

Introduction

WOW!

We say it when we're awed and inspired . . .

We say it when we're amazed and astonished . . .

We say it when we're thrilled and delighted . . .

We say it when we're shocked or startled . . .

We say it with joy – and with sadness . . .

We say it for a million big reasons.

But we also say it for a million small ones – reasons that actually have more impact and meaning over a greater period of time than the big, splashy **WOWs** that have an immediate impact on us, but are usually far too infrequent and short-lived. The small **WOWs** I'm referring to are those of compassion and kindness, empathy and respect – small acts of extreme humanity that add up to big **WOWs** for varying reasons because they are deeply meaningful to the person on the receiving end of them.

When we begin to focus on the small but meaningful **WOWs** we can *consistently* create, rather than focusing solely on the big but fleeting **WOWs** we can *occasionally* create, that's when we realize that *all* of our actions matter, not just *some* of them. This mindset shift enables us to look at the long-term cumulative effect of all our actions, and begin to more consistently behave the way we want to behave and treat others. It is also important to realize that occasional good deeds performed simply to make amends for a rash of bad ones don't quite add up to a **WOW**.

But when we make this mindset shift as an organization, and create a culture that focuses on consistently creating small but meaningful

TURN YOUR WORKPLACE INTO A **WOW**PLACE

WOW experiences for everyone around us, that is when we are able to turn our Workplace into a **WOW**place.

Marking Time

There is a joke circulating the Internet in which a worker says, “*I don’t mind coming to work, but that eight-hour wait to go home is a killer!*” Funny joke, but it does hit home because it contains a poignant truth. We are at the point where many associates embark on an eight-hour wait to go home each day – waiting until they can get back to their “real” lives, and to what really matters to them, rather than becoming engaged in the activity at hand in their workplace.

What has happened to cause so many of us to question whether we’re really making a difference in our daily lives; whether our jobs and our work have meaning; or if what we do for eight hours a day, five days a week is worthwhile and appreciated? This question is being asked by almost every category and level of associate, many of whom are feeling underappreciated and frustrated by being pitted against their organization’s leaders, customers and even each other.

However, as much as we’re hearing about disengaged associates and heartless leaders, I believe that we still live in a world where most people *do* care about each other. But “bad” stories make better headlines, so we hear lots of negative hype and not enough positive truth. I also believe that we can help each other and still get ahead in this world. In fact, that’s the very thing that often gets other people engaged in helping us succeed. In other words, nice guys and gals don’t have to finish last!

These beliefs, as well as four very clear observations, compelled me to write this book:

1. **We could all do with a little more respect in the world.** We must not give in to the temptation to believe that the only way to

combat disrespect from others is by lashing out with disrespect of our own. Especially in the current technological era of being able to say anything (and everything!) electronically and anonymously, without having to come face-to-face with the people we're impacting, we must not forget that there's a real person at the receiving end of our words.

2. **We could all do with a little less fear in the world.** Everyone is afraid of losing their job, losing their power, losing face. As a result, we find it difficult to admit we're wrong, share our knowledge or give credit where applicable.
3. **We could all do with a little more appreciation, recognition and encouragement.** Even though the opportunity for reward or recognition is not what drives most of us to do what's right, it's still nice to have someone notice it occasionally, and take the time to recognize it.
4. **We could all do with a little more inspiration in the world.** Just as we inspire family and friends to feel good about their contributions to the world at large, we must find ways of providing knowledge, coaching and praise to help people succeed and feel good about their contributions in the workplace.

By keeping these observations in mind and committing to doing something about them, we can create more fulfilling workplaces that bring higher success and profit to our companies while instilling hope in our fellow associates that we can make a real difference, no matter what title we hold.

*The Multiplying Effect of **WOW** Experiences*

Why is creating a **WOW** so critical? Why isn't just being good at our jobs enough? If our products are good, or even great, shouldn't that be what matters most?

No. It is *not* enough, because "good" is the bare minimum; it is the baseline. Customers expect both our products and our services to be good. But, in a competitive market, if one or the other (or both) are performing only at the barest minimum level, why would anyone choose to buy from us? Unless we're the only option out there, they won't. Even if we are the only option out there right now, we won't be the only option forever, and it won't take long for potential customers to discover better ones.

But here is the more important point: successfully creating and marketing **WOW** products and services is essential for business success. But it is all wasted effort if we focus solely on the activities that get new customers, without subsequently putting at least as much, if not more, emphasis on actions that keep them.

In reality, it's worse than wasted effort. Effective sales and marketing will eventually work against us by very effectively helping spread negative word-of-mouth much faster than if we had done no marketing or sales at all, as customer after customer who buys from us as a result of these efforts subsequently becomes dissatisfied and leaves. No matter how great our products are, if we do not treat them with respect, customers will not stay with us. In fact, only 14 percent leave because they don't like an organization's products or services; the number one reason customers leave is the way they were treated by an associate.

We have all seen the statistics that reveal the fact that dissatisfied customers will tell many more people about their bad experience than satisfied customers will tell about their good ones. This means that

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bad news travels at a much higher rate than good news. Therefore, the more people we attract with our **WOW** promises – and subsequently tick off by not living up to that promise – the faster word-of-mouth will negatively impact us, until finally our market “learns” not to buy from us.

The same holds true for associates. We spend so much of our lives at work that it is definitely not worth staying if we’re treated disrespectfully by our superiors or colleagues, or if we feel that we’re just marking time until we can find something better.

It’s time to get back to a “we” mentality (rather than “us versus them”). The only way to do this is to create small daily **WOWs** by focusing on the way we treat each other. By creating **WOW** experiences, we give every associate three things we all desire above almost everything else: being valued, appreciated and listened to.

It’s not hard to do, nor does it cost a lot of money. What it boils down to is showing people we care about them. We must never forget how important our small acts of compassion, respect, integrity, and trust are to the people with whom we interact on a daily basis.

It is my intent that this book will provide valuable mindsets, tools, and techniques for creating higher levels of compassion, integrity, respect, and humanity in the workplace, and that improving the way we treat each other on a consistent basis will give each of us the power to turn our ordinary workplace into a **WOWplace!**