

# YOU CAN'T LEAD WITH YOUR FEET ON THE DESK

## Building Relationships, Breaking Down Barriers, and Delivering Profits

**ED FULLER**

**ED FULLER** is president and managing director of Marriott Lodging International. Under his leadership, Marriott Lodging has grown from 16 properties (\$325 million in revenues) to 400 hotels in 70 countries (\$7 billion in gross sales) with another 175 hotels under construction. He joined Marriott in 1972 and has held numerous positions within the corporation since that time. Mr. Fuller is a graduate of Boston University and Harvard Graduate School of Business. He also served in the U.S. Army in Germany and Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star and the Army Commendation Medal.

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**MAIN IDEA**

*"A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world."* – John le Carre

The key to excelling in today's world of borderless commerce still remains to build relationships and you can't do that by sitting behind your desk. You've got to get out and experience different cultures and customers for yourself. It's not until you do that firsthand that you will appreciate their interests and needs in sufficient depth that you can then serve them effectively. To get ahead, you've got to get out into the marketplace and experience things for yourself and build relationships one at a time.

The seven key principles involved in doing this successfully are:

- ▶ 1 **Have and live sound values** Values provide the foundation on which relationships are built
- ▶ 2 **Respect in order to inspire** Before others will respect you, you must learn to respect them
- ▶ 3 **Trust has to be earned** Trust is generated layer upon layer by shared experiences
- ▶ 4 **Learn how to communicate** Being able to convey ideas clearly is crucial to effectiveness
- ▶ 5 **Give yourself the toughest jobs** Lead from the front – do the toughest jobs yourself
- ▶ 6 **Understand your people's culture** Never forget culture is ingrained and must be allowed for
- ▶ 7 **Build and cultivate connections** Forming and retaining close ties is a competitive advantage

*"Most business leaders need only drive to a plant in a neighboring county or ride the elevator to the ground-floor loading dock to see and appreciate cultural differences. In other words, if you are spending your days meeting with other managers or sitting at your desk doing paperwork, it's time to broaden your horizons and get closer to your business."*

– Ed Fuller

**1. Have and live sound values** . . . . . Page 2

Business relationships cannot survive or prosper unless one or both parties live by a clear-cut set of moral standards. To build a strong foundation on which your business relationships can be constructed, have a definitive set of values by which you live. Communicate those values and ask people to hold you to them.

**2. Respect in order to inspire** . . . . . Page 3

Successful leadership is always a two-way street. If you want your associates and your partners to respect you, then you have to learn to respect them as well. Usually the best way to show respect for your front-line people is to have a strong policy of promoting from within.

**3. Trust has to be earned** . . . . . Page 4

Trust is essential to any productive and long-lasting business relationship and it always involves some mutual give-and-take. The ultimate responsibility for forming a bond of trust resides squarely with the leader. Trust is earned by demonstrating you will stand with others through thick and thin.

**4. Learn how to communicate.** . . . . . Page 5

To be an effective leader, you must have the ability to convey ideas clearly. Hone your ability to communicate verbally and nonverbally and you automatically become a stronger leader. Effective communication is a key leadership asset but many leaders tend to give this scant attention. Work on it.

**5. Give yourself the toughest jobs** . . . . . Page 6

You must lead from the front if you're to stand any chance of getting people to respect you. In practical terms, that requires that you give yourself the really tough jobs instead of handing them off to associates. There's just no other way you can earn the respect you need.

**6. Understand your people's culture** . . . . . Page 7

Irrespective of the way you wish things were, the reality is the attitudes and general behaviors of your employees will be determined, to a large degree, by their country of origin. Make sure you're familiar with the underlying culture of each employee and factor that into your expectations for how they will work.

**7. Build and cultivate connections** . . . . . Page 8

Today's world is more connected than ever before. Relationships have become the new testing ground for aspiring leaders. Forming and retaining close ties is a strong competitive advantage today. To extract maximum benefit from your ability to connect, build time into your schedule for stay-in-touch phone calls to partners, impromptu sessions with your team and unscheduled trips to outlying branches. Deepening your connections always pays impressive dividends.

