



*We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.* <sup>SM</sup>

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### *The Greatest Bellman I ever met...*

In my current role as a consultant and trainer, I travel quite regularly, and am able to experience service at some of the finest hotels in the world. In fact, I consider myself to be an expert in not only assessing world-class service, but delivering world-class service as well. During a recent business trip to Chicago, Illinois, I stayed at one of that city's finest hotels, and was thoroughly impressed with the flawless execution of virtually every service detail. Particularly, I was privileged to have been "roomed" by the most professional and genuine bellman I have ever met. In strength management, a strength is defined as consistent near-perfect performance in a given activity. Basically, that means that someone is doing something so remarkably well, that everyone else looks on in awe as this strength is being displayed (this is easily seen in many professional athletes). This particular bellman definitely has a phenomenal strength for making people feel not only welcomed but treated as royalty. His delivery was effortless, precise, and genuine at the same time.

Allow me to walk you through the service experience as I witnessed it.... After the front desk agent checked me in, she walked around the counter and introduced me to "Tim". He immediately used my name and welcomed me to the hotel, and told me that I should anticipate having a wonderful stay at "his" hotel. As he escorted me to the guest elevator, he gave a thorough description of various hotel amenities such as the dining outlets, spa facilities, and gift shop. He then said that he would meet me at my room in about five minutes with the rest of my luggage that I had given to the doorman earlier.

Sure enough, five minutes later, Tim knocked on the door. When I opened the door, he again used my name and asked if he may enter. Once I said yes, he proceeded in, and immediately asked if the room temperature and lighting was to my satisfaction. Like any five diamond property, he asked me where I'd like my luggage placed. Tim then proceeded to explain all of the room's features including the following:

- Laundry service
- CD player/Radio operation
- Shoe shine service
- Location of In room dining menu
- Location of ice-bucket (which was already filled with ice).

He then asked if I had a laptop with me. When I said yes, he explained the internet connection, and showed me where the internet cable was. He then inquired about

laundry, and told me if I had items to be laundered and/or pressed, he would be happy to take them for me. I did, and Tim ensured that I would have them back within two hours (which is what I requested). He then wished me a wonderful stay, and asked if there's anything else he could do to assist.

From a leadership perspective, I am always looking to study success and what type of environment fosters such remarkable excellence to flourish. Usually, there is a clear and unbroken link to leadership. So I asked Tim how long he worked at the property, and he told me 28 years, and loving every day of it. I then asked him what keeps him so motivated to do a great job. Besides the obvious answer of being in the right role and using his talent often, he said that the leadership (especially the hotel's senior leaders) made it a point to consistently solicit his opinion on various service matters, and always made sure that he felt greatly appreciated and taken care of.

This brings me to my next point about how leaders should treat stars. From my travels, one of the biggest misconceptions leaders have is that they should treat everyone on their team the same way. That is probably one of the fastest ways to accelerate mediocrity on a team. Think about it...if I'm consistently doing a superior job, is it fair that I get offered the very same coaching, development, and recognition opportunities as those colleagues who don't put forth the same effort? Don't get me wrong...of course, everyone has to be held accountable for standards of conduct, attendance policy, etc. I'm referring to the amount of effort that is bestowed on various employees. To put it plainly, people should be treated the way they deserve to be treated. In an ideal work environment, people shouldn't even be paid the same. Payment should somehow be linked to identifiable and quantifiable performance metrics (guest satisfaction, financials, generation of repeat business, etc.).

On sports teams, every athlete doesn't get paid the same. On the Cleveland Cavaliers, LeBron James doesn't get paid what every other player on his team is paid. Why not? He contributes more than everyone else...he scores more, grabs more rebounds, and as a result, more is expected of him, not only from his coaches, but from his teammates and the fans as well.

Now, back to our bellman...he is also the bell captain of this particular hotel, and I would always see him giving feedback to his team (reminding them to smile more, and use the guest's names). It was as though he was a conductor in the middle of the lobby, orchestrating (and inspiring) the actions of the team around him.

Clearly, he loved his job, and more importantly, he took exceptional pride in making his guests feel like they have returned home. Whenever he saw me in the lobby, he made it a point to inquire if my stay was indeed wonderful, and if there was anything he could to assist me. Always very classy, articulate, and genuine. He is a role model of what a world-class service professional should be like.

Tim is, by far, the best bellman I have ever met.

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