

800-CEO-READ Blog

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Jack Covert Selects: The Ice Cream Maker

The Ice Cream Maker: An Inspiring Tale About Making Quality the Key Ingredient in Everything You Do by Subir Chowdhury, Currency Books, 100 Pages, \$17.95 Hardcover, September 2005, ISBN 0385514786

Quality: something of which I have always been a huge fan. Now, I'm not talking about the number crunchers' version of quality. I'm talking about the human kind of quality—that of customer service and care. Service America and Moments of Truth are books I read years ago. They helped me understand how to build a customer-centric company, long before that word (customer-centric) even existed.

Subir Chowdhury, author of a few Six Sigma books, has written the perfect primer for people that need a refresher course or are merely wondering why their business seems to be stagnating. We all have customers whether we are retail merchants, manufacturers, teachers or bureaucrats.

At 100 pages long, this book is the story of a guy who runs an ice cream company, hence the title (clever folks, these authors). The guru—all fables seem to have gurus—is a friend of the ice cream guy and he leads our character through the stages of implementing quality processes that will improve his product and, therefore, save the plant from closure. The author uses LEO as the acronym for the keys to understanding and implementing quality. "L" is Listen to both your internal and external customers. "E" is Enrich your business with innovative ideas and "O" is Optimize what you are doing as in striving for perfection. Some of the other treasures from the book are:

"The bottom line is that quality is defined by the customer." The only way that will happen is when we listen to our customers...When a customer requested a certain product or service, it must do what it is expect to do. It must 'Perform as Promised...' The third customer need is what we think of as 'excitement,' giving the customer that extra something that gets their attention, that delights them, and makes your product or service stand out.

This is a book I have given to people on my staff and we will be using to implement some changes in the future. This will be an important part in 8cr's future plans. Pick it up and learn.