MAXIMIZING RESULTS THROUGH VALUE CREATION

Dr. Randy Ross and David Salyers
Remarkable! is dedicated to the most Remarkable! people in our lives: LuAnne and Lynn for their unconditional love and support. And to Ryan, Lindsay, and Colton, as well as Amanda, Nick, and Daniel, whose futures we hope will be brightened by the application of these truths.
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Foreword

I have always believed that a good name is more desirable than great riches. While profits are important in any business, maintaining a strong sense of values and living out your convictions are imperative. If a company’s good name to the outside world is its brand, then its real character is revealed in its culture. And while there is much discussion about the need to create a compelling corporate culture in the marketplace today, very few understand the dynamics at play and how to address them effectively. Taking simple truths and placing them in a corporate parable, Remarkable! provides the reader with both an enjoyable format and transformational insights.

I am convinced that if you help others get what they want, then you will eventually get what you want. A deep love for people causes you to focus your efforts on providing the best for them rather than constantly thinking about what you want to receive from them. This simple concept transforms
relationships and the work experience and is at the core of good business.

The truths contained within the pages of what you are about to read are a clear and succinct articulation of the principles that create a superior advantage in business. If embraced and applied, these principles can have a profoundly positive impact on the culture of any company. At the same time, they have the power to enhance your professional life. But please don’t stop there. Apply them to your personal life and watch them transform your closest relationships as well. After all, there is no better way to invest your time and energy than in strengthening relationships. It truly is “my pleasure” to encourage you to read and apply the truths contained within the pages of Remarkable!

S. Truett Cathy
founder, Chick-fil-A, Inc.
Introduction

There are millions of businesses and organizations, but only a handful of them could be described as Remarkable! Have you ever wondered why? Remarkable means notably or conspicuously unusual, extraordinary, worthy of notice or attention. The ideas explored in this book have come from a lifetime of observing some extraordinary people and organizations as they live out their conspicuously unusual ideas, producing uncommon results. The effect is that those who work for and benefit from these people and organizations find themselves with an irrepressible desire to “remark about them.” What is it that these people know that others seemingly do not? How does their view of the world lead them to think and behave differently than others? When faced with the same opportunities and challenges, how are their choices different . . . and why?

This book is an attempt to answer these questions and resolve the most important issue facing businesses today. Once you understand the basic premise and apply the principles
Introduction

contained within these pages, a transformation is almost certain. We encourage you to begin a revolution that will infuse new life and energy into your organization and help people find significance and fulfillment in their work.

Life is either limited or enhanced by your choices. Leadership is about influencing people to make conspicuously unusual choices that bring health and happiness to life and work. The choices you make will eventually make you. We challenge you to choose to be Remarkable!

—Dr. Randy Ross and David Salyers

We want to offer you an opportunity to take the Remarkable Engagement Index.

For more details, please see the back of the book.
Advertising is a tax you pay for being unremarkable.

Robert Stephens,
founder, Geek Squad
Shifting Gears

The tires thumped in syncopated rhythm with the joints in the pavement of the overpass just north of the city. Dusty’s mind was spinning as quickly as the wheels on his candy apple red 1968 Ford Thunderbird convertible, an innocent indulgence he had afforded himself shortly after his thirty-ninth birthday. The T-Bird was a midlife purchase that brought him much joy. It had rolled off the assembly line the very month of his birth, and he had always been drawn to its sheer power and sleek elegance. He took great pride in keeping it in mint condition and enjoyed the attention it garnered when he occasionally took it on road trips to the beach. Though he rarely drove the car to work, today he was glad he had. With the top down and the sun out, it was pure therapy. He actually welcomed this commute home because it gave him time to reflect on everything that had happened that week at work.
Assessment

Dusty Harts was a senior vice president at Query, a customer care service provider in the utilities industry. Working from the corporate office in Atlanta, Dusty was responsible for the firm’s three call centers in the southeast United States. With more than eight hundred energy advisors in his chain of command, the demands he faced as the leader of such a heavily customer-facing operation were formidable. To add to the burden, two weeks earlier he had received the results of Query’s recent Employee Engagement Survey, and one could refer generously to the scores as “not good.”

For two years, Dusty had taken comfort in the fact that employee turnover was at an all-time low. He was optimistic that somehow the company had finally slowed the spin of the revolving back door that had previously churned associates through the organization. Now, it appeared, the bubble had burst. Dusty knew that economic winds were adverse and few companies were hiring in the market. That had kept the issues hidden by limiting options for the disgruntled and disillusioned. Despite the fact that his teams were meeting client expectations, morale was a constant concern. His gut told him that things were not all good, but he’d never expected such an abrupt reality check. The survey painted a picture of unhappy, unmotivated teams, with a significant number of employees seemingly slogging through the drudgery of their daily activities. By their responses, many team members had indicated that they were experiencing little satisfaction or fulfillment. The findings from the survey had sent leaders throughout the organization into a tailspin.

Employee engagement had become a critical metric for Query ever since Gallup published studies definitively linking higher levels of engagement to higher productivity. Leaders
intuitively knew that the employee experience and the customer experience were inseparably linked, but this research actually quantified the connection. If employees were unhappy in their roles and brought little enthusiasm to the job, then that lackluster attitude would most certainly carry over into their encounters with customers.

But it had also been firmly established that the higher the emotional attachment to one’s work, the more passionate and productive the performance. Measuring, monitoring, and moving engagement levels in a positive direction could produce profound results. Therefore, engagement was at the heart of what Query called its transformational triad. This three-pronged mission statement encapsulated their commitment to engagement. It simply read: “Engage, empower, and enrich the life of every colleague and customer.” It sounded impressive, and it was certainly visible. It was displayed prominently in the lobby alongside the vision and values statements, as well as on plaques and posters throughout the building. The real challenge was in figuring out how to add some walk to the talk. Dusty often wondered how many of his team members could even explain these statements, much less embody them.

Once the survey results had reached the leadership team, Jim Mitchell, the chief financial officer, had formed a task force to address the troublesome findings. The ad hoc team’s stated objective was to determine a course of action that would turn the tide and reverse the downward trend. Dusty had been tapped to be a part of the task force, and he wanted to believe that Jim placed great confidence in his judgment and valued him as a key player in the transformation process. After all, Jim had been influential in hiring Dusty six years
Assessment

ago. Since that time, Jim had served as a confidant and mentor. He was one of Dusty’s biggest cheerleaders.

However, Dusty’s team members were among those who rated their work experience poorly on the survey. He wondered if his reputation as a leader had been tarnished by the less-than-stellar report and worried that it would be taken as a reflection of his leadership. Either way, it threw him into the proverbial lion’s den, staring into the teeth of what was sure to be a difficult season as the task force tried to determine what was causing their corporate sails to luff in the wind.

Dusty was trying not to let the whirlwind in his head prevent him from enjoying the beginning of a beautiful spring weekend. Pushing his concerns to the back of his mind, he approached the exit that would take him to his well-manicured community in the suburbs of north Atlanta.

As he approached a turn and depressed the clutch, he struggled to get the car into a lower gear. He had experienced difficulties in shifting the last few times he had driven his “ball of fire,” as he affectionately called it. This time the grinding was unnerving. It was time to have someone look at what might be malfunctioning, and he knew just where to take the car. He decided to run by Classic Car Care, where he had developed a good relationship with the owner. If he could get there by six o’clock, someone might be able to take a look and get the work done the following day. That way, he reasoned, he could have the car back in time to drive it to church on Sunday morning, something he loved to do when the weather permitted.

Dusty pulled up to Classic Car Care right at six o’clock, fearing that he might have missed his window of opportunity. He fully expected that he would have to come back again
the next morning. But true to form, Fred came sauntering out to greet him.

Fred Walters was the owner of Classic Car Care. He always made Dusty feel like they were best friends, even though the only time he ever saw Fred was when he brought the family vehicles in for routine maintenance. Fred was a stately man in his midsixties, with a tall frame and wavy gray hair. He was unusually fit for a man his age and always neatly dressed. Dusty often thought it odd that Fred’s khaki pants and shirt were perfectly pressed, even if they sported oil and grime from the shop. Half the time Fred could be found out front with customers and the other half he would be working diligently on a car in one of the bays. He always seemed to be remarkably at ease, whether working with a wrench in his hand or on the phone with a customer.

“Hey, Dusty, what brings you our way on a beautiful day like today?” Fred asked with his usual unassuming smile.

By the warm greeting and light tone in his voice, you would have thought Fred had all the time in the world to talk with Dusty.

“I’ve been having difficulty shifting gears, and I was wondering if you could take a look and see what’s going on. I think the clutch is going out,” Dusty answered.

“We’re closing for the night. If you’ll pull her into the second bay, I’ll give her a once-over first thing in the morning and give you a call. Does that work for you?” Fred asked.

“That would be great,” Dusty responded. “I’ll call my son and have him come pick me up.”

“Don’t bother. I can drop you off on my way home,” Fred offered. “I’ll still be able to get cleaned up in time to take Anne out for our date tonight. Come on.”
Accepting Fred’s offer, Dusty pulled the T-Bird into the bay while Fred gave a few last instructions to his partner in the front office. Then the two men climbed into Fred’s restored vintage 1948 pickup and drove away, chatting about their love of classic cars like two giddy teenage girls talking about boys.