For instance, if your value to customers includes words like 'trust, loyalty, or creativity,' keep asking yourself questions until you have concrete descriptions for your specific actions that distinguish you from the others in the same business.

What will customers gain from the unique value you offer that will increase the value of their business? How does the experience of working with you enable your customers to do more, have more, or be more?

Be clear about what you value, and the value you offer. Practice stating your deepest, most powerful convictions. Write down what your mind gives you, then refine the statement until it has clarity, conviction and complete integrity.

If you consistently add value in your dealings with your clients, they will become a value-added network for you.

One key to excellent service is resourcefulness – the ability to have the resources to meet your customer's complex, and specialised needs.



In his book *The Tao of Sales, 'The Easy Way to Sell in Tough Times'*, author Dr. E. Thomas Behr Ph.D., has some practical advise regarding one of the most important part of business – delivering value – as follows:

1. Start with value;
2. Define that value in concrete language;
3. Translate that value into the customer's world;
4. Communicate that value to your clients;
5. Translate your values into a code of conduct;
6. Increase that value; and
7. Share that value.

Think through the consequences of not offering value to customers. Make a choice. Live with the consequences.

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