

Service: Develop Internal Customers

Bottom line: Your internal customers are more important than your external customers. I was giving a speech to General Electric (GE) people, who were in one of the big energy sectors. GE is a nut—I wish maybe the people in the banks had been—GE is a nut about risk analysis. I was talking to one of their top sales persons. You know, these are the people who make multi-billion dollar sales, certainly sales of \$100 million or always in the millions. And this was the guy who put me onto this. He said, “My most important customers are my internal customers.”

Now, what does that mean? In his case, there is a risk analysis department in GE at the corporate center, and the average man or woman in that department has got 27 folders, electronic folders, with projects that need to be evaluated. What does my friend want? My friend wants that person in risk analysis to pick *his* folder out of the pile first and work on his project. He can deliver his project a day, a week, a month, a year, two years earlier if he can get it sorted out inside the company.

And, incidentally, the same thing is true for a 19-year-old waitress or waiter in a restaurant. The most important customer for the waiter or waitress is not the person buying a meal, it is the chef. Will your plate come off first? Will your plate be cooked absolutely perfectly? If the chef loves you, the chef will pay more attention to you. I’m not suggesting we forget the people who pay the bills, but I am suggesting, I am saying, and I am insisting, development of your *internal* customers is *more* important than your external customers.