

Excellence never happens
by accident.

We have to *make* it happen.
And our methods
matter every bit as much as
our results.

Excellence is a process, not just an outcome.

Sure, we have to hold out for high standards in the products or services we provide. The goods must be more than “good enough.” But so must our approach – you know, our methodology, the way we do business and deal with people. How could the *ends* be considered excellent if we can’t be proud of the *means*?

Excellence calls for character...integrity...fairness...honesty... a determination to do what’s right. High ethical standards, across the board.

We can’t achieve excellence through talent alone. Or merely by making technological improvements. We can’t even buy our way to excellence, no matter how much money we have available to spend. More dollars will never do it.

We have to develop a strong corporate conscience. Ethical muscle. And that doesn’t happen by accident either.

The only way we can develop muscle is through regular exercise. As soon as we stop stretching and working toward higher ethics, our standards start to sag. The muscle gets soft, and instead of excellence we have to settle for mediocrity. Maybe something even worse.

The question is, when so many others cut corners, shave the truth, self-deal, believe in the fast buck, and follow the crowd along the low road of least resistance, can we even *afford* to travel the high road of ethical behavior?

Frankly, we can’t afford anything else.

Any other competitive angle is a pure crapshoot in today’s business world. Companies with shaky ethics and shabby standards will be crippled as they try to compete in our changing world.

We need timeless principles to steer by in running our organizations and building our personal careers. We need high standards...the ethics of excellence.