



# Good vibrations

*Our attitude and the attitude of our staff can be our competitive advantage.*

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set up Experience On Tap to provide companies with experienced management resources to handle projects and assignments. His 40-year career has been in both multi-nationals and SMEs. His team and supporting companies cover a broad range of disciplines and services.

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As the well-known advert says: "It ain't what you do it's the way that you do it!" When we meet someone for the first time and search for something to talk about, we tend to fall back on asking what they do for a living, knowing that it is usually safe territory. Our responses can be very revealing. Do we identify with the company we work for, the products and services we provide, or the job that we do? For example, I recall a time when an acquaintance responded that he worked in IT when, in fact, he worked for a multinational car company!

Why is this important? Well, business is all about people. What is the one thing that customers, suppliers, staff, shareholders and even bank managers and tax inspectors have in common? They are all people who are influenced by the way they are treated by you, by your staff and your company. They respond and react to you, and the products and services you supply. If your focus as a company is about how you make a better widget, rather than about how it will make the customer's life easier, then you miss your opportunity to stand out from your competition.

Remember the last time you had a bad experience with an organisation? What did you do? I'll bet that you told anyone who was prepared to listen how unsatisfactory the service was!

How about the irritation you experienced when your name was misspelt on a letter or there was a glaring mistake? How did it affect your response? Have you ever made a complaint because



you were dissatisfied about a product, only to have the person receiving the complaint make you feel uncomfortable or a downright nuisance?

Just like throwing a pebble in a pond, the initial effect of a bad experience is magnified as word spreads. If referrals are the best source of new business, the opposite is also true.

Let's look at what influences our attitudes at work and why we treat people the way we do. At an individual level our personal values strongly influence our behaviour. A company is no different. In the same way that a parent passes values on to its child – by reinforcing good habits and discouraging bad behaviour – a company must do the same for its employees. Values are what influence our decisions and guide our behaviour, so we must ensure that everyone knows what they are and what they mean. Here are a few suggested values that you might like to adopt:

### **Honesty**

We will be realistic, honest and trustworthy in all our dealings with you.

### **Respect**

We will treat you with respect and will have the courage to tell you what you need to know.

### **Integrity**

At all times we will apply high

moral principles in our dealings with you.

### **Flexibility**

Our approach will depend on your needs, so our response is appropriate to meet your circumstances. We encourage adaptability and versatility.

### **Innovation**

We are motivated to look for opportunities to create and add value for our customers.

Publishing these values on your website, using them as part of your marketing campaigns and building them into your staff induction and training programs, are all ways to get your message across. The values will soon become fundamental to your business processes and the result is a company culture that takes every opportunity to reinforce its values, with staff that know what is expected of them.

This really will make a difference. For example, think back to the time you arrived for an appointment, and you were greeted with a smile and made to feel comfortable while you waited for your meeting. How did it make you feel? Appreciated? Valued? Special, even? This, then, is what you should be doing for anyone visiting your offices.

In the words of great Mahatma Gandhi: "We must become the change we want to see."