

*How to Win by Putting Customers
at the Core of Your Business*



UNCOMMON SERVICE

FRANCES FREI | ANNE MORRISS

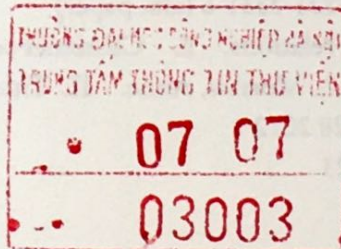
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One of the gifts of working in academia is that you are surrounded by people who devote themselves to the art of education. They have no choice but to teach, and you have no choice but to learn, more often than not from every conversation. Throughout the book we have tried to celebrate the thinkers who have influenced us along the way, many of them colleagues who drive into the same parking lot every day. No doubt, we have fallen short.

We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the breakthrough work on services done by Ben Schneider and David Bowen, authors of *Winning on Service*, and Earl Sasser, Jim Heskett, and Len Schlesinger, authors of *The Service Profit Chain*. By capturing the importance of organizational design and the vital role that service employees play in building healthy companies, these books changed the way the world thought about the business of service. We have also been deeply influenced by the moral and intellectual courage of Clay Christensen, author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*. Clay has an extraordinary ability to distill out the essential truths of a complex world.

Our hope in writing this book is to give people the tools—and audacity—to go out and change organizations. Youngme Moon, author of *Different*, embodies this type of leadership. She has given us, and so many others, permission to dream.

Like Youngme, most of the messengers in this book study business. We don't typically associate service with the crass

act of making money, yet for millions of people every day, the bulk of their human interactions takes place in a commercial setting. Do we really lose our humanity once we climb into the capitalist arena and add profit to the spoils? Of course not. Which means that we should be able to resolve the gap between the very human desire to serve and the frustrating service experiences we're now asking each other to endure. It is a gap, we believe, the world is ready to close.

If This Is a Service Economy, Why Am I Still on Hold?

We live and work in a service economy. In 1950, industrial workers represented the single largest employment sector in any developed country. Today, 80 percent of jobs are in service, and service represents 80 percent of the U.S. gross national product.

We cherish good service. In survey after survey, it's an enormous differentiator in our experience as consumers. Companies that deliver service excellence get a disproportionate share of our income, and our loyalty to them is often difficult to shake. In researching this book, we encountered more than a few people who were brought to tears as they recalled an empathetic insurance provider or an airline experience that made them feel human, despite their screaming infant or lost luggage.

We find deep meaning in the act of serving. We've been devising ways to take care of each other—and celebrating the