

0.1 2: work: Finding Work

0.2 Finding Work

1 How to Serve

Understanding how to serve customers well is a major factor in the success of corporations: and service has a big role outside work too. Its one of the many ways in which theres an overlap between getting better in business and getting better at life in general. Service means helping others to thrive. Its a goal thats been around longer than humanity.



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1.0.0.0.2 A service culture exists amongst Japanese Snow Monkeys

We're all keen on being served well. But getting good at serving is tricky. Its a problem that deserves a great deal of sympathy. We're one of the first generations in history to be grappling with the delivery of effective service on a mass scale. There are so many ways service can go wrong.

One: The fear that its humiliating to serve

For centuries, the idea of service was focused on one particular kind of job: being a servant.



It didn't necessarily seem like a terrible option at the time. There was little social mobility; if your parents were servants you were probably going to end up doing the same thing. Carrying a tray or polishing shoes might not seem at all bad compared to hewing coal or digging the fields. But there must have been untold millions of moments of petty humiliation, many of them around unpleasant bosses.

Then across the Western World this kind of employment largely disappeared, under the combined impacts of WWI and WWII.



1.0.0.0.3 Mary Quant, 1965

And by the 1960s in the New York of *Mad Men* or the London of Mary Quant - being a servant came to sound like a dreary, slightly shameful kind of work. Service wasn't sexy.

The ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre, who had been offered the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964 and had very publicly rejected it, were getting a wider hearing. In his *Being and Nothingness* (1943), we find a strangely annoying waiter as the focus of Sartre's account of what he felt was wrong with society in general: to serve is to be inauthentic, to fail to be who you really are.



Let us consider this waiter in the cafe. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. (*Being and Nothingness*, Part I