SERVICE IN BUSINESS

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by

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INTRODUCTION

In discussions of business and employee performance there appears to be a dichotomy between the expectations of service from the employee and the employer, among others. Lower-level employees are expected to perform differently than those who are higher in the corporate hierarchy. From an outside perspective, it is easy to assume that service is isolated simply between the lowest level employee and the customer. Lower-level employees are expected to serve both the interests of the company and customer, seamlessly. Service is just the final aspect of a business transaction. Often times, when plans for the policies and direction of a company are formed, lower-level employees are only expected to fulfill the requirement of customer service. They are often not consulted or heavily considered for input in the decisions of a company, even though they are arguably most responsible for serving the needs of the customers and the company. Service is almost never discussed as a quality of those at the middle-level or upper-level management, except for in vague and shallow terms. However, upon closer examination and analysis of the corporate structure as a whole, as well as the economic climate we operate in, it becomes clear that service needs to be present at all levels of a company, and it must be modeled after employees at the lower end of the company, who demonstrate service to persons considered higher in the corporate hierarchy and customers outside the corporate hierarchy.

Despite the fact that the corporate structure seems to be stacked against them, lower-level employees have the most to contribute to discussions of Service, I believe. In Chapter One, I will
investigate John Dewey and his insights into the problem of the “Lost Individual” to set the foundation for further discussion about a possible solution. I believe that even though work, in general, has devolved into an activity that rarely actualizes the entire individual, the successes that are observable in lower-level employees when they actively engage in Service pose a solution to the problem of the Lost Individual both in life and work.

In the Chapter Two, I will investigate specifically the role lower-level employees play in the corporate hierarchy to understand the commitments they have to both the customers, who I view as lower in the corporate hierarchy, and the company, which I view as higher in the corporate hierarchy. I will investigate how exactly they can fulfill both avenues of commitments. I will argue it is through an attitude of Service. I will then investigate the potential ramifications for both the employee and the company of implementing Service on a system-wide scale.

In Chapter Three, I will investigate the role Service can play if implemented by employees at the middle-level management and, in Chapter Four, upper-level management. I will argue that an attitude of Service can remedy the problem of the lost individual within the corporate structure while allowing for a greater commitment to a company’s product and monetary goals, without significantly or dangerously affecting the operations of a company. Service should be implemented in an organic way, so as to allow for the greatest possible net benefit for the company, its employees, and its customers.
CHAPTER ONE: THE “LOST INDIVIDUAL IN THE 21st CENTURY

Before we can discuss Service, the employee, or the company, we must examine the basis of the business model in which all of them participate. Writing at the beginning of the Great Depression, John Dewey noted, in Individualism: Old and New, poignant observations that still reign true some 80 years later. “Quantification, mechanization, and standardization: these are then the marks of the Americanization that is conquering the globe…they have invaded mind and character, and subdued the soul to their dye,” he writes, observing how businesses and individuals have come to perform during his age (Dewey, 12). Notice the absence of the classical approaches to business and ethics. No longer is business aligned around the idea of providing a good or service of the highest quality to a customer who has invested in a family establishment. The Pride of Main Street is gone from the business model – a story we know all too well in 21st Century America:

The marks and signs of this “impersonalization” of the human soul are quantification of life, with its attendant disregard of quality; its mechanization and the almost universal habit of esteeming technique as an end, not as a means, so that organic and intellectual is also “rationalized”; and, finally, standardization. Differences and distinctions are ignored and overridden; agreement, similarity, is the ideal. (Dewey, 12)

For Dewey, business has become cold and calculating. What began as an exciting and important development in industrialization has given rise to a degradation of humanity. Dewey notes that the industrialization of American business is a result of the technological advances that occurred over
centuries. Industrialization allowed the transformation away from economies based solely on agriculture and mercantilism. It also allowed for a greater distribution of money among those whom might have never had access to any degree of wealth before. Further industrialization allowed for the mass production of cheaper goods that became available to men and women who previously would not have been able to afford higher priced, individually crafted goods. Dewey calls this the “old” individualism, where innovators originally looked to create a better world and advancements for their society, and applauds the spirit of the original entrepreneurs as it certainly led to societal expansion and growth. However, he notes that business has grown too much and the lucrative developments in business quickly eroded the overall benefit provided to society. The innovations of the previous generations paved the road for the exploitation of the current business magnate. No longer is business innovative and adaptable. Instead, business has become the result of: quantification, whereby the individuality of people is suppressed and disregarded so as to create a market for a particular good; mechanization, whereby individuals are required to do menial, repetitive tasks that do not utilize their full potential in order to produce the calculated amount of goods; and standardization whereby individuals are expected to accept the system and results tailored to these artificially created desires.

It is a shame the products of impersonalization can still be observed in our business structures; however, the passage above alludes to the money-driven culture that traps adults in underpaying jobs that focus on repeated routines meant to be accessible by any person capable of basic motions and simple direction following. There is no soul in work. All of this has come to dull the individual in an impersonal society where individuality is blocked by quantification, mechanization, and standardization (Dewey, 12). In fact, the three concepts mentioned only seek

1 Historical context is taken from: (Dewey, 13-15, 37-38, 40-41).
to equalize the conditions of input to project and determine an output. Creativity, ingenuity, and intuition are stymied to create a uniform product or result.

Dulling of the individual, quantification of the goals, mechanization of the tools needed to produce goods, and the standardization of the results are simple observations seeking to illuminate how America has become obsessed with the “business mind” (Dewey, 21). These traits and this obsession persist to this day. In a radically more mechanized and industrialized world, and in an even more technologically inclined world than Dewey could have imagined, Americans have indoctrinated their entire lives around business and the idea of monetary gain. Students continue on to tertiary education not for personal growth or enrichment, but to gain a skill that will get them a better paying job. Workers are encouraged to spend their dismal wages as a way to fulfill an urge for luxury that is instantiated by the corporations they are employed by (Dewey, 23). So irrelevant have the individual’s needs and wants become in this process that not only do they accept a job based on a preconceived notion of fulfilling a need in the market, they work for the business that designed the product and goods designed to fill a universal void they created. This allows the business cycle to begin again as more of the company’s product is taken out into the public, encouraging others to purchase goods as well. The corporate story continues in this way. All of this corporate mindedness contributes to, what Dewey calls, “a situation which defines an individual divided within himself” (Dewey, 25).

So enters the Lost Individual, a person practically created by and for the role they fulfill in the corporate climate, “the development of a civilization that is outwardly corporate – or rapidly becoming so – has been accompanied by a submergence of the individual” (Dewey, 26). For Dewey, in the world that has become so corporate and mechanized, individuality has been sacrificed for profit and monetary gain. Even in the expanses of the leisure, enjoyment, and art,
people cannot escape the corporation, “the loyalties which once held individuals, which gave them support, direction, and unity of outlook on life, have well-nigh disappeared” (Dewey, 26). Devoid of the basic humanity that individuals formerly found at work, robbed of the enjoyment of art, continually moved by the corporate machine, the lost individual roams life looking for a way to reestablish harmony for themselves.

The fact that individuals can sense their lost individuality is important. Dewey notes that, “the unrest, impatience, irritation and hurry that are so marked in American life are inevitable accompaniments of a situation in which individuals do not find support or contentment in the fact that they are sustaining and sustained members of a social whole,” insinuating a growing urge not only to recognize the lost individuality at the hand of corporation but also to need to fix the problem (Dewey, 28). Given the discussion so far presented, it would not be inappropriate to suggest that this individuality should be found outside the corporate sphere, but to suggest that is to be ignorant of the way in which the world operates today. Individuals must work. I believe how they work and the structure in which they work must change. With the over mechanization, standardization, and quantification of work, the “technique” that was originally applauded in the work of individuals becomes relegated to an uninvested action that any person can be made to make (Dewey, 14). However, Dewey believes that recommitting to technique, what he defines as: “intelligent means and methods for securing results” – can save the deteriorating system, “I think that interest in technique is precisely the thing that is most promising in our civilization, that thing that in the end will break down devotion to external standardization and the mass-quantity idea” (Dewey, 15). I concur. Within the corporate hierarchy today, I believe, there exists a way to reinforce the importance of individuality through the pursuit of a proper technique by means of
Service. I believe that this can already be seen in some lower-level employees, it just needs to be abstracted and applied to the entire system.

Applying the idea of Service to the whole corporate structure is the beginning of a transformation of individualism that will affect society as a whole, “our problems grow out of social conditions: they concern human relations” (Dewey, 45). For Dewey, this new individualism must be a result of the times in which we live. Consequently, the only way to emerge from the doldrums of this old individualism is to focus on the relations we have. We must use the all of our faculties and capabilities, including the power to master science and technology, to make these relations better – we must align ourselves and our actions “to the liberation and enrichment of human life” (Dewey, 45). Dewey wrote Individualism during a time when the progress of technology allowed the work of many to be exploited for private pecuniary gain. While science and technology have been almost seamlessly integrated into 21st Century American culture, new problems have arisen – think labor relationships, for instance. These problems can be dealt with by the same prescriptions Dewey proposed in the 1930s, “a new individualism, consonant with the realities of the present age, may be brought into operative being” only as long as they are tailored to “envisage the expansive, the social, culture which [it] may be made to serve” (Dewey, 48-49). A new individualism, for both Dewey and current day America, must focus on understanding the fully human elements of work and life and attempting to reconcile the two so that their product will be the enrichment of the individuals who participate in it.

Crucial to our understanding of the new individualism is the fact that it results in an individual who is empowered. When a person achieves a new individuality, they are no longer inhibited by the old individualism, they are able to actively use all of the resources available to them, especially their mind, to create a life that is better. They use science and technology, yes,
but they use them as a tool for helping create “the expansive, the social, culture” in which every individual is freed from the submergence of the corporate machine (Dewey, 49). Importantly, though, is the integration of a liberated mind and empowered spirit into the workings of society. Breaking free from the standardization, quantification, and mechanization of business and reuniting the individualism that was initially divided is the product of an empowered person who has applied “the delights of thinking, of inquiry” in their world in an effort to make their life better (Dewey, 78). Realizing that something needs fixed, determining how to fix it, and then understanding they have the means to solve the problem is empowering. A New Individualism grants each individual the capacity and power to better their society and life – it requires creativity and innovation, drive and motivation – and “because the free working of mind is one of the greatest joys open to man” a new individualism ensures that each individual is empowered enough to use their mind as a tool for determining how to better their society, life, and work (Dewey, 78).

“Industry is not outside of human life, but within it” and for humanity to flourish, so too must industry (Dewey, 76). The work an individual chooses to partake in comes under a new and important light as it contributes to the advancement of society, “every occupation leaves its impress on individual character...their pursuit determines intellectual horizons, precipitates knowledge and ideas, shapes desires and interests” (Dewey, 77). Work now becomes an important way to contribute to the success of the community the individual is a part of, the society as a whole, and the individual. This New Individualism, oriented around the idea that our actions must be designed around social advancement and human enrichment, becomes the foundation for our discussions of labor relations. This New Individualism, I believe, must be couched terms of Service, particularly in business. It is to this end; we must now turn.
CHAPTER TWO: SERVICE DEFINED

Despite the overly cynical presentation of business described earlier, it is imperative to note that not every business falls into this mold, and there are many examples to be found of businesses that encourage their employees to succeed in their assigned jobs by utilizing their very individuality. It is to these companies we must turn our investigation. If we are to suggest Service as a means of alleviating the market malady of the lost individual, we must observe and analyze the best examples we can in the current structure. Permit, now, some preliminary remarks about the structure of business. Businesses, as a means of attaining success, generally must employ more than one employee (companies that are owned and operated by the same person with only one employee will still benefit from the discussion that ensues). A corporate hierarchy becomes established with the hiring of new employees. Generally speaking, a corporate structure exists with: lower-level employees, who provide the goods and services directly to the customers, middle-level management, whose responsibilities include supervising lower-level employees in an effort to help make the company successful, and upper-level management, whose responsibilities include ensuring the means of production and the products remain available so that all subordinate employees can continue their jobs and also making decisions that affect the corporation as a whole.

Businesses, whether a small business or a corporation, seek to provide a good or service in a way that sets them apart from their competition and encourage customer patronage. A commitment to the product or service they offer, their "practice" is the basis of a company (MacIntyre, 184). For MacIntyre, a practice, as applicable to both an individual and business, is:
“Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity” (After Virtue, 184). Following this definition, any practice, or work, has an intrinsic good that can only be realized in the fervent attempts at perfecting it. The scope of practice is important, particularly if we are to properly reconcile Dewey and MacIntyre. MacIntyre’s definition of practice coupled with Dewey’s understanding of the importance of technique reveal how work must be completed. Where technique is intelligent it combines achieving the ends that define the practice of a business with the meaningful input and empowerment and enfranchisement of the employee. Consequently, the work of the lowest-level employee takes on a newer and important light. No longer can the work of the lowest-level employee be understood as isolated. Even if it is rote in design it is constituitive of something much greater. Understanding this, particularly from the standpoint of the lowest-level employee, allows for a discussion of how work comes to be designed and how every employee can attain individuality in a company.

Repeated attempts at perfecting a particular assigned job will reveal to the employee the standards of excellence necessary for the proper instantiation of the practice. It also reveals how to not properly and excellently perform work. Each time an employee attempts the work given to them, even in a mechanized and repeatable business, they will likely notice the correctness or incorrectness of their attempts, analyze their attempt and try to find a way to better achieve and succeed in the work assigned to them. When analysis leads to innovation, the practice flourishes along with the employee. In order to truly participate in the practice of a business an employee must be able to isolate the technique needed and make it their own. Making technique a natural extension of a fully involved individual allows for a commitment to the company and their goals as
well as the personal success of the individual. Now, the pursuit of perfection of a practice comes from the enhanced technique employees will use to accomplish even menial tasks. As Dewey hinted, “in the end, technique can only signify an emancipation of individuality” (15). Each employee can perfect their technique and approach to work that can result not only in individuality being attained but also in virtuous work. Virtue, according to MacIntyre, is “an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices” (MacIntyre, 191).

Crucially for the employee in their pursuit of virtue is their attention to the technique and skill necessary for the particular practice. MacIntyre realizes this when he states: “what is distinctive in a practice is in part the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve...are transformed and enriched by these extensions of human powers” (MacIntyre, 193). Humans were designed mechanically and rationally for work. A genuine commitment to practices inevitably improves not only the goods produced by the practice but also the practitioner who has adopted the ends of the practice as their own, at least partially. The analysis that the lowest-level employee must do to reveal better techniques and ways to participate in the practice of a company is necessary as it allows for the evolution of the individual. However, this is only possible in a business where employees have a say in the constitution of the practice the company houses. Innovation and empowerment are necessary for the growth of the employees and the consequently the practice of the business and the company, as a whole. No longer are lower-level employees simply and blindly performing labor. They are actively bettering themselves and the company for which they work. However, the approach to work and labor will be directly impacted by the community that the lowest-level employee lives and works in.
Alasdair MacIntyre seeks to present Aristotle’s Virtue Ethics as a means to reach the pinnacle of human existence through communal activities. His account lends itself nicely to discussions of business because it discusses practices, virtues, traditions, institutions, and how individuals coexist among these concepts to attain some degree of success. While we have briefly discussed the two former concepts, more needs to be said of the latter two. Traditions, for MacIntyre, are the basis of practices and virtues, “a living tradition then is a historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition” (222). Important to note is the relevance and influence of a community. Traditions represent the conditions and situations that individuals live in and shape their perception of the world. Where the goal of human life is the achievement of the “good life,” traditions provide the basis for that pursuit:

Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations. Hence, the individual’s search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual’s life is a part. (MacIntyre, 222)

Businesses must offer products and services to communities in ways that will encourage patronage and support. Often; however, the work that must be done by lower-level employees falls prey to the same faults that lead to the problem of the lost individual – the perpetuating cycle of creating an artificially manufactured consumerism that stomps out creativity, eliminates competition, and negates societal benefits by subjugating labor to monotonous adventures and actions. I posit that when Service is implemented, in these instances, the problem of the lost individual can be solved. What MacIntyre adds to the theory is a sense in which even menial labor can become important, especially when it is examined through the lens of the community. Manufacturing jobs characteristically have been known for their mechanization and standardization. However, understanding that even though the particular job is mundane the product the worker creates is still
needed by the community allows the participant the opportunity to realize the worth of their individual job. In particular, it allows them to examine more closely the traditions and practices needed to attempt perfection at that craft. Investigating the history of a practice because of the prompting of a community encourages further enrichment in the practice and the technique needed to do the job well. Investigation of this kind allows for the employee to understand the different facets of the work they are about to do and it gives them the opportunity to assess their approach and technique. This in turn affords them the opportunity to practice innovation and creativity with the work they participate in. In truth, any person can be assigned a menial task for accomplishment; however, the quality of the commitment to the task is enhanced to the degree the technique promotes creativity and innovation. Through this opportunity for commitment not only does the worker create a more fulfilling work experience for themselves, they further the goals of the community, and the business in a positive light.

MacIntyre notes that: “to enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded us in the practice,” but he also takes it a step further, adding: “and for this learning and the relationship to the past which it embodies the virtues...are prerequisite in precisely the same way...in sustaining present relationships with practices” (MacIntyre, 194). MacIntyre is completely correct in appreciating the importance of past practices to present relations. However, Dewey’s technique of empowerment is needed to fully take advantage of the fact that the lower-level employee is often the first to notice practices and traditions that need to change due to the evolving needs of the community. Being as it is those employees who interact with the community most often, they must offer a product and service in ways that the community endorses, or else they run the risk of alienating their customer base. Remember that in the moment of interaction between lower-level employee and customer,
the customer rarely understands or is impressed by the workings of a giant corporation – they are there to purchase a product or service that meets their standards. Thus, employees must look at their actions and the products they create to make sure they are doing something that members of the community want in a way they would like it done. This combination of respect for tradition and attention to needed innovation offer an avenue to elevate work and give the lower-level employee a greater degree of individuality because they use their full selves to understand the circumstances they are in as well as what is needed for both the customer and the company. In this way, the continual pursuit of practices and the virtues they can present offers the continued opportunity for individuals to practice virtues and live the good life in compounding fashion – it is “not accidental that every practice has its own history and history which is more and other than that of the improvement of the relevant technical skills” (MacIntyre, 194).

Where traditions provide the beginning of the pursuit of a particular kind of good, “institutions” provide the means of achieving the good through practice (MacIntyre, 194, Moore, 304). Institutions are the formation of entities designed for a particular tradition and practice. They seek to ensure the success of their practice, as well of their individual organization. Here enter discussions of “external goods” (MacIntyre, 194). While pursuing the excellence of practices will result in internal goods, it also allows for the realization of external goods, goods that are to “sustain not only for themselves but also the practices of which they are the bearers” (MacIntyre, 194). However, the pursuit of sustenance, particularly because it involves money, potentially lends itself to corruption and greed. Here is the reason and place for the virtues to exist within the practice of an institution, “in this context the essential function of the virtues is clear. Without them…practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions” (MacIntyre, 193).

Commitment to a company’s practice in this way reveals two kinds of goods that can be produced
by a particular practice: internal and external goods. Internal goods are what is learned through the continued pursuit of perfecting the company's practice. Qualities like perseverance, teamwork, and attention to detail as well as a commitment to the craft of espresso preparation and beverage production all combine appropriately when a barista hones their techniques to make a great latte or cup of coffee that you can find in your neighborhood coffee roaster. Further, there are also external goods that can be realized in pursuit of a company’s practice is perfected that relate to the function of the business as a whole, profit and success, among others, which Geoff Moore believes are “both a necessary and worthwhile function of the organization, but only to the extent necessary for the sustenance and development of the practice” (305). Realizing both internal and external goods reveals, also, two various responsibilities of Service an employee has. Internal goods are perfected so as to be given to customers for their loyalty and patronage. External goods must be attended to for the success of the company as a whole.

Perhaps this is the beginning of an appropriate definition of Service; work performed in pursuit of the perfection of a company’s community determined practice as well as the attainment of individuality for the employee. In order to properly exhibit Service, lower-level employees must tend to both of these responsibilities because they seek to ensure the continued success of the business and the individual by allowing the business to succeed and continue working towards its main goal of perfecting the craft it claims as its own: “its most important function [is the] sustenance of the particular practice that it houses” (Moore, 305). Internal and external goods are inherently connected to the success of a company. The overlap begins and ends with the individual participating in the practice of the business. Imagine, for example, a farmer and a farmer’s apprentice. While teaching the apprentice how to plant the seed, the obvious steps involve: tilling the ground, planting the seeds, covering with dirt, watering, and cultivating; however,
when showing the apprentice how to cover the seed with dirt the farmer imparts wisdom learned after years of work – perhaps, folding the dirt under the seed yields the strongest crop, this is an internal good of the practice. For the farmer’s apprentice, serving the needs of the farming business involves learning the standards of excellence necessary for success. Planting seeds is biologically necessary for growth; however, learning the “tricks of the trade” seem to display commitment that goes beyond simple completion of a task. The pursuit of perfection certainly might yield a strong crop and consequently a profit, an external good, necessary for the continuance of the business; however, it is important to realize that the seed planted does not care much for the profit of the business. Commitment to the internal goods of the practice is good with or without the realization of external goods, as they prompt a fuller involvement of the individual. Further, the profit of the company is derived after the good work has been done – the good is external. It is necessary for the continuance of the business, but separate from the commitment to the practice of farming.

The instances above display the dual responsibilities of the lowest level employee nicely. Through his commitment to the customer and the company as described above, he provides real Service. According to Luigino Bruni and Robert Sugden, “the corrupting tendencies of the market can be contained only to the extent that individuals are at least partially motivated by the internal ends of practices” (146). This is important for both the individual and the company as a whole. It is through the constant pursuit of perfection to the practice of a company and the technique needed to achieve perfection that an individual can gain individuality back, especially in the midst of a corporate society because this is the only way for the employee to engage the skills and faculties that make them as an individual unique. It provides harmony in the midst of a fragmented existence. Importantly, the employee has to want to attain this version of individuality,
and they have to be willing to work to attain it. Giving employees the opportunity to invest in themselves, through a genuine commitment to practice, and not by simply expecting them to perform as mindless machines, is the only way for a company to stay in touch with its practice and the customers it wishes to serve. Although opposed to the notion of work as mechanic, Dewey understands that new scientific and technological advances will drive business forward – that is certainly true of today. However, he cautions against the use of science and technology “for ends of private pecuniary gain” because he believes this is a misuse and abuse of technology (Dewey, 49). Machines and technology have advanced the status of medicine, education, and commerce, but they have done so only in as much as they were treated as a tool to expand human development.

When Dewey originally wrote *Individualism*, men were trapped behind a machine, forced to do almost inhuman work. It was only once we stepped away from the machine and began to use it as a tool for our collective gain that we were able to harness its true potential and advance society. Using machines as an extension of the ambition and intuition of a fully involved individual to provide Service for the advancement of society is the only way to break the “old” kind of economic thought and motivation (Dewey, 49). An attitude of Service, as advocated for above, helps avoid the corruption the market can have on individuals and companies by allowing the worker to remain faithful to the practice of the business, which includes a commitment to the internal goods of the respective company, the customer, without which the company would not exist, themselves, and society – “for what the artist discovers within the pursuit of excellence...is the good of a certain kind of life,” – a good life centered around a newfound individualism where the work that a laborer participates in is no longer mundane and defeating, but actualizing and empowering because it focuses on what inherently makes us human and the successes that can be
derived for both the individual and their community from that individuality present in work (MacIntyre, 190).

Let us revisit our definition of Service given these new distinctions. Service, now, becomes: work performed in pursuit of the perfection of a company’s community determined practice as well as the attainment of individuality for the employee so as to realize both the internal and external goods of the practice to better provide for those higher and lower in the corporate structure. When a worker acts virtuously in their role they should not only be committed to producing the desired result of their role, they should also be committed to doing it with an attitude of Service directed toward parties both lower and higher in the corporate hierarchy and themselves. Orienting toward virtue in the work of their choice reveals an important element of Service that is necessary for the business transaction and the individual worker. Service becomes the “perfection” of the worker who is oriented towards virtue in work and life (Moore, 303).

For Moore, there is no greater time than the present to re-evaluate the ethical dimension of business and labor so as to ensure something like the Great Recession of the late-2000’s never happens again. Moore states: “the corruption of institutions led to individuals similarly failing to respect and prioritise the practices in which they were engaged” (305). In the world that must recover from a devastating recession, Moore suggests, “a prescription that is more than simply a general plea for individuals to cultivate the virtues and apply them as much at work as in other areas of their lives...or a regulatory approach” (306). In order to protect ourselves from another dreaded downfall, we must recommit ourselves as employees and employers to the virtues and practices of our businesses – “the interplay between practices and institutions suggests that, at the organizational level, what is required is an institutional framework that is conducive to the exercise of virtues inside practices,” in a MacIntyrean sense (Moore, 306). Remember, that for MacIntyre
and Moore, virtues are acquired traits that allow their practitioners to achieve the internal goods of practices. Being as institutions house a practice they claim as their own, the corporate structure must be one designed around the exercise of the virtues necessary for the practice to be sustained. In this post-Recession economy; however, it is important to note how labor and work has changed. Where the Recession can be seen as an example of a failure of multiple companies to truly house the practices they claimed to, our subsequent Recovery has allowed for a greater understanding of the role of the lower-level employee and the direct impact they have on a company. The Recovery was certainly possible through a combination of factors including the work of the lower-level employee. As businesses tried to rebound, so did individuals on a personal level. In order to do so, individuals had to commit to the business they served and the practices that those businesses tried to house in an effort to make the company more viable in the volatile market. The definition of Service I have advanced in this project is modeled on the observations of the actions of those employees. Service, not only allowed for the lower-level employee to invest in the company, it also allowed for them to invest in themselves. In an economic structure that had devalued labor and the input of employees in the corporate structure, lower-level employees’ commitment to attempting to perfect the practice of a company in an effort to serve the customer, inherently involved an investment in themselves. This investment allowed for them to attain, at least personally, a greater degree of enrichment, fulfillment, and individuality. In this post-Recession world, no longer can the institutional framework of business not permit and allow for an element of Service. Too do so would be ignorant of the past and the advances made by and through the lower-level employee.

I want to pause here and acknowledge an important restriction on Service. I do not intend to make Service just another avenue of corporate exploitation. It is not a job requirement. The
practicality of trying to establish whether or not someone is adequately performing service to a company or a customer seems near impossible to judge based on empirical metrics. I argue that there will certainly be an increase in external goods that are measurable; however, the internal goods that will advance because an attitude of Service is present are observable but not necessarily measurable. I can imagine chastisements of the kind “You do not care enough” becoming the norm. Not only are these redundant, but they do not seek to improve the situation. As Moore states: “the achievement of an appropriate balance between internal and external goods stands as one of the key tensions in organizations” (305). Service must be self-directed if it is to have any positive consequences for both the employee and the employer. However, it cannot become too burdensome for the employee, or else it runs the risk of corrupting what it originally meant to save.

The employee must want to participate in Service as a means to achieving a greater degree of individuality. Bruni and Sugden term this a “market virtue of self-help” because it is the result of actions made by the individual to enhance their lives. It is a tangent consequent of being useful and helpful both to a company and a customer (Bruni and Sugden, 157). For them, “each individual’s wants and aspirations are relevant to others only in so far as they can be satisfied in mutually beneficial transactions” (Bruni and Sugden, 157). Service, then, is played out in a market transaction that has goals directed to the company and the customer, all funneled through the lower-level employee. Pursuing perfection in the practice of a business becomes important for both the customer and the employee because it adequately provides both with something they desire – the customer desires a product that is produced by the employee’s attention to the detail of the practice of a company and the employee seeks an elevated existence that comes from the respect and acknowledgment granted by the consumer when they purchase the good or service the employee has attempted to perfect. Consequently, it is important to understand that even though
an employee seeks to perfect the practice of the company, they might not produce anything a
customer wants. It becomes foolish to expect a customer to purchase something just because of
the way it was crafted, “a person who upholds the virtue of self-help will avoid asking others to
reward [them] for producing goods that those others do not value” (Bruni and Sugden, 157).
Business practices arranged around the expectation that every person who walks through the doors
of company must become a customer now become null and void. The pursuit of business must
always be the attention to its practice, understanding this requires us to understand that not every
consumer will want to partake in that practice. Forcing them to do so would be an exploitation of
their role as a consumer.

Providing a mutually beneficial market transaction appears to be the most direct avenue for
recognizing the Service I seek to articulate. So self-help, as Bruni and Sugden present it, offers an
important humbling experience for the worker and well as an appropriate gauge on the
expectations of the company “self-help is also opposed to self-sacrifice” (Bruni and Sugden, 158).
This restriction applies to a company’s expectation of an employee because it tempers their
understanding of Service so as not to make it burdensome. “A relationship in which one party
incurs a loss so that another person can gain is not a mutually beneficial relationship between
equals,” and seeing as an employee has a vital role to play in the success of a company disregarding
this point is dangerous (Bruni and Sugden, 158). So, Service must be tempered. It cannot inflate
the worth of the work of an employee so as to make it undesirable, and it cannot force an
employee to give beyond their means to the whims of a company. I second an important
conclusion with Bruni and Sugden:

Seeing self-help as a virtue makes it easier to understand how people can find satisfaction in
work that they would not choose to do if there were not paid for it. Large parts of most
people’s working lives are not “fun” or “challenging” ... They are simply activities by which
one earns a living by being useful to other people in ways that they are willing to pay for. But that surely does not mean that these activities lack authenticity or virtue. (158)

Understanding that Service requires a certain degree of tempering is important as it reminds us of the corporate influence and system that it must operate within. It is important to understand how exactly Service can be instituted within the corporate structure. There are at least “three important human motives that interact with economic incentives: the motive to reciprocate, the desire for social approval and the desire to work on interesting tasks” (Moore, 308). The framework, Moore suggests, is a way of governing the virtue present in practices of business within the business structure itself (306). Much about how the corporation is structured influences the attitude toward the work that must be done. Psychological factors affect the motivations and dedication of employees at every level, but especially at the lowest level. To this extent, Moore, and the others he has drawn from, suggest creating an atmosphere that focuses on the intrinsic motivation of employees. Of most importance for this discussion is the third point. Allowing work to be done on interesting tasks could allow the employee to become engaged in the techniques necessary to perform that task well. So the story continues with a commitment to the practice and perfection of the standards of excellence necessary for the success of not only the employee but the company as well. Knowing that work that is intrinsically motivating is captivating to employees impresses on those in control of the work the need to tailor the work to the strengths and needs of the lower-level employee. Moore articulates this:

Attention needs to be given to job design, so that intrinsic motivation is built into the greatest extent possible. There is a tendency to de-skill and routinize job at ‘lower’ levels. But it is in the core practice of the organization that employees (practitioners) find the greatest opportunity to engage in the practice, exercise virtue, pursue excellence and so produce good products and perfect themselves in the process.² (309)

While it can be argued that any task involving some degree of technical skill has internal goods and can produce virtues in those who attend to the perfection of its practice, it becomes imperative to understand the human inclination to participate in meaningful work. Ron Beadle and Kelvin Knight accentuate this point while appealing to MacIntyre, saying: “the tasks that require the most from us turn out to be those that transform our desires” (435). When attempting to perfect a task that involves becoming deeply committed to the techniques and the practice, individuals become inherently better: “these tasks acquire both meaning and valence because emulating standards of excellence requires exercising, and thereby cultivating such virtues” (Beadle and Knight, 435). Individuals become better when they participate in tasks that are tailored to their strengths because when they are fully immersed in their work they are more fully enriched and achieve a greater degree of individuality, “meaningful work requires...workers take the achievements of the goods of their practice to be constitutive of their own good” (Beadle and Knight, 444; emphasis added). Consequently, they know of the positive impacts of this kind of work and want to experience it more. They become aware, maybe even naively so, of “teleological understandings of work,” that is work meaningful, enriching, and fulfilling when it is designed to produce the best in the human form, and come demand tasks “whose practice presupposes a privileging of internal goods and the cultivation of virtues” (Beadle and Knight, 436). Simple success at a particular task becomes a benchmark that is too low for our understanding of the importance of work.

Beadle and Knight believe that “meaningful work is not only a particular good for the individual who possess it but...comprises a good whose just distribution should be an object of common concern” inasmuch as when meaningful work is realized it reveals a type of good that no longer pertains simply to the work of one person (445). Meaningful work comes to be indicative of
a better type of life, a life of new individuality that should be attained or attempted by all people. Service, as articulated and deployed in this project, can provide the avenue to bridge the gap from simply successful work to meaningful work. Job design, as well as a more thorough understanding of the benefits to be derived from a commitment to the virtues of practice, become imperative when determining job creation and employment opportunities. In truth, these realizations come to expect more from the business as a whole.

It appears that for Moore, as well as MacIntyre and Dewey, that work is a communal effort and must be as it involves so many people. Catering to the strengths of those present in the business is the only way to ensure the company’s continued success. Many people are involved in the process of a business, and many people have different roles to play. While discussion so far has centered on the contributions that can be made by the lowest level employee, here Moore signals an important facet that must be addressed: the responsibilities and contributions of those who have direct control of the lower-level employees, the middle-level management. They are inherently involved in the process of business simply because of their interaction with those below them. However, even though they might fulfill different roles, they should be afforded the same opportunities as those whom they supervise (Moore, 309). It is this fact we must now turn.

Have we now sufficiently provided a definition of Service that can alleviate the lost individual problem articulated by Dewey? Service, now, becomes: well tempered work performed in pursuit of the perfection of a company’s community determined practice as well as the attainment of individuality for the employee so as to realize both the internal and external goods of the practice in an effort to better provide for those higher and lower in the corporate structure and to live a better type of life. Dewey wanted to answer the question: “can a material, industrial civilization be converted into a distinctive agency for liberating the minds and refining the emotions
of all who take part in it?” (60). The short answer to his question is a definitive, yes. Remember, he saw the individual as lost amongst the corporatization of America. We see that happening still today, although I believe to a lesser extent than before the Great Recession. In regards to the fact that this type of behavior is still present, there is still work to be done. Businesses are constantly driven to innovate so as to attract new customers and drive sales while being perfectly comfortable relegating their lower-level employee to a status almost inhuman. Dewey observed these effects of business at the time he wrote *Individualism: Old and New*. However, what they often times fail to realize is the importance to care for the practice of their institution and those who perform the practice - the lower-level employee. Focusing on this important element and the fact that observable Service can exist within the structure of business today, it is imperative to make its implementation systemic as the only way to effectively solve the problem of the lost individual as Dewey articulated. To do so; however, work and the relationship between employer and employee must be reevaluated, “such progress will not be initiated until we cease opposing the socially corporate to the individual” (Dewey, 49). Eliminating the disagreements of harmony found in the individual because of their current state in business, is imperative to solving the lost individual problem: “a stable recovery of individuality waits upon an elimination of the older economic and political individualism, an elimination which will liberate imagination and endeavor for the task of making corporate society contribute to the free culture of its members” (Dewey, 36).

Adopting an attitude of Service can do this, I believe.

Although it is certainly not a practical notion, the implications for its acceptance are vast. Changing a massive corporate structure or an economic system is not a fast endeavor. However, ardent attempts to make the system better for both business and employee should be applauded. If we can understand and acknowledge the implications Service could have on business, we have
every obligation to see it through to fruition, even if we are alone. Understanding what is truly at

stake and what can be gained is of the utmost importance. Dewey believes:

General guidance of serious intellectual endeavor by a consciousness of the problem would
enable at least one group of individuals to recover a social function and so refind
themselves. And recovery by those with special intellectual figs and equipment from their
enforced social defection is at least a first step in a more general reconstruction that will
bring integration out of disorder. (68)

In truth, labor relations are incredibly complex relationships. They are so complex because they
are the compounded result of centuries worth of human traditions, skills, practices, and virtue. In
short, they are so important because they speak directly to what makes us human. Ensuring the
success of the system ensures the success of every person who will work within the system. This is
a noble endeavor. This is where we must turn our investigation.

We have seen how Service is visible in the lower-level employee within a business and we
have seen how its pursuit is useful not only for the individual employee, in that it allows them to
advance virtuously through good work toward a good life, but also for business, in that it allows the
company to provide goods and services in a way to protect the institution. Throughout this
investigation so far, we have seen how the community is involved in many aspects of a business.
Not only do they provide the justification and the need for the company to exist, but they also
provide the means to the company's success through attention to its practice. We have also noted
how the influence of community helps the individual approach virtue in work. This, in turn,
reveals certain standards for work that is to be assigned to employees. What comes next must be
an investigation further into the corporate hierarchy. While lower-level employees certainly deliver
the product at the end of the system, there is much at work being done above them. We have
seen how Service in business is an effective tool for employees at the lowest level; we must now see
if it is used at the middle-level of management. If it is not, does the structure of the system allow
for its implementation and what are the results that can come from an instantiated attitude higher in the corporate structure.
CHAPTER THREE: SERVICE APPLIED

This project was prompted by an observation about lower-level employees. There appear to be clear examples that can be found in almost every business of employees who can do their jobs as if successful completion involved filling out a checklist and then there are employees who participate in their job as while filling out the checklist and then some. I believe this extraordinary quality found in particular individuals is Service, as defined in the previous chapter. From our discussion of Service, we have seen how it is applicable is solving the problem of the lost individual as advanced by John Dewey. Service allows the individual to invest in the work they have chosen to do in a way that allows them to achieve fuller individuality. The consequences of such Service are beneficial to the employee as well as the company -- as Service involves employees challenging themselves to achieve a greater degree individuality by continually committing themselves to finding different and better ways to effectively employ the techniques necessary for the practices of the company so as to create a better product for the company and the customer, as well as enhancing and enriching their input in the business structure and in their personal lives. This results in a better product for both the company and the customer. While this notion of Service attempts to solve the problem of the lost individual, it is important to note that it is not the norm for business. It is a rarity, particularly because the structure of business, generally speaking, does not allow for the proper exercise of Service. The structure of business must be designed so as to permit and encourage this attitude of Service. However, this discussion seems to involve much
more than just the lower-level employees’ contribution and importantly involves middle-level management, at least. This chapter focuses on the contribution of middle-level managers. If Service is as beneficial as I believe it to be for the lower-level employee, I will investigate the ramifications of its application for employees at middle-level management.

For the purpose of our discussion, middle-level management consists of the men and women who occupy a superior role in the corporate hierarchy when compared with lower-level employees. Middle-level managers are responsible for coordinating the actions of lower-level employees to achieve the business goals directed by upper-level management. The scope of their specific role in fulfilling the company’s goal is different since as they do not primarily deal with the customer directly, although they can. Instead, they are responsible for providing the means and materials with which the lower-level employees will create the good or service for the customer. Within this structure, middle-level managers possess responsibilities to parties both above them and below them in the corporate hierarchy. It is in this split of responsibilities that John Dewey believes even middle-level management falls prey to the problem of the lost individual:

Even those who seem to be in control, and to carry the expression of their special individual abilities to a high pitch are submerged...They exercise leadership surreptitiously and, as it were, absent-mindedly. They lead but it is under the cover of impersonal and socially undirected economic forces. Their reward is found not in what they do, in their social office or function, but in the deflection of social consequences to private gain. (Dewey, 27)

From this onset, the challenges to achieving individuality for middle-level management seem to mirror the challenges of lower-level employees as the individual who happens to be in a middle-level management position seems to be overwhelmed by the demands of the company. Too often middle-level managers are caught in the crosshairs of the demands of the business and the demands of the employees they are responsible for supervising. They are forced enforce policies directed at achieving success for the company by nature of the structure of the business. Here, the
individuality of middle-level management is submerged under the cold and calculating machine of business, as decisions made in the boardrooms of corporations are rarely designed for a greater achievement of success for the individual employee, they are often only focused on success, defined by profit margins, for companies. Often the demands of the business win and decisions have to be made that may not necessarily respect or help the lower level employees and, in the long run, do not benefit the business but might provide a temporary solution, “while the actions promote corporate and collective results, these results are outside their intent and irrelevant to that reward of satisfaction” (Dewey, 27).

Middle-level management, while certainly receiving a greater deal of responsibility, also has access to a greater amount of data, both quantitative and qualitative. However, within the corporate structure presented, they do not necessarily have the ability to use their skills to design solutions for their relevant aspects of the business – instead they are required to tow the company line and direct their subordinates to do the same. Dewey notes the absurdity of this problem,

Hence, the irony of the gospel of “individualism” in business conjoined with the suppression of individuality in thought and speech. One cannot imagine a bitterer comment on any professed individualism than that it subordinates the only creative individuality – that of mind – to the maintenance of a regime which gives the few an opportunity for being shrewd in the management of monetary business. (Dewey, 45)

The exploitation of persons for profit or pecuniary gain is a most heinous act for Dewey. Individualism cannot be attained or even attempted, if mindset of the company does not regard the lower-level employees with some degree of respect. Their work must matter. The fact that middle-level managers are unable to use their own abilities to the fullest extent and design solutions tailored to their subordinates and the goals of the company further displays not only the problem of the lost individual but also the fact that Service is not present at this level. Is there room for Service at this level? I believe so. Noticeably, Service for the middle-level manager will involve
Service directed at lower-level employees and the business as a whole in a way that seeks to avoid the “chief obstacle” to individualism, the exploitation of labor for simple “private pecuniary profit,” and instead focuses on the individuals and their contributions to the business, “in whom sociability is one with cooperation in all regular human associations” (Dewey, 44).

Bearing in mind the problem of the lost individual’s formation in the current business structure, we will begin by discussing the relation between lower-level employee and middle-level management. Robert C. Solomon believes that corporations and businesses are communities ideally based around a central goal, “a caring corporation cultivates the most basic strength of any organization, mutual dedication” (518). The way in which an organization cultivates this kind of mutual dedication, Solomon believes, is through caring and compassion, especially from the role of managers. Where management has to bring together different and diverse people and unite them towards a common goal, they inherently must begin by developing a relationship with these employees. These relationships are based on caring; he states: “management is concerned first and foremost with people, and where those people are part of the same organization all such relationships are defined by caring” (Solomon, 525).

Caring, for Solomon, can simply be construed as “taking [another’s] interests as one’s own” and it is imperative because it is the foundation for the interaction between middle-level managers and lower-level employees (527). Within the current corporate structure imagined, it is not alarming to see where this kind of caring is necessary – middle-level managers are responsible for the success of the company in that they spur the lower-level employees to do better at their assigned jobs, they reassure their superiors that all is being done to responsibly advance the company’s interests, and they interact with customers when problems arise or when special requests are made that are above the responsibilities of lower-level employees. Success in each of
these individual areas, while not all inclusive of the work middle-level managers do, certainly allows the company to grow as a consequence of the caring and investment made by middle-level managers in lower-level employees and the company as a whole.

The application of caring in a business structure is important because it moves the discussion of management away from the traditional discussions, where managers were only present to impress corporate goals on their subordinates, to discussions that allow for the betterment and advancement of both the lower-level employee, the middle-level manager, and the company as a whole. Carol Gilligan believes that there is a fragmented understanding of the benefits that can be realized when communities of people work together. Ordinary discussions of justice and ethics have focused on dividing rights by calculated agreements “favoring the separateness of the individual self over connection to others, and leaning toward an autonomous life of work than toward the interdependence of love and care” (Gilligan, 17). Instead, Gilligan believes, discussions of justice and ethics must be expanded to include care and the relationships it fosters. Gilligan believes that care evolved as an understanding of our commitments to others. Originally, care was a basic means of survival for the individual; however, when we realized this could be selfish, we broadened our definition to include responsibility for others. However, this definition of care, while including many other people, was still too narrow because it allowed for the exploitation of the caregiver, and so Gilligan’s definition of care was revised once again to include a “new understanding of the interconnection between other and self” in a way that does not allow for the exploitation of the caregiver (Gilligan, 74).

For Gilligan, and for Solomon, the uniting element of care empowers each individual in the community or, in our instance, business. Caring, particularly in business, then “is a move toward social participation” such that when decisions must be made that will affect many people,
caring requires those who will be affected the most be involved in the decision-making processes (Gilligan, 79). Caring involves understanding the interconnectedness of both the individual and the community and realizing how both will thrive when they work together. Within the confines of a business structure, caring, as advanced by Gilligan, becomes characteristic of a good middle-level manager. Being able to analyze the actions one is about to take or direct to determine a suitable path that is both beneficial for the company and employees at every level, while not subjecting the individual employees to exploitation, becomes the hallmark of an empowered manager. It requires taking seriously the consultation of the entire community, employees included, and using that to determine how to guide the actions of others into the future. This allows for personal growth, as well as a greater degree of individuality, and success for the company. Caring allows for a fuller sense of community to be formed within the company which in turn can do nothing other than help the business strive for success as employees at all levels come to realize through caring and Service everyone achieves a greater degree of individuality, everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

When middle-level managers can invest in lower-level employees through caring, they can break away from the problem of leadership observed by John Dewey. Caring for the employees under their command allows middle-level management to at least move toward the individuality that they lost in the corporate machine because they are no longer absent-mindedly advising. Instead, they are actively engaging with their employees and their customers to evaluate what is being done to determine how it can be done better. Leadership, in the form of middle-level management, is enhanced through caring because it allows the individual manager the opportunity to invest in another person. Caring allows the manager the opportunity to serve the lower-level employee as it provides the relationship necessary to collaborate towards a better result. These
better results will most likely involve, not only a better technique to be employed in the practice of the company resulting in a better product, they will also likely involve a greater enrichment and enhancement of the lower-level employee as well as the middle-level manager. When a middle-level manager cares enough to challenge the employee, the relationship can prompt growth in the lower-level employee.

Importantly, also, these types of interactions allow for the fuller enrichment and individuality of the middle-level manager, as it is through their Service and investment that not only was the lower-level employee bettered so is the manager who gains individuality though the ability to truly lead. Truthfully, this type of caring allows for the problem of the Lost Individual to be solved. When both the middle-level manager and the lower-level manager are working together, because of a relationship grounded in caring, they collaboratively form solutions to problems. In this way, they are no longer simply following standardized rules, they are actively solving problems together because they are encouraging one another to be innovative and empowered. Service is inherently connected with caring for middle-level managers because when both are implemented internal and external goods are achieved for the lower-level employee, the middle-level manager, and the company as a whole. Caring, then, seems to be the beginning of what Service must look like at the middle-level of management for “what care and compassion do...is provide that mutual understanding and shared sentiment which makes for harmony and allows for cooperative and mutually formulated solutions” (Solomon, 519).

Solomon points to another characteristic of middle-level management he views as missing and imperative in the corporate structure, as well - compassion. Solomon begins a discussion of compassion noting how compassion is based on one’s ability to “feel for those less fortunate than oneself.” (Solomon, 528). Importantly, Solomon believes that compassion is a relationship that
comes from a person who is superior in the business structure to another person. As a consequence, compassion is “fundamentally other-regarding rather than self-regarding” (Solomon, 529). Where caring provides the opportunity for a relationship to be developed in the community of a business, compassion provides a moral justification for the actions of middle-level management. When decisions must be made by someone who is superior in a hierarchical structure, Solomon believes that compassion is required as it shows the decision maker is not ignorant of the consequences of their conclusions. Solomon admits that in hard decisions, particularly in a business environment, “it is good to feel bad, and to avoid the pain is, in some sense, immoral” (529). The pain that would be felt should a decision be made that negatively impacts subordinate employees displays the significant relationship between the middle-level management and lower-level employees. Solomon describes how superiors might be forced to make a good decision with bad outcomes, think of an executive that must reduce the hours of work given to every employee in order to save other employees from being let go. Even though the decision had to be made, and was made appropriately, the superior still expresses regret over consequences that negatively impact employees she cares about (529).

This is compassion, and he worries that if it is absent from decision-making, particularly in the realm of business, it might lead to exploitation. He advises, “taking it personally is what converts a difficult or distasteful action in an acceptable one” because it is in the feeling felt by the superior that justification can be noticed (529). In this way, compassion tempers the decisions of management and attempts to provide a justification for the actions of middle-level managers. It seems as though while caring for a lower-level employee allows the middle-level manager the opportunity to help the employee better themselves, compassion allows the middle-level manager ensure they are making the proper decision for their employee. It involves commitment to
continued analysis of the demands of the business and the strengths of the employees under one’s supervision. For middle-level managers, compassion seems to be a “rational and intelligent” method of continuing to better themselves while revealing a way to better the overall result for the business, as it appropriately tempers the demands of the relationships of the job and gives some version of justification to the middle-level manager who must lead appropriately (Solomon, 530).

J. Thomas Whetstone believes this is servant leadership and it inherently involves the qualities aforementioned when he says, “a leader builds people through service when he genuinely puts people first, viewing them as humans worthy of dignity and respect” (389). Within the workplace, “every person has his or her vocation in life in response to subjectively recognized values, but this vocation recognizes the objective world of other persons and relations among and between them” (Whetstone, 385). Work then becomes a place where each individual, at every level of a business, has the opportunity to achieve their own version of individuality because it allows them to focus on the skills they recognize in themselves and use those skills toward a goal that will benefit many people. Servant leaders must lead by example, “when a problem appears, the servant leader first addresses in what manner it may be originated within himself, then invents and develops solutions...success is measured by growth in the people served and the positive effects on the least privileged” (Whetstone, 389). Service for middle-level managers involves the constant attempt at perfecting the relationships they find as a consequence of their responsibility - to those subordinate to them, to themselves, and to those superior to them.

The idealized version of middle-level management presented might seem to many business commenters impractical. Solomon understands this worry saying, “good managers care for their employees, to be sure, but the current management literature more often treats “caring” as an luxurious “perk” for the employee but a dangerously expensive liability for the corporation” (517).
The proposed method of management seems unable to juggle the restrictions of business as it occurs today, “the idea of commitment to one’s employees...is bandied about as a mandatory bit of policy but that “commitment” typically runs thin when profits sour” (Solomon, 517). However, Solomon believes that these ideas are not so foreign to the concept of management. He states,

It is clear that such a notion [of care and compassion] has much to recommend to [management] in the context of a corporation, where the success and competence of a manager consists most of all in his or her success in nurturing and developing those who are subordinate and, inevitably, actually do much of the actual work. (Solomon, 526)

Relationships are the most important part of any description of management. It is the foundation for growth, not only of the individuals at each level but the corporation in totality. This chapter seeks to display how when Service is exercised by those in positions of middle-level management it allows for the growth of the individuals at that level and the subordinate level. In this way, businesses continue to succeed because they have fostered the people and the practice they house. When the employees of a company continue to invest in its practice because they have been invested in by managers and those above them, the practice of the company remains strong. Employees at all levels are enriched and more fulfilled. Consequently, the practice of the business, the actual thing that must attract customers and will provide the business pecuniary success, is strengthened. Middle-level management provides the crucial link between business goals and the people who must carry out the practices necessary for achieving those goals. Encouraging Service from middle-level management inherently involves focusing on lower-level employees and providing them with the leadership necessary to do their jobs well. Depriving middle-level management of the opportunity to invest in themselves and those they supervise is an error of great proportion. Hiding behind the impersonal notion of business to do this is dangerous, as it is “a pathetic conception of a “job description” that is limited to stated duties and responsibilities and does not also include reference to those basic human attitudes, relationships and concerns that are
essential to any collective enterprise” (Solomon, 517). While originally it might be difficult to convince those in business to advocate for this idea of middle-level management, after looking closer nothing alarming has been proposed. It is not too dangerous to want to base management on the relations that are formed there, especially since cohesiveness and collaboration between many people are necessary for success in business. Couching management in relationships between individuals is important because it signifies a decided shift towards the dignity of work. Solomon notes that “between word and deed, attention and policy there is easy slippage” and if a company wants to encourage and support the individuals that are employees and endorse a notion of Service as a way of benefitting both the people and the business, it must begin the process of leading with care, compassion, and Service (531). Everything else follows from a new understanding of the role middle-level management has to play in the corporate structure we operate within, “once we start insisting that the ethics of business is not simply confined to “business” but begin by examining the very nature of the good life and living well in a business society, those conceptions [of the business machine] are bound to change” (Solomon, 531).

We noted, in Chapter Two, how Service exists from those at the lowest level of a company. If we recall our definition of Service from the previous chapter, we can modify it slightly and further speak to how middle-level management can participate in it, as well. Service, as we can define it now, is: work that promotes the empowerment of employees at every level by encouraging innovation and genuine input in forming and modifying a practice optimizing the attainment of external and internal goods. While middle-level management participates with the practice of a company mainly in an indirect way, their contributions are certainly important as their decisions directly impact the ways and means the work is done by lower-level employees. Middle-level managers participate in Service by focusing on and pursuing perfection in the relationships that
surround them. They participate in this work by effectively being the go-between for the company’s needs and the needs of the lower-level employees. They do this by demonstrating care and compassion, as each allows for a genuine relationship to be formed that is mutually beneficial. Managers care by helping the lower-level employees develop their approach to the company’s practice and succeed, not only in the work they do but also in the life they live, by giving them the resources and direction to attain individuality. Their compassion allows for an objective check on the important decisions that must be made as a manager. It helps assure them that their decisions are what is necessary for the needs of the company and the needs of the employees. Importantly, middle-level managers attain their individuality again because when they practice this Service they are no longer absent-mindedly leading. They are actively involved in the process of leading. They must constantly evaluate the input data and determine the appropriate output both for the employee and the business. The internal goods to managing can be construed as the success of those who are managed. Where the success of middle-level managers is essentially tied with the success of those they supervise, the reward in managing internal to the practice would be the revelation of the success of a lower-level employee. An external good, within this structure, certainly involves monetary success of the business that allows for both the middle-level manager and the lower-level employees to continue doing their job. The connection to those lower in the corporate structure is clear. However, the connection to those above the middle-level management has been referenced only indirectly so far. It is to this relationship we must turn and investigate so as to isolate Service throughout the entire dimension of middle-level management.

Geoff Moore and Ron Beadle believe that managers play an especially important role in ensuring the business they belong to is a virtuous organization because they bridge the divide between the lower-level employee and upper-level management. When the practices of businesses
become institutionalized, they run the risk of corruption by focusing too closely on the external goods they create. Given our previous discussion, this is not new information. However, Moore and Beadle believe that managers can stop the corrupting tendencies of the external goods by remaining committed to the virtues of the practices their business houses, “managers – those who have, in one sense, outgrown the practice and now represent the institution that houses it – also have the same opportunity to exercise the virtues in the making and sustaining of the institution” (373). While middle-level managers are removed from the day-to-day instances of performing the practice of the business, it is important to realize that they still represent the practice the business houses. They work to ensure the employees have the tools and abilities to properly perform the practice and they work with the community in a different role than the lower-level employee. In this way, they come to represent the institution and the practice and must work to ensure both remain strong. While we have discussed the important role that middle-level managers play in enriching those whom they supervise, and consequently the practice of the business, we must examine the important relationship middle-level manager have with those higher in the corporate hierarchy.

Virtues in management come from the unique relations between institutions and the community, among others. Helping institutions remain committed to their community-determined practices involves a commitment to the community the business wishes to serve, which in itself takes the form of a practice with its own virtues to be attained (Moore and Beadle, 373). Businesses and institutions have a community-determined role and function and managers have a special role in a business to ensure that the history that shaped the collective practice a company wishes to advance are protected. The responsibilities that middle-level management has to the community and the business in general only display this more. Protecting a practice from a
business standpoint involves taking the history, traditions, practices, and excellences of those practices and institutionalizing them within the corporate structure. Companies, though, operate in the present and a great deal of attention must be spent to understand how a company is to operate in a community that is changing. Middle-level managers fulfill this role, and serve those higher in the company, by evaluating input from the community to determine how exactly to help the company succeed. Just as the lower-level employees in a company are in the perfect position to improve the practice of the business through their interactions with customers and the community, middle-level managers are in the perfect position to foster the growth of the business through enhancing the work done by lower-level employees. It is the duty of middle-level managers to ensure that “all business activities, irrespective of their form of institutionalization, must contain vestiges of a practice and the virtues to some degree, for if they did not...then the institution would have, in effect, killed itself from the inside by failing to sustain the practice on which it itself is founded” (Moore and Beadle, 378). Middle-level managers crucially help sustain the practice of the business through Service. When a community’s demands for a business are changing, imagine shifts in customer tastes or trends, the middle-level manager must be able to notice these indicators and begin the process of innovating and modifying the practice of the business, with the help of the lower-level employees, so that it is relevant to the needs of the community and is still able to achieve both the internal and external goods for the business and its employees. Service, in this way, can be viewed as a virtue of middle-level management.

Middle-level managers are particularly at risk for coercion and pressure from upper-level management to focus too intently on external goods of money, power, fame, and the like. This can be thwarted by understanding where virtue lies at the level of middle-management, “thus, an important part of the whole [MacIntyrean] schema is to focus on the level of the institution in
order to assess what features of the institution will better enable it not to distort the practice that it houses” (Moore and Beadle, 374). Within the current corporate structure, middle-level managers must balance the need to do well fiscally (among other business-oriented responsibilities) with the need to provide a quality product (practice-oriented) to the customer. The balance of these demands reveals where and how the virtues can be found at the particular level of the business. These virtues are the result of “peer and superior influence on the ethical behavior of managers” in that they help display virtues “not just in terms of particular individuals and their exercise (or not) of the virtues at the institutional level…but also in terms of institutional-level virtues” (Moore and Beadle, 374).

For Beadle and Moore, it is certainly important to have people in a company who strive to act virtuously, both in life and in the workplace. However, it is equally important for them that the structure of business reveal virtues that are expected of certain people within the corporate hierarchy. The level of middle-management is one of the most important levels in a company because it is one of the most divided in terms of expectations and exposure to virtues and vices. The actions middle-level managers take directly reveal the “institutional character” of the business they belong to and when they are able to adequately employ Service to distill the needs of the community, and those higher and lower in the corporate hierarchy, virtuous action is realized and Service directly helps the company as a whole (Moore and Beadle, 374). We noted how balance is necessary for virtue at the level of middle-management, allow an example. While it can be seen as the responsibility of upper-level management to provide the visions, in terms of corporate goals or acquisition of supplies, technologies and labor, for the balance between internal and external goods, it is largely the responsibility of the middle-level managers to strike this balance properly. For instance, managers who might fall prey to the external goods run the risk of alienating the
practice their business houses and consequently could have terrible effects on the very thing their business is based on. At the other end of the managerial spectrum, managers who focus too intently on internal goods might spend frivolously, not focus on the importance of fiscal responsibility, or they might alienate their consumer base by making their product too unapproachable. The role of middle-level manager becomes elevated and enhanced through our understanding of the balancing work they must do and the empowerment, responsibly, innovation, and dedication needed to enact a “virtuous institutional character” in that role – successful middle-level managers become:

The seat of the virtues necessary for an institution to engage in practices with excellence, focusing on those internal goods thereby obtainable, while warding off threats from its own inordinate pursuit of external goods and from the corrupting power of other institutions in its environment with which it engages. (Moore and Beadle, 374)

Moore and Beadle advance MacIntyre when he says practices will only retain their “integrity” when virtues are practiced in regards to the “institutional forms which are the social bearers of the practice” (375). When a business attempts to operate in a market and attract customers for their continued patronage, it must exhibit the virtues that have come to be expected from a business with regards to the practices they house. The way in which a company operates within itself, between the levels of corporate hierarchy, has a direct effect on the product delivered to the customer, as we have noted. Consequently, for Moore and Beadle and MacIntyre, if virtue is not present throughout the different levels of a business, it is likely that the business will eventually fail because it will fall prey to the vices of the market, even though this might take a great deal of time. Moore and Beadle suggest there are three requirements for a business to continue down a path of virtue, all of which lend themselves nicely to the pursuit of the New Individual Dewey hopes to find in labor: virtuous agents, a conducive mode of institutionalization, and a conducive environment. Given our presented discussion of middle-level management, I believe
we have articulated how exactly virtues can be achieved with respect to the first two requirements – it is in the balance of the relationships and demands that the middle-level manager must participate. Virtuous agents become the empowered, innovative, and cooperative agents who are working to achieve a greater degree of individuality and success through their labor and the conducive mode of institutionalization comes to have the form of a collaborative place where contributions from employees of all levels are valued and solicited in order to bring about the greatest product and result for both the individuals and business.

The third requirement, a conducive environment, needs to be hashed out. Moore and Beadle note that because a business is an institution that must interact with society and other people and institutions within a society, “a particularly significant factor in any organization’s ability to maintain and exercise the virtues...is the extent to which the environment is more or less conducive to such activity” (379). Does the society a business exists within promote a market that encourages virtues in the practice? I believe that at this particular time in American history, given the results of the Great Recession, this is an appropriate question to investigate. I am inclined to say no outright to the question, but I must add a caveat. While the current environment does not encourage virtuous practices wholeheartedly, I believe it is changing. While no great revolution has occurred in terms of demands for virtuous practices from upper-level and middle-level management, slow and steady changes have become increasingly evident since the Great Recession and its subsequent Recovery. Employees at all levels seem to be evaluating work and their contributions to work in a different light. Communities, too, seem to be investigating the ways in which companies operate in a different light because they have learned to ask “good questions” about what systems work the best for the most people (Viskovatoff, 285). Perhaps these investigations display a longing for a greater sense of fulfillment and enrichment from work.
Alex Viskovatoff demonstrates the benefit that can be attained through a workforce that is empowered and trusted by their employer. In noting the growth and success of various economic systems historically, Viskovatoff describes how American businesses were able to succeed by utilizing “the combined productive capabilities of human and physical resources” so that through effective management many different arms of company could work together to coordinate production and marketing “activities” (287). Viskovatoff notes that this was possible because of successful managers; however, it ultimately led to the “de-skilling of workers” whose labor became mechanized in order to keep up with elevated demand, a problem we have discussed previously (287). Contrast this vision with that of “collective capitalism” where the maintenance of long-term relationships in the workplace is the foundation for the success of the company (Viskovatoff, 287). In this system, Viskovatoff explains, “workers are considered to be essential partners in the production process, so that they are skilled and well-trained, and participate in the planning of production with managers” and often “see their destinies as being closely tied to the destiny of the company” (287). Consequently, success is most noted in the latter theory as it involves the total involvement of employees at every level. A greater sense of Service drives the success of the individual and the company – as the individual is able to serve the practice of the company and is valued for their input and the company is able to serve both their employees and customers by constantly innovating and advancing the practice they house through their employees’ enfranchisement. Consequently, the markets and societies in which the businesses exist are able to flourish and excel more because of the increased innovation and technological advances. Further investigations by ardent observers will reveal the important contributions employees at each level of a company can make through Service and show how “a proper economic methodology is inherently normative, [and] it must either justify economists’ practice or, if that cannot be done, it
must criticize that practice and show how that practice must be changed” (Viskovatoff, 290). Through our current discussion we have isolated a way in which the practice of lower-level employees can change and enhance the practice of a business. We have also discussed how business is often torn between the desire to invest in sound practices or financially rewarding short-cuts. Understanding the nature of our current economic climate allows us to acknowledge that the expectations of business are changing and that they can and should continue to improve particularly while focusing on a notion of Service we have advanced. If Service is possible in lower-level employees and possible in the changing market, we return to the question this chapter opened with: how is Service present at the middle-management level?

If businesses are to be virtuous and remain successful for long periods of time, Service must be present at in middle-level management, particularly concerning the business itself and upper-level management. It should not be alarming to suggest that middle-level management ought to partake in the institutional virtues. Even so, this discussion borders dangerously on impracticality. While the notions of institutional virtue appeal to our ideals of equality and dignity it is easy to hypothesize, given the bottom-line mentality of business, that they would not be endorsable for long. The system and society middle-level managers operate within must encourage Service at their level in the corporate hierarchy. Service, when instantiated into the realm of business and labor relations changes the society and system of business – it makes business a conducive environment for the exercise of virtue within institutions. Service then provides the means and justification for middle-level management to pursue the virtues of their job when they might have not been able to previously. Service is the way to combat the overarching tendencies to disregard the virtues of business found at the middle-management level. Only by
adhering to a notion of Service can middle-level managers overcome the lost individual problem posited by John Dewey.

Service for the lower-level employee allowed each person to achieve individuality by raising work to a more fulfilling level that was based on each person’s basic humanity and the role the business was trying to play in the community. Individuals at the lower-level elevated and enriched their work life in ways to achieve a new individuality by genuinely serving the needs of the business and community by being innovative and creative in order to solve problems for both the business and themselves. For middle-level management, Service has significant emancipating features as well. Through the implementation of Service, managers, who were initially submerged and coerced by the pressures of the business above them, have a way to liberate themselves and still enact positive effects on the business. Service, particularly regarding those who are higher in the corporate hierarchy than the middle-level managers, takes the form of creating a conducive workplace for the exercise of virtuous action in and throughout the company. Managers must actively pursue appropriate responses to the onslaught of challenges and instability in the market and environment the business exists within. They must work to enhance the practice and not cave to the strength of the market forces that will inevitably challenge them and those they supervise. This is where the true Service of middle-level management is shown. This newly defined Service of middle-level management seems to solve the problem articulated by Dewey,

I find rather the protest against a weakening of vigor and a sapping of energy that emanate from the absence of constructive opportunity; and I see a confusion that is an expression of the inability to find a secure and morally rewarding place in a trouble and tangled economic scene. (40)

Service would allow for middle-level management to isolate the virtues necessary for the institutional level they occupy. It isolates what is needed for the corporate character to be virtuous and allows middle-level management the opportunity of navigating the realm of business while
trying to achieve these goals. Middle-level managers must take what they know about the perfection of the practice the business owns and do what they can to craft the part of the business they are responsible for into fulfilling the practice virtuously. They must actively work with employees, and they must be constantly aware of the needs and demands of the community concerning the traditions that gave rise to the practice. Certainly, they can no longer be leading absent-mindedly. They must be fully immersed in Service, in the practice, and in the work they do. The additional benefit of the virtues observed, for the practice of the business, is that they often lead to positive benefits for the financial ends, reputation, strength, and power of the company.

The successful balance of relationships allows for Service, as it allows for the fulfillment of the individual in the role of middle-level manager,

There can be no stable and balanced development of mind and character apart from the assumption of responsibility. In an industrialized society, that responsibility must for the most part be associated with industry, since it will grow indirectly out of industry...The wider and fuller the sense of social consequence...the deeper and surer, the more stable, is the intelligence of those who have the foremost place in the direction of industry. (Dewey, 66)

Industry and the individual businesses that participate in it provide many benefits to the societies they are a part. They provide employment for citizens, goods for consumers, and they encourage innovation and development. Business must be rooted in society. We have seen through the development of this project how the community has a direct impact on member of businesses at the lower-end of the company and now at the middle-level of management. In order to encourage a new individualism, and a society of empowered individuals, businesses and industry need to actively contribute to the growth of the people that they employ. Those who wish to lead in the realm of business need to understand and exhibit virtues for their role, the business they serve, the market they participate in, and the community from which they are derived. More people need to
be empowered to analyze and respond creatively to the needs of the company in order to make the practice relevant to the community and society and keep the business strong. Middle-level management can do this through Service. When they appropriately do this, the business undoubtedly succeeds. Beyond that, the employees that managers are responsible for supervising also succeed, as they are given the genuine care, direction, and support necessary to do their jobs well. The business succeeds, too, as it is constantly reinvented through the lens of Service to the community and the traditions that it was founded upon, the practice it houses is constantly improving. In this way, a business rooted in Service actively participates in the advancement and enrichment of the entire workforce, community, and society. Lastly, the employee in the middle of it all, the middle-level manager, can succeed as they are no longer burdened by the cold and monotonous demands of the corporate machine – they cannot be. Instead, they are actively involved and empowered within a company to do what is necessary for the success of everyone involved. Fulfillment comes not only in the objective success of the business but also in the relationships developed and maintained.

Combating the threatening tendencies of the market provides an interesting appeal to those who are higher in the corporate structure. While the middle-level management has much more qualitative and quantitative data available to them then employees at the lower-level of the company, which allows them to guide effectively both lower-level employees and tend to the community-determined practices of the business in their immediate location and time, upper management is needed to protect and ensure the success of the company as a whole, with special focus on all of the many factors that influence the business aspects of the company. Importantly, upper-level management will become responsible for establishing, maintaining, and preserving relationships that allow for the commitment to the practice their business houses. Also, they will
be responsible for creating a workplace within their company for the exercise of corporate virtue and affecting change to the external environment within which the business operates. The challenge comes in how exactly the corrupting tendencies of the market are battled at this level. For those under the upper-level management, relationships and the idea that there is someone that is reported to act as a guide. Is there such a limiting factor at the upper-level of management? Further, what would be the overarching impacts of upper-level management if they were to take these actions and virtues seriously? These responsibilities and consequences will be investigated now.
CHAPTER FOUR: SERVICE AND THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Throughout the course of this project, we have traced the formation of Service from the lowest-level employee through the middle-level manager and determined that there is a place for Service at both levels. With its successful implementation, we have observed, there is a unique opportunity for the practitioner to achieve a greater degree of individuality in their work. This has noted positive effects on both the individual and the business as a whole. At each step, we have observed how the community affects the practice of a business, and we began to understand the importance of the relationships formed with the community. We have also noted the importance of the relationships formed between employees of each level. This investigation has left us with one crucial area of a business to investigate – upper-level management. While both lower-level employees and middle-level management have the opportunity to impact directly the delivery of Service to customers and the lower-level employees, respectively, upper-level management has a much more indirect route to the delivery of Service to the employees below them (and the customers) and to shareholders and other entities that have interests in corporation’s strength and success. Chapter Four will investigate the role that upper-level management plays in the company to determine if and how Service can be implemented at this level and the effects that Service’s successful implementation could have on the corporation as a whole.
In describing the effects the “business mind” has had on America, John Dewey argues that “a unified mind, even of the business type, can come into being only when conscious intent and consummation are in harmony with consequences actually effected” (Dewey, 29). For Dewey, as we have noted before, the approach business has taken has not been to enfranchise and empower its employees, that costs too much money and time. Instead, the predominant business mind of the 1930’s (and dare we say the 2000’s) sought to submerge the individual employee and make them a simple machine for the mass-production of goods for market consumption. However, this has led not only to divided individuals in the lower-level and middle-level employees, but Dewey believes it has also broken down the unity of the upper-level management. In their pursuit of private pecuniary gain, upper-level managers have become divided and lost some degree of their individuality, “an economic individualism of motives and aims underlies our present corporate mechanism, and undoes the individual” (Dewey, 30). Dewey believes this occurs because the motivations for collaboration and associations between members of the upper-management are “inorganic” since they are almost singularly defined by “private and egoistic” motives (Dewey, 30). In short, the loss of individuality of those at upper-level management occurs because they do not realize the importance of the relationships business is founded on - instead, they are purely focused on achieving the next financial milestone for themselves, primarily, and for the company only as a means of accruing more for themselves.

Dewey does see the unity of the individual in upper-level management as a possibility and understands the positive effects it would have not only on the business but society as a whole. He advises: “as long as the direction [of business] is more concerned with pecuniary profit than social utility, the resulting intellectual and moral development will be one-sided and warped” (Dewey, 65). It is certainly acceptable to understand that businesses do have a place in our society and our
lives. They provide us with goods that the majority of people cannot create or collect, and they provide the populous with work and a paycheck. While the importance of their existence is noted, Dewey believes that for individuality to be reintroduced into business, those who make the decisions about the direction of a company have to direct their actions towards attaining some version of social utility. No longer should businesses be creating useless products for mass consumption. They ought to create products that genuinely benefit the community, not because of artificial wants but because of a need for a quality product, in a way that showcases the excellence of human creativity in its creation and execution, “an inevitable result of a cooperatively shared control of industry would be the recognition of final use or consumption as the criterion of valuation, decision, and direction” (Dewey, 65).

When businesses seek to create a good product of benefit to consumers the focus is no longer purely on profit – it is on the customer, the employee, the product, and the practice of the business. This is not to say that businesses cannot want to achieve a degree of profit, as this is certainly necessary for the continued success of the company, it does attempt to say, though, that businesses must realign their direction and focus when it comes to the ways in which they approach the practice of their company, the goods they create, and people they work with. In doing all of this, Dewey believes that:

When the point of view of consumption is supreme in industry, the latter will be socialized, and I see no way of securing its genuine socialization save as industry is viewed and conducted from the standpoint of the user and employer of services and commodities. For then human values will control economic values. (65)

Business, interactions with them, and participation in markets is a collaborative endeavor. If businesses were to heed Dewey’s advice by focusing on the product they create and on the relationships they develop, they could spur innovation, creativity, and a greater sense of individuality for all those involved. Designing a business structure with these goals in mind, and
helping to facilitate a market that promotes these goals, falls into the hands of those in upper-level management and can be greatly benefitted through a commitment to Service.

If we recall our definition of Service from previous chapters, Service has become: work that promotes the empowerment of employees at every level by encouraging innovation and genuine input in forming and modifying a practice optimizing the attainment of external and internal goods. For upper-level management, the application of Service needs to be described further. When Service is extrapolated to the upper-level of a company, it will certainly include the characteristics of the previously explored levels, it will involve commitment to the practice of the company. It will involve care and compassion and investment in the employees lower than it. Moreover, importantly it will involve a greater focus on the community of which the business is a member. It will differ crucially in what is meant by “optimizing the attainment of external and internal goods.”

While a constant pursuit of the refinement of the practice of the company should be a priority of those who are in decision-making roles, this will be done by primarily establishing an infrastructure necessary to enhance the work of those who provide the service or create the good. Lower-level employees require the tools, materials, and supplies to do their job, middle-level management require metrics, facilities, and employees to supervise and advise to create and provide for customers – these needs will be primary to a company’s upper-level management. So too will financial and identity concerns. While we noted the importance of relationships at every level of employee, relationships formed at the upper-level of management will prove to be some of the most crucial to the company as they will create the ways and means for every other employee to do their jobs well. The proper balance of these relationships will be examined next.

R. Edward Freeman proposed a reimagined vision of a company based around the groups which affect the company most and which are affected by the company the most. His Stakeholder
Theory seeks to rebuff the older version of a corporation, what he calls the “Production View,” in which the production of goods proceeds in a pre-determined linear fashion (5). In the older view, the owner of the company determined what good was going to be produced and then went about securing the suppliers and the materials that the company would manufacture into products for customers to purchase. However, great and exciting changes have occurred since that view was dominant. In the 21st Century, companies have grown and diversified to sizes that render the Production View untenable. As companies have grown so too have the bases they serve. Customers and markets have grown in size as well as the demands for products. Businesses have grown in the number of employees and customers. Simply, more people have become involved in the business process. In order to respond to these changes, Freeman proposes managers adopt a “Stakeholder Theory” of Management in which decisions are made after careful analysis is made of how those decisions will affect the different stakeholder groups in an effort to equalize a beneficial result for all groups (53). For Freeman, a “stakeholder” is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives” (25). Unfortunately for Freeman, there are many stakeholders and stakeholder groups for each company and include, but are not limited to, government, suppliers, employees, customers, and owners (55). Upper-level management is directly responsible for enacting procedures that systematically balance the demands of all of these relationships.

Before policies and procedures can be enacted; however, it is most important to determine who exactly is a stakeholder in a corporation. Freeman, himself, notes that the notion of stakeholder is intentionally “broad,” so as to allow the possibility for the greatest number of stakeholders to be considered, however, he notes that when upper-level management begins the process of utilizing the theory in practice they must be willing to “ignore certain groups who have
little or no impact” (53-54). So, while it is possible to limit the number of stakeholders, a preliminary number of stakeholders has yet to be established. Freeman, along with Laura Dunham and Jeanne Liedtka, attempts to provide this base number through an appeal to an understanding of the way in which the community is a stakeholder in a business. In order to combat the broadness of Freeman’s initial definition of community, they seek to “particularize” the notion of community as it appears to have become the “default” and all-inclusive category of stakeholder (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 24).

The authors begin by observing that the notion of community, while originally was based on geography, is changing and adapting. No longer are communities in their simplest form confined to the same geographic region. Instead, communities are groups associated with a common belief or practice and fall into several important categories, two of which will be discussed here – “communities of interaction” and communities of identity,” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 28). If we attempt to understand this in terms of a large business we can see there are many different groups of people who come to be associated with how a company functions and succeeds through a common belief in that company. This unifying factor not only makes the individual people members of a community it makes them stakeholders in the company. Importantly, though, there seems to be still a slight division in terms of how these people interact with the company – some actually work with and for the company and participate in “social relationships,” others interact by advancing the company’s interests as one of their own through support “a shared set of beliefs, values, or experiences” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 28). Importantly for our discussion is understanding that “communities built on interaction and identity are playing an increasingly important role in the business world” as they provide the common link
to and for beneficial relationships for both the stakeholders and the company as a whole (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 28).

Understanding the important ways in which interaction and identity come to create a community of stakeholders to a company allows the authors to advance several new notions of community that will be employed here: “communities of interest” and “communities of practice” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 29). For the authors, communities of interest range from the simple hobbyists to organized groups of individuals with different socio-economic and political backgrounds; however, the important feature of these groups is their “rapidly growing numbers as well as the increasing amount of influence they wield” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 31). While they come from diverse backgrounds, with diverse agenda items of their own, their interest in the corporation they have become a stakeholder in is the unifying feature. To that end, these communities are “shaped by a set of attributes that make it possible for the manager to build a productive relationship with these particular stakeholders” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 32). Their investment in the corporation can take many different shapes, some will financially invest, others will socially invest, but all members of communities of interest invest in a corporation inasmuch as they are patrons and share a common interest in the company continuing to be successful, so as to continue to provide the good or service this community of interest member desires from the company. Consequently, there is a certain degree of “interdependence” that is shared by the community of interest and the company (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 32).

It is not hard to isolate even a hypothetical example of this type of investment. The important feature to note is the investment in the company from stakeholders originated because of the practice of the company created something they appreciated or desired. Consequently, it becomes paramount for upper-level management to serve their stakeholders in a way that allows
for their desires to be met and the practice of the company to be enhanced and protected. Doing so, taking genuine input from stakeholders who are necessarily outside of the practice of the company, allows for upper-level management to propose solutions and go about acquiring market relationships that allow for the optimization of the goods internal to the practice of the company, while also providing the opportunity for more goods external to the practice to be achieved.

The attention to this interdependence and the careful art of balancing the relationship between these stakeholders allows for Service to be observed from upper-level management concerning the practice of a company. Commitment to the practice of a company and its development relies importantly on the input of the community, as noted above, but it also relies importantly on those who participate in the practice of the company. These “communities of practice” offer yet another opportunity for upper-level management to practice Service as they are defined as “groups united by a sense of identity, mutual obligation, and an openness that facilitates learning and change within organizations” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 35). Being as they are so integral to the company’s success and being as they are the ones who ultimately must seek to improve the practice of the company, a Stakeholder Theory holds that upper-level management take into consideration the needs of the members of this community by promoting the advancement of the community as a whole and the individual members of the community, “in fact, it would see these two as inseparable, in that increased capabilities at the organizational level flow from development at the individual level” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 35). Requiring upper-level management to invest in the needs of the community of practice members, many of whom are employees of the company, allows for a conducive environment to be created within the company, “communities of practice offer a case in point here, where committing to build a spirit of
true collaboration that moves beyond the arms-length stance of traditional stakeholder management and...offers new possibilities” (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 37).

This notion of collaboration is vitally important, particularly when examining today’s business climate. While so often the system is designed as top-down, inasmuch as upper-level managers dictate the processes and procedures that every employee is supposed to do, this notion of collaboration directly opposes this. In fact, as harborers of the practice of a company, it is the lower-level employee who must also guard the practice. We noted earlier how the effect on the product the upper-level management has is often indirect and how it is the lowest-level employee who renders the Service at the end of the corporate hierarchy. Decisions that upper-level management makes, however, will affect the way in which the practice of the company is to be performed. Their responsibility is to optimize the practice, too. However, the practical implications of these decisions often do not materialize in the way it was planned.

Moore suggests that “within those who engage directly in the practice there needs to be the commitment to exercise...the internal goods of the practice which benefits the individual directly, but also against the corporation when it becomes, as it inevitably will at various times, too focused on external goods” (2005, 250). The sense of collaboration with upper-level management requires that employees who are lower than they in the corporate hierarchy do not just blindly follow instructions but work with them to determine the best ways to approach the practice of the company. In fact, tensions and disagreements are bound to occur in the governing of a company. Stakeholder Theory showed us how disagreements between members of the community, especially members of the community of practice, must be taken into account by upper-level management. Service showed us how to act on these disagreements so as remain committed to the
practice of the company, empowering employees at every level, and ensuring some degree of corporate success.

If we take a step back and look at the Great Recession of the late-2000’s, can we conclude that a notion of Service was absent from those at the level of upper-management? Geoff Moore seeks to determine how exactly virtue can be reintroduced effectively into business. In response to the Great Recession, Moore observes, “there is a dawning realization that an economic crisis is never just an economic crisis, but is also, and always, a moral crisis” (2012, 293). Moore traces the beginning and the effects of the global recession to a collapse in the practices of individual businesses. He notes that collapses come in many different ways; however, all are similar in that the practice of the company is corrupted or abandoned. He shares many of the same intuitions as Dewey in regards to the corporatization of the world and economy. For Moore, the abandonment of practices a business purported to house allowed for the collapse of the practice and of the entire business because the pursuit of monetary gain, external goods, became the guiding force of many companies. As companies came to focus solely on the attainment of easy money, many began to participate in speculative market actions. Many companies abandoned “good business practices,” as colloquially defined by both moral and empirical claims. From here, an ardent reader or historian need only think of one of the many collapsed businesses of the late 2000’s and understand the implications and applications of this explanation to see where the fault lied.

Companies abandoned the practice of their business for a selfish monetary gain of those who were at the top. In an abandonment of the proper balance between upper-level and lower-level employees, bad decisions were made. Further, many firms attempted to hide this problem by

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3 The following is adapted from: (Moore, 2012, 295-300).
4 Moore points directly to: Enron, Arthur Anderson, Northern Rock, Lehman Brothers, and AIG, though there are certainly others (Moore, 2012, 305).
insuring the toxic assets so as to protect the company. Eventually, this, coupled with several external factors spawned the rapid downfall of the global economy into the “spectacular” recession (Moore, 2012, 299). A complete abandonment of the principles we have just argued for can be observed from this historical summary. Those at the level of upper-management sought too highly to achieve external goods of money and power directing those below them to abandon the practice of the company, and the good practice of the company, to exploit this desire for private gain. Further, they directed the lower-level employees to find ways to insure their decisions in the hope of protecting the business that they had destroyed when they abandoned the practice of the company. While the Great Recession occurred as an aggregate of different economic reasons, it is difficult to ignore the correlation between the many collapsed companies and a lack of Service.

This notion of Service, which was so absent from the failed companies of the Great Recession, if implemented from the upper-level of management can provide for a conducive environment for the practices of the company and virtue at the institutional level. Those who occupy the upper-level of management are at the greatest risk for fall prey to the corrupting tendencies of the market – focusing too heavily on external virtues. How is this properly combatted? Through Service at the institutional level. Service at the upper-level of management within a company provides the ways and means for the managers to appropriately balance the many relationships in which they find themselves. It helps them isolate relevant stakeholders in the company and provides them with a rubric for making corporate decisions. In order to optimize and secure the internal goods that the practice of the company ought to create, upper-level managers have to invest in the communities of interest and practice. They properly serve the communities of interest by making decisions that ensure the future stability of the product and the availability and the quality of the good the customers demand. They properly serve the
communities of practice when they invest in the various relationships that each link in the chain of the company is apart. The lower-level employees need the finished products (which are made to community-determined standards) to sell to customers. The middle-level managers need the materials, employees, and metrics necessary to drive sales and encourage success in those they supervise. The manufacturers of the goods need the materials and the tools necessary to create them. The suppliers of the materials need strong corporate relationships in which are reliable and dependable. The balancing act of all of these important elements of a business rest on the shoulders of the upper-level management. Through the careful implementation of Service the upper-level managers determine the actions necessary to ensure that their employees are empowered and enfranchised enough within the corporate to create the products and goods. The harmony created through Service at the upper-level of management combats the divided business mind the upper-level manager is subjected to, according to Dewey. Thus, not only does the upper-level manager ensure their employees achieve a greater degree of individuality by not submerging them under the corporate machine, they too achieve a greater degree of individuality because they have appropriately fostered and affected in a positive way the relationships that all converge on the institutional level they occupy.

While Service has been isolated as a way of creating a conducive environment within the company for a practice of corporate virtues and the optimization of the internal and external goods of the practice of a company, the environment within which the company operates must be discussed. If we recall from Chapter Three, Beadle and Moore suggest that it is the responsibility of the upper-level management to ensure the market and the social environment in which the corporation exists is conducive to its success and the practice of the company. This particular responsibility brings to light another relationship in which upper-level management must
participate – a relationship with the government. Freeman initially proposed the government as just another stakeholder in the corporation, consider the interest the United States Government has in making sure the American automotive industry remains strong and visible in many international markets as a symbol of the economic strength and success our the country, however, Buchholz and Rosenthal suggest that the government plays a different role concerning the corporation, “although government is a stakeholder of sorts, it is far more than that because it is the major player in the public policy process” (148). While Freeman suggests that if stakeholder theories were to become the dominant theory of management there would no longer be a need for government intervention in the affairs of business (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 144), there still exists that need today as government and the public policy they enforce act as a “means of keeping a proper balance between the common other and individual interests” (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 148). Buchholz and Rosenthal define public policy as “a social process that helps infuse the market with moral vision” (150) and believe this is necessary because there is currently “no formal process” for balancing the many demands of stakeholders (145). Buchholz and Rosenthal are increasingly worried about the “unaccountable power” of the upper-level management and believe the only way to temper this is through an appeal to the government’s involvement through public policy in the market (152). For them, public policy creates a level playing field for discussions about values and the direction of a company, the market, and labor in general – importantly it provides the opportunity for a back-and-forth as “value conflicts are inevitable, but the resolution of these conflicts leads to growth of the corporation and society of which it is a part” (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 152).

In a perfect economic system (for Rosenthal and Buchholz), or a system that fully endorses Stakeholder Theory (for Freeman), or a system that fully endorses Service (for this writer),
interactions between government and corporations would be minimal and collaborative, at best. However, the current market design does not allow for these kinds of assurances. Instead, upper-level managers find themselves embroiled in a relationship with governments because it is only the government that “has the legitimacy to speak for society as a whole and can thus change the way corporations are governed and managed” (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 149). Importantly, this exchange is an exchange. Instilling value and virtues in a market involves the constant discussion of what is expected of the market and corporations; it also allows the government to act as an advocate for laborers to help determine what society expects of work-relations. These interactions, while in some respect leave something to be desired, namely a time when these interactions are not necessary, are beneficial as they streamline some of the decisions that upper-level management must make when taking into account the needs of stakeholders, particularly those within their respective company. Buchholz and Rosenthal note that this interaction is still net positive as it ultimately helps advance society through the emergence values that come to permeate the market with public policy direction, “neither individual corporations nor society as a whole are bearers of value, but [the values desired in a society] emerge in the interactions between different business and consumers in a marketplace context or between business and citizens in the public policy context” (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 151). The relationship between business and government does not have to result in a corporation just blindly doing what a government dictates, as the government does not necessarily understand what is needed for the practice of a respective company to succeed, but it does involve constantly working with the government, and society as a whole, to better the climate the business operates within as a result of the public policy of the time.

Importantly for this discussion is the understanding that Service provides the opportunity to make the best of this relationship. If Service were implemented within the corporate context, as
we have argued for, discussion with government would be much more productive than it is currently. As the government involvement in business is currently meant to advance and elevate the status of the employee and the market through public policy, if these ends were already being met different discussions could be had about the state of the market. Different public policies would come to the forefront of the public debate, particularly some that could spur industry growth and innovation within the sphere of public policy, and upper-level management, as a representative of a company that adheres to Service, would have a more important role in these discussions - contributing to the evolution of public policy with regards to the market structure, infrastructure, workforce training, education, labor relations, and innovation. The balancing of the relationship between government and business (particularly with regard to upper-level management) can only be enhanced with an attitude of Service. Further, Service in the context of the upper-level management seeks to transform the role the corporations play within the market and the community (and society) the business is a part.

From this current discussion, communities of practice offer a unique and important insight into the responsibilities of upper-level management. In order to properly take this stakeholder group’s needs into consideration involved investing in them as people and empowering them within the company they so ardently serve.

A firm ought to interact with other communities that it affects or is affected by, seeking to understand their perspectives, listen to their preferences, and evaluate the impact of its actions on them. Such interaction is best characterized as being market by a spirit of cooperation. On the other hand, it ought to be in community with those upon whom it relies for support - employees, suppliers, and customers...It requires a more active pursuit and support of the kind of spirit imbued in the community of practice...a spirit of collaboration. (Dunham, Freeman and Liedtka, 37-38; emphasis in original)

The above-mentioned quote seeks to provide two clarifications pertaining to the communities of interest and the communities of practice. Upper-level management ought to make decisions after
receiving important information from communities of interest in the spirit of cooperation.

Cooperation here is evident of Service. Upper-level management serves customers by making sure they are providing a good or product that the customer desires in a way that adheres the standards set by the community. Upper-level management ought to work with communities of practice in a spirit of collaboration because it is the only way to effectively ensure the success of the company. Service, concerning communities of practice, involves creating a workplace environment that is conducive to the Service we observed and argued for in lower-level employees and middle-level management. It involves investing in the people that make up the company and participate in the practice in an effort to better themselves, the company, the consumer, and the community at large. The balance of the relationships that upper-level management must participate in is vast and daunting. However, examining the meaning of community reveals exactly who is integral to the success of the company and exactly where the relationships that must be maintained are formed. It reveals hidden desires and expectations from consumers and customers, and it reveals opportunities for growth in both the company and the individuals who are employed by the company. Service provides the means for the appropriate balance of these relationships while providing decision-making procedures for upper-level management. As such, Service allows for the unity, empowerment, and enfranchisement of every individual in the corporate structure.

We began this chapter hoping to discover that the notion of Service we have found in lower-level employees and middle-level managers was applicable to upper-level managers. We have successfully done so. The Stakeholder Theory of Management provides a blueprint for the isolation of members of the community and society that are most involved in the interests and success of a company. After these communities were isolated, the implementation of Service at the level of upper-level management provides the decision-making procedures necessary to create
a company that is based on optimizing the internal and external goods of the company while
designing a system to give employees more individuality in the work they do. This is turn,
ultimately, provides a better product to the community, in a way they desire, and provides the
opportunity for public support of the company. Service at the highest levels of the corporate
hierarchy allows for a better environment to be formed within the company and within the market
the company exists. The corrupting tendencies of the market are combatted through the constant
attention to the relationships that would be most affected by these tendencies. Commitment to the
betterment of the relationships within a company allows for the growth of the entire workforce and
the success of the company through optimization of the goods of the practice the company houses.
Importantly, the relationship the corporation must play with the government has the opportunity to
become collaborative through this attitude of Service. Through the development of relationships
with those within the company and those outside, the role of upper-level management can
participate in Service and can avoid the problems and pitfalls the Lost Individual as articulated by
Dewey.
CONCLUSION

The Great Recession of the late-2000’s and its subsequent Recovery have provided an opportunity to examine the relationship between the laborer and the work they do. In the years following the Recession, a breakdown of the individual has been observed and with a new generation about to enter the workforce now is the perfect time to investigate how this occurs and how this can be combatted. From John Dewey’s *Individualism: Old and New* we were able to characterize this problem as that of the Lost Individual, someone who has been so submerged by the corporate hierarchy they are no longer invested in the work they do or the product they create. They are simply bodies to fulfill a role in the process of a corporation. While this appears to be the case for the majority of lower-level employees, for certain particular and extraordinary employees this is not the case. In observing these employees, we noted a difference in the quality of the work they performed, it exuded an attitude of Service. Upon further investigation, we came to understand the important ramifications of Service for the lower-level employee – Service allows for investment in the practice of the company and the development of the individual employee as a result. After many refinements, we defined Service as: work that promotes the empowerment of employees at every level by encouraging innovation and genuine input in forming and modifying a practice optimizing the attainment of external and internal goods. When employees are able to invest in the practice of the company in an effort to serve customers and the community, they are inherently bettered. Service became a quality that allowed for the lowest-level employee to solve the problem of the Lost Individual. Through careful attention and analysis of the work they do,
lowest-level employees are able to challenge themselves and the company to better the practice company houses. They were able to find fulfillment, empowerment, and enfranchisement in a structure that devalued their labor. After noting the importance of Service and its implications, we questioned how a business structure would be transformed if this attitude were to be instantiated throughout the corporate structure. The remainder of this project investigated whether or not this was possible.

The middle-level of management and the upper-level of management are both able to employ a notion of Service derived from that of the lowest-level employee. Importantly for these levels of the business is the balancing that must be done between the various relationships the individuals in these roles participate. After careful observations we came to understand that it is through careful and thorough attention to these relationships that the managers at each of these levels combats the problem of the Lost Individual and achieves a greater degree of individuality for themselves, ensures that those who report to them can be bettered and achieve a greater sense of individuality, and ensures that business decisions are being made so to protect the practice and advance those within the corporation. These decisions create positive consequences for all members of the corporation, the community which the company serves, and ensure the business has made the appropriate decisions to remain successful and viable. From our analysis of Service, it has become clear that its inclusion in the realm of business is not only a possibility, it is also a necessity.

Advocating for Service in business has important consequences for the greater community and society. According to John Dewey,

It is still impossible to foresee in detail what would happen if a system of cooperative control of industry were generally substituted for the present system of exclusion. There would be an enormous liberation of mind, and the mind thus set free would have constant direction and nourishment. Desire for related knowledge, physical and social, would be
created and rewarded; initiative and responsibility would be demanded and achieved. One may not be, perhaps, be entitled to predict...a distinctive social culture would immediately result. But one can say without hesitation that we shall attain...a characteristic American culture...[only when] this condition is fulfilled. It is impossible for a highly industrialized society to attain widespread excellence of mind when multitudes are excluded from the occasion for the use of thought and emotion in their daily occupations. (64-65)

In this way, not only does Service seek to advance the individual, the business, and the market, it seeks to advance the entire society should it be instantiated. Where Service, as applied in business, allows for success in that realm, it could certainly be extrapolated to other realms of our society. Certainly within the practice of daily life and relationships, government, medicine, and education could we find instances for its application. Further investigation can result in a new understanding of the importance of both Service for the achievement of individuality for those who practice it and the formation of a greater community and society as a whole when Service is present.
WORKS CITED


