



Simply Leading Complexity!

Is the world more challenging/complex or less challenging/complex than it was 20 years ago?

If you are in the "less complex" camp, you might note that people don't have to go to a bank location every time they want to deposit a check (they just snap a photo on their smartphone and hit send). If you are on the side of "increased complexity," you might cite the challenges of navigating security at a sporting event or concert.

From my reading of social commentators, business leaders, and scientists (yes there is a branch of scientific study referred to as the complexity sciences), technology - while often intended to simplify life - seems to be having an inverse and complexifying impact.

Therein is this month's message on leadership - today we must lead by simplifying whenever possible!

American educator, John W. Gardner once observed, "*excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.*"

Let's take senior leadership at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company as an example. My experience in the C-suite at that iconic guest experience brand demonstrates an unrelenting focus on the Ritz-Carlton "Gold Standards" - thus the title of my book about them - [The New Gold Standard](#). For example, much of the magic of the Ritz-Carlton guest experience can be linked to leadership's disciplined prioritization for staff to execute the three steps of service.

The Three Steps of Service

A warm and sincere greeting.

Use the guest's name. Anticipation and fulfillment of each guest's needs.

Fond farewell. Give a warm good-bye and use the guest's name.

For a moment let's assume the world (and specifically your workplace) is becoming more complex. Where can you lead (from wherever you sit in your business) a movement toward extraordinary execution on the "vital few" things that will result in staff/customer engagement loyalty, referrals, and success?

Invariably there will be necessary complexity in the world around us, but it doesn't take a genius to see the value in reducing unnecessary complexity. Of course, a genius did weigh-in on the issue. As such, I'll close this post with his (Albert Einstein's) words:

"Make everything as simple a possible, but not simpler."

Here's to you looking for ways to reduce complexity and to a simply great month!



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From the Blog:



Do you have a "go to" song you sing when you are at a karaoke bar? How about a signature dish you like to prepare the first time a new visitor comes over for dinner?

Customer Experience Design Strategies

For me, my "go to" strategies for product development or experience innovation involve components from my "empathic design" toolkit. For fellow empathic designers, you know that there are a lot of tools available which help business owners and leaders "step into the shoes" of their "user" or "customer."

For those who don't work in product or experience design on a daily basis, you probably just want to have an overview on how to "build products and services from the customer perspective." For a contextualized dive into this topic, I recommend a fairly recent Harvard Business Review Article titled 5 Ways to Design Products Customers Love. In that article, Dorothy Leonard details many empathic design strategies including:

**User-designer
Ethnographic research
User simulation
Customer culture immersion, and
Cognitive artifacts**

[Continue reading the full blog post.](#)



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