

“We Must Add More Value to Win Customers for Life”

Motivational Speech

EXCERPT 1

Forty-one years ago today, on April 4, 1975, Microsoft was founded by two men in the United States: Bill Gates and Paul Allen.

Microsoft’s journey from two people to 118,000 has been an incredible one, but not always smooth.

In fact, in the early ‘90s, the World Wide Web caught Microsoft by surprise.

Turns out they were “asleep at the wheel,” and paid dearly catching up to competitors like Netscape and AOL.

No company wants to be surprised. And that’s why we’re paying close attention to our markets and to our customers.

Here’s what’s happening ...

EXCERPT 2

Results like these are not acceptable if we want to be sustainable.

So how do we respond?

Many of you shared your ideas with the management consultant we invited in last year to take a hard look at how we do business. In the process, we learned a lot about ourselves, and how we serve customers.

We discovered that our global structure may have served us in the past, but it will not serve us in the future:

- Making everybody responsible for everything meant nobody was responsible for anything, including profit.
- Our global structure weighed us down, so we reacted too slowly, and we delivered too slowly. That increased costs.
- We sought a structure with accountability and simplicity, aligned with our customers and how they make decisions, buy products and want support.

We also discovered we needed a new approach to research and development.

Our habit was to start many projects, but finish very few. That because either the end game was unclear, or the customer didn't want to pay for our new development.

Here's something else we discovered:

All customers are not created equal. Yet, we tend to treat all customers exactly the same.

But when every customer is deemed a high priority – permitted to demand rush orders and special favors at no extra charge, and gets free advice on a design but buys from a competitor – then our work is completely devalued.

By us. And by our customers.

When we're constantly reacting, putting out fires, trying to do everything for every customer every day, we run out of time and energy to give the very best service to our most loyal, and most profitable customers.

So we lose money. And opportunity.

When things go awry, I assure you: I have the monopoly on every mistake. And the duty to make right what is wrong.

If we are to be sustainable for many years to come, we must not be asleep at the wheel, doing what we've always done, when markets, customers and competitors change.

Instead, we must take what we've discovered to build a more sustainable organization.

What must we do?

The answer is clear.

We must add more value to win customers for life.

That is my dream for this company!

Because adding more value creates a competitive advantage. And having a competitive advantage creates customers for life.

Perhaps now you are wondering, "But how will we add more value?"

There are two sides to this coin.

We will add more value on the inside, by improving the way we work.

And we will add more value on the outside, by improving the way we serve customers. ...