

"The Manager's Book of Decencies is worth twice the price for the title alone! It is a beautiful book. Simple and profound. Almost the only book on the subject you need to read."
—Tom Peters

THE MANAGER'S BOOK OF DECENCIES

HOW SMALL GESTURES BUILD GREAT COMPANIES



STEVE HARRISON

FOREWORD BY PETER UEBERROTH



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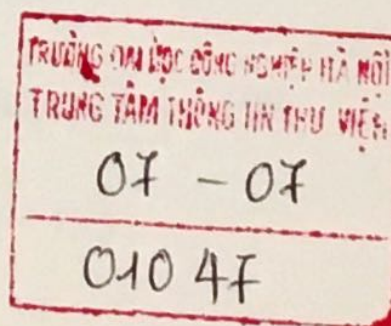
*This book is dedicated to the memory of
my father, Albert P. Harrison, MD*

"Where there is no man, be one."



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Foreword

Corporate culture is the heartbeat and lifeblood of any corporation or organization. A company's culture is a critical element to its success. Offering simple common courtesies and showing respect to others generate not only loyalty but also a sense of self-purpose that pumps life into any organization.

This book's subtitle, *How Small Gestures Build Great Companies*, exemplifies how we have run our businesses over the last 40 years. Whether starting out with my first travel company in the early 1960s, The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, or being the commissioner of Major League Baseball, the common thread of organizations I have worked for is a positive business culture. How we treat one another, our customers, investors, vendors, and partners sustains any business or group.

When I think of the leaders in my life who have had the most impact on how I conduct business, I realize they all practiced small decencies at every opportunity. Kirk Kerkorian, a leader I admire in many ways, gave me my first break when I was 22 years old by hiring me to help him manage Trans International Airlines. Kerkorian is a master at the "two-minute schmooze" described in *The Manager's Book of Decencies*. This is the decency that recognizes that the most invisible people in the organization are as significant as anyone else. I never saw Kirk ignore a receptionist or accept a car key from a parking lot attendant without taking a minute to visit and to recognize the individual. When Kirk asks someone, "How are you doing?" he really does want to know. He is decent enough to actually listen to the answer.

Decencies are a habit that start early in life, and they should instinctively feel right to us. Here's an example of a small decency I recommend. On the day that an individual new to our organization starts work, we send flowers and a card to the new hire's spouse or partner. In the card we acknowledge that the individual has started a new journey with our firm and that we see that person's spouse or partner is important to our team as well.

This book covers dozens of ideas for small decencies. Especially important are those around the issue of terminating employees. Job loss, downsizing, and terminations are unfortunate realities of today's business environment. How we treat affected individuals and how we help preserve dignity and self-respect are critical to them as human beings.

In this book, it is evident that Steve Harrison is passionate about helping individuals redirect their lives when their work situations change. There are not enough people who focus on the needs of the individuals who are victims of restructuring and downsizing. Steve's business card may identify him as a founding principal of one of the world's largest outplacement firms, but he is really in the transfer-of-strength business. Steve and his colleagues know that a little coaching, a little training, and a new perspective can transform those negatives into positives that can lead to new engaging careers.

This book is not about business in the sense of the transfer of goods and services, but rather the business of people, the business of ethics, and the business of culture. The book describes corporate cultures that inspire a sense of purpose and empower human beings to do their best in any environment or business climate.