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One time I took my grandson out to lunch and I decided to order us a few root beer sodas. The waitress told me they were out of root beer so I changed my order to two Sprites. I then noticed the cook (who we could see in plain view preparing meals) pick up a cell phone and call someone (who apparently was on their way in to work) and told him or her to stop at a convenient store and grab a few root beers (and to hurry!). Within five minutes, the waitress came out and handed me and my grandson cold bottles of A&W Root Beer.

Was it the cook’s job to figure out how to accommodate our desire to have root beer? No. Was it the dish washer’s job to stop and buy us root beers on his way in to work? No. Were my grandson and I delighted to drink root beer? Yes. I didn’t expect anyone to jump through hoops to accommodate us so I was pleasantly surprised when they did. Because of their efforts that day, I will be sure to make many repeat visits there for lunch.

Sometimes, it’s simply the right thing to do to go above and beyond to

satisfy a customer, client, or coworker regardless “whose job it is.” If you can stop and grab a delivery box on the way into the building even though you’re the executive assistant and don’t really have to, do it anyway. If you can give a customer directions in your building despite there being a large map in the atrium for them to view, do it anyway. If you’re the company computer guy and can lend a helping hand to a coworker in setting up a more efficient workspace in their cubicle area, do it anyway.

At work you get paid to “do things right,” but in some instances, it’s just as (or more) important to “do the right things.” Your company or organization’s mission, vision, and values can guide you in determining what those right things are. Ideally, your actions should be in concert with others’ actions in a way that directly or indirectly achieves an overall mission, objective, or goal, or in a general sense, makes the world a better place.

In the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, there’s a scene where an infantry squad was sent on a mission into the depths of war-torn Europe in order to find the sole surviving Ryan brother. He was

It’s not MY job!

a soldier whose four other (and only) brothers were killed in action during World War II. The Army chief of staff wanted to spare Private Ryan from the same fate so his mother wouldn’t have to receive a fifth folded American flag. As the squad stumbles upon a German machine gun bunker, the captain (played by Tom Hanks) gives the order for the squad to take out the bunker rather than go around and avoid it. One of his soldiers questions the order, making the case that it’s an unnecessary risk considering their objective is to find Private Ryan and return him to safety. The captain reminds him the objective is “to win the war.”

Sometimes you simply have to do what’s necessary for the greater good or overall objective. Don’t worry about whether that necessary action is in your job description or not. If a company phone is ringing, answer it! Take a note or take action to solve the problem or resolve the situation and then move on about your day. Your organization and world will be a better place as a result.

~ The End ~