

Excel in service

Joe is branch manager of a bank. He takes his job and the Christian gospel very seriously, which is why he never misses a chance to talk about Jesus. But some clients didn't appreciate his mixing business with personal faith. One of them eventually filed a complaint with the bank. After hearing Joe's explanation, his manager reminded him: "You've always done a good job for the bank and our customers. Please remember that we're paying you to take care of people's money, not to be an evangelist!"

Praying for people is never a substitute for honest service and uncompromising work. Neither is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. No matter how encouraging, comforting, or life-giving the message is, the right to share it needs to be earned. In a marketplace that's often filled with skepticism (if not distrust), competition, and greed, this means delivering on our promises. We put in a fair day's work to offer our service with a smile.

We do tend to think that our jobs are particularly difficult, or we have the worst possible coworkers, supervisors, and clients. Yes, life is hard, and people can be trying. But when we decide to treat work as mission, we learn to see it through a new lens. As we make that commitment, change is already happening *in your heart and mind*.

Intentional commitment

Today I commit to honor my Partner at work, the Lord Jesus Christ. I will strive to deliver the goods and services expected of me, knowing that it is the Lord whom I serve, not just men.

Adding value

Back when I was a rookie editor, my mentor often asked me: "What are you bringing to the table?" At first I was stumped. Then I thought of my job description, and then how my skill set exceeded requirements. Then I secretly matched myself against my coworkers. Before I realized it, their shortcomings loomed larger than life and I was begrudging how "unfairly" the company was treating me. Oh yes, I was going to let them have it in the next staff meeting.

The same question came: "What are you bringing to the table? What can you offer to get things moving in the right direction?"

It took me 20 years to figure out not only the importance of adding value, but *how* to add value. I pray that you're way ahead of me. Let me try to summarize. To add value is to:

- Know your strengths without getting carried away.
- See the needs of the team without being overly critical.

- Prepare to offer yourself and stand in the gap.
- Know when to speak up and when to hold your peace.
- Make others succeed, sometimes even at your expense.

I'd be the first to admit that I don't have a perfect score! We come to this with different kinds of baggage, but I do know people who continue to overcome negativity and rise above the mediocre. One of them is Denis, a software developer. In an industry that's notoriously demanding in terms of new learning, our man thrives on *sharing* what he knows with colleagues. "There's no way I can master and do everything all the time. I might as well do my part to make life easier for others," he said.

People and institutions can appear quite hopeless at times, but we don't need to go down the tubes with them. If we want to see transformation in our marketplaces, let's start with ourselves! ***Be the change!***

Complete the left-hand column using your job description, then ask yourself honestly what *you* bring to the table:

Your job description	How you can add value
<i>Position/role:</i>	
<i>Reporting to:</i>	
<i>Your team:</i>	
<i>Skills required:</i>	

Review your week

While it's best to take 5 to 10 minutes at the end of each day for reflection, many may find it too much to begin with. You may want to try a weekly review. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal any blind spots. Write down the thoughts that come to mind using the table as a reference:

- Who are the people I served?
- Did I purposely allow anyone to interrupt my day?
- What have I learned to improve myself?
- How was Jesus involved, as far as I can discern?

Week at work

Day	Work done	People served	Lessons learned
<i>Sunday</i>			
<i>Monday</i>			
<i>Tuesday</i>			
<i>Wednesday</i>			
<i>Thursday</i>			
<i>Friday</i>			
<i>Saturday</i>			

