



# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT ADDS VALUE?

**W**e all have different measures and interpretations of what it means to be successful, and no one definition is right or wrong. We're all familiar with the common success factors; however, the number one thing you can do to ensure success – personally and professionally – is add value.

Value itself is something that is defined by your customers and the people in your life, not you. It doesn't matter what you think is valuable; if the people you are trying to win over don't see the value in what you're doing, then there is none. Everyone is different; therefore, the topic of value is highly subjective. While what you

have to offer may not be valued by everyone, there is likely a group of people who are dying to know or see what you have to offer.

How you can add value will differ from customer to customer and from person to person. The point is to remember that it is your customers or other people who dictate what's valuable, not you. We've all been taught that the thought behind a gift is what's most important. If your focus when giving a gift is really on the recipient and not on yourself, then you want to give them something they want and can use, appreciate and admire.

There are several ways you can add value in all areas of your life, and the things you do or offer need not be huge or earth shattering. Many truly valuable things are not.

Find out who your customer is and ask them what they want. Yes, ask them. Get to know your friends and family by asking what they want. Yes, ask them. Ask them about their fears, their desires or what that one thing is that would make their lives easier. Building a product, creating a report or finishing a chore might make you feel great, but if it's never used or valued, is it really worth it? Could your efforts be better focused elsewhere?

While you go through your day, ask yourself, *Am I adding value?* When was the last time you did something incredibly useful and were accessible, approachable and helpful? There are a number of things we can do to add value every day. To be effective at it, we need to get out of our heads, step away from our agendas and see what we can bring to our customers, friends and family.

You don't have to create something new to stand out; improve and offer more than what is already available. What makes a person choose one restaurant over the other? Is it the advertising, marketing or a person commenting about it? When you offer something better than what already exists, you get people talking.

Ever been to Barclay Prime in Philadelphia and ordered their \$100 cheesesteak? They start with a fresh, house-made brioche roll brushed with homemade mustard. Then they add thinly sliced Kobe beef, marbled onions, shaved heirloom tomatoes and triple Taleggio cheese. All of this is topped off with shaved, hand-harvested black truffles and butter-poached Maine lobster tail. They throw in a chilled split of champagne, and they not only add value, they stand out.

In the workplace, from an employer's point of view, it's possible that after the interview process they may be faced with having to make a hard choice between applicants who all meet the requirements of the job. At this juncture, they begin to review the applicants and look for the one who offered something additional to the required mix of skill, experience, background and temperament.

A lot of books have been written about success, and a lot of people believe they are successful because they have everything they want. They have added value to themselves. I believe significance comes when you add value to others. You can't have true success without significance.

This book is about understanding how important it is to develop and deliver value in everything you do. Great companies with great cultures add value to their people, products and services. This book is about recognizing the many things that add value and are worth more than what you perceive has merit.