

## Service: On Thoughtfulness

I think it was the recession—the great recession, or whatever you want to call it—that really got me thinking about this. You know, when times are very tough and tough decisions have to be made, as they certainly have to be made, fundamental human decency toward one another is arguably more important than at any other time.

And somehow or another, the word *thoughtfulness* came into my mind. And I like the word *thoughtfulness*. And then the next step in this process—and I'd ask you to think about this—many of you, most of you, probably have some kind of value statement. Put the employee first, put the customer first, put the shareholder first, whatever it is. And so, I am really *literally* asking you—it's probably only got, like, five lines, right?—I want one of those five lines, or six lines, to say—precise language, please—“We are *thoughtful* in all we do.”

Now, one of the benefits of that is it makes you a better human being probably. But then I got thinking about it, and here's what I wrote down when I put together a slide on the topic. I said, “Thoughtfulness is the key to customer retention.” It is, don't you think? Think about it. Thoughtfulness is the key to customer retention. Thoughtfulness is the key to employee recruitment and satisfaction. Thoughtfulness is the key to brand perception. Thoughtfulness is key to your ability to look in the mirror and tell your kids about your job. Thoughtfulness is free. Thoughtfulness is key to speeding things up. It reduces friction. Thoughtfulness is key to transparency and even cost containment. It abets rather than stifles truth telling.

So maybe you'll get enamored with this word, too. I like the word *thoughtful*. I particularly like the word *thoughtful* in tough times. But then, as I thought more and more about it, I also think thoughtful is probably the key to profitability through employees who are satisfied or even happy and customers who are satisfied and even happy.

So if you do have a value statement, just write in, “Thoughtfulness in all we do,” and take a look at it for a while and if it works for you, keep it. I suggest you keep it.