

**Excellence. NO EXCUSES!**

**Excerpt:**

**“OF SERVICE”**

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## **Organizations Exist to Serve: Why Else Get Out of Bed in the Morning?**

*Organizations exist to serve. Period.*

*Leaders live to serve. Period.*

Passionate servant leaders, determined to create a legacy of earthshaking transformation in their domain (a 600SF retail space, a 4-person training department, an urban school, a rural school, a city, a nation), create/must *necessarily* create organizations which are no less than “cathedrals” in which the full and awesome power of the Imagination and Spirit and native Entrepreneurial flair (“We are *all* entrepreneurs.”—Muhammad Yunus) of diverse individuals

**(100%** creative Talent—from checkout to lab, from Apple to Wegmans to Jane’s one-person accountancy in Invercargill, NZ) is unleashed in passionate pursuit of jointly perceived soaring purpose (= win a Nobel peace prize like Yunus, or at least do something worthy of bragging about 25 years from now to your grandkids) and personal and client service Excellence.

Such Talent unbound pursue Quests—rapidly and relentlessly experimenting and failing and trying again—which surprise and surpass and redefine the expectations of the individual and the servant leader alike. The collective “products” of these Quests offer the best chance of achieving rapid organizational and individual adaptation to fast-transforming environments, and provide the nutrition for continuing (and sometimes dramatic) re-imaginings which re-draw the boundaries of industries and communities and human achievement and the very conception of what is possible.

In turn, such organizations, bent upon excellence and re-imaginings based on maximizing human creativity and achievement, will *automatically* create cadres of imaginative and inspiring and determined servant leaders who stick around to take the organization to another level, and then another—or, equally or *more* important, leave to spread the virus of Freedom-Creativity-Excellence-Transforming Purpose by pathfinding new streets, highways, and alleyways which vitalize and revitalize, through creative destruction, Entrepreneurial Capitalism, which is the best hope for maximizing collective human Freedom, Happiness, Prosperity, Wellbeing—and, one prays, some measure of Peace on Earth.

## **Oath of Office: Managers/Servant Leaders**

*Our goal is to serve our customers brilliantly and profitably over the long haul.*

*Serving our customers brilliantly and profitably over the long haul is a product of brilliantly serving, over the long haul, the people who serve the customer.*

***Hence, our job as leaders—the alpha and the omega and everything in between—is abetting the sustained growth and success and engagement and enthusiasm and commitment to Excellence of those, one at a time, who directly or indirectly serve the ultimate customer.***

*We—leaders of every stripe—are in the “Human Growth and Development and Success and Aspiration to Excellence business.” “We” (leaders) only grow when “they” (each and every one of our colleagues) are growing.*

*“We” (leaders) only succeed when “they” (each and every one of our colleagues) are succeeding.*

*“We” (leaders) only energetically march toward Excellence when “they” (each and every one of our colleagues) are energetically marching toward Excellence.*

***Period.***

*Organizations  
exist to serve.  
PERIOD.*

*Leaders live to  
serve.  
PERIOD.*

## Business and Human Well-being: Joined at the Hip?

I just discovered Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's book ... *Good Business*. Business has become the center of society. As such, an obligation to community is front & center. Business, per Csikszentmihalyi, as societal bedrock, has ...

# RESPONSIBILITY

to increase the **“SUM OF  
HUMAN WELL-  
BEING.”** (A mouthful!!!)

Business is **NOT** “part of the community.” In terms of how adults collectively spend their waking hours ... business **IS** the community. Should act accordingly.

Business is ... **statistically** ... responsible for the livelihood of the great majority of adults in any given community. That's a rather big deal.

Community obligations are similar for ... **all flavors of business** ... tiny to grand, private or public.

The **(REALLY)** good news:

**Community mindedness is  
a great way (the BEST way?) to have a  
spirited/committed/  
customer-centric work  
force—and, ultimately,  
increase (maximize?) profitability!**

Problems Revealed:  
Run Up to the Great Recession,  
When Is Enough ... **ENOUGH?**

*“At a party given by a billionaire on Shelter Island, Kurt Vonnegut informs his pal, Joseph Heller that their host, a hedge fund manager, had made more money in a single day than Heller had earned from his wildly popular novel Catch-22 over its whole history. Heller responds ... Yes, but I have something he will never have ...*

**enough.”**

—John Bogle, ***Enough.*** *The Measures of Money, Business, and Life*  
(Bogle is founder of the Vanguard Mutual Fund Group)

*“Too Much Cost,  
Not Enough Value”*

*“Too Much Speculation,  
Not Enough Investment”*

*“Too Much Complexity,  
Not Enough Simplicity”*

*“Too Much Counting,  
Not Enough Trust”*

*“Too Much Business Conduct,  
Not Enough Professional Conduct”*

*“Too Much Salesmanship,  
Not Enough Stewardship”*

*“Too Much Focus on Things,  
Not Enough Focus on Commitment”*

*“Too Many Twenty-first Century Values,  
Not Enough Eighteenth-Century Values”*

*“Too Much ‘Success,’  
Not Enough Character”*

Chapter titles: John Bogle, *Enough. The Measures of Money, Business, and Life*

## The Shareholder Value **Myth**

*“The notion that corporate law requires directors, executives, and employees to maximize shareholder wealth simply isn’t true. There is no solid legal support for the claim that directors and executives in U.S. public corporations have an enforceable legal duty to maximize shareholder wealth. **The idea is fable.**”*

—Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

*“Courts uniformly refuse to actually impose sanctions on directors or executives for failing to pursue one purpose over another. In particular, courts refuse to hold directors of public corporations legally accountable for failing to maximize shareholder wealth.”*—Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

**“From a legal perspective, shareholders do not, and cannot, own corporations. Corporations are independent legal entities that own themselves, just as human beings own themselves. ... Shareholders own shares of stock. A share of stock is simply a contract between the shareholder and the corporation, a contract that gives the shareholder very limited rights under limited circumstances. In this sense, stockholders are no different from bondholders, suppliers, and employees. All have contractual relationships with the corporate entity. None ‘owns’ the company itself.”**—Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

*“Courts uniformly refuse to actually impose sanctions on directors or executives for failing to pursue one purpose over another. In particular, courts refuse to hold directors of public corporations legally accountable for failing to maximize shareholder wealth.”—Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public**

*“[A corporation] can be formed to conduct or promote any lawful business or purpose.”*

—from Delaware corporate code (no mandate for shareholder primacy), per Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

*“What about shareholders’ rights to sue corporate officers and directors for breach of fiduciary duty if they fail to maximize shareholder wealth? Such a right turns out to be illusory. Executives and directors’ duty of loyalty to the corporation bars them from using their corporate positions to enrich themselves at the firm’s expense, but unconflicted directors remain legally free to pursue almost any other goal.”*

—Lynn Stout, *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

*“On the face of it, shareholder value is the dumbest idea in the world. Shareholder value is a result, not a strategy. ... Your main concerns are your employees, your customers, and your products.”*

—Jack Welch (Yes, THAT Jack Welch, long-time primo vociferous promoter of shareholder primacy/*FT*, 0313.09/p. 1.)

*“I told my board that if they want to get the share price up 50% in 12-18 months, I can do it without raising a sweat. But it will destroy the long-term prospects of the company—and they’ll have to do it without me.”*

—CEO, large (\$10B+) electronic components company