



## ***On Great Service: A Framework for Action***

By Leonard L. Berry  
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Berry is a Distinguished Professor of Marketing and holds the M.B. Zale Chair in Retailing and Marketing Leadership in the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University. Berry's published books include *Discovering the Soul of Service: The Nine Drivers of Sustainable Business Success*, *On Great Service*, and *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*. He has twice been recognized with the highest honor Texas A&M bestows on a faculty member—the Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching and the Distinguished Achievement Award in Research. He is the recipient of the Career Contributions to Services Marketing Award from the American Marketing Association's Services Marketing Special Interest Group, the Outstanding Marketing Educator Award from the Academy of Marketing Science, and the Pinnacle Award as Marketing Educator of the Year from Sales and Marketing Executives International.

In this volume, Berry presents what he characterizes as “a framework for action” to provide and then sustain great service. The word “sustain” is critically important. Those organizations whose people always provide great service (e.g. Nordstrom, Ritz-Carlton, The Container Store) consider perfection break-even. Berry carefully organizes his material within 13 chapters. In the first, he introduces the aforementioned “framework for action” (Exhibit 1-1 on page 5); in the last, he shares his thoughts about “the artistry of great service.” As he convincingly explains, great service is both an art and a science...and is the result of several factors that include a total commitment, enterprise-wide, to specific principles. “The purpose of this book is to teach the lessons of service quality implementation. The book focuses exclusively on how to improve service quality.” With regard to the aforementioned principles, Berry observes that customers are most likely to do business with companies that “are reliable, excellent in interactive service, prepared to cover if the service fails, and eminently fair. These principles are the essence of service excellence.” And they always will be.

Readers will appreciate Berry's focus on real-world situations in which these principles are clearly demonstrated, specifically in a variety of companies which include Longo Toyota and Lexus, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Hard Rock Café, Lakeland Regional Medical Center, Bank One Texas Trust Division, and Harold's. These exemplary organizations illustrate how to deliver great service, one customer at a time, day after day, month after month. Of course, that is not easy to do. “Nothing in this book suggests that the excellent service journey is easy. It is not. But it is immensely rewarding, not just financially, but spiritually. Excellence nourishes the soul.”

In the final chapter, Berry explains what “the artistry of great service,” not only to customers and service-providers but also indeed to entire organizations and even industries. With the passion of an evangelist but with the precision of a surgeon, he reviews all of the essential ingredients of great service. They include leadership enterprise-wide, a fundamental belief in human potential, having a reason for being...and doing, informed decision-making, collaborative, and an inspiration to excel. Are these “old fashioned values”? Of course! But keep in mind that *Fortune* magazine's annual list of the most profitable companies includes the names of many that are also on its annual list of the most highly admired companies, year after year. That is not a coincidence. ☐