

Is That the Best You Can Do?

David Ogilvy is a member of the U.S. Advertising Hall of Fame. He is most noted as a copy writer.

He was also respected as a powerful leader and developer of young writers. His style was one-of-a-kind.

It was intimidating to walk into Mr. Ogilvy's office as a neophyte writer seeking copy approval. Ogilvy had a habit of wrinkling the copy into a ball and tossing it into his circular file. He would wave his hand at the writer and dismiss him from the office without a word.

In the initiation of a new writer, Ogilvy would rip and toss submissions multiple times without a word. The writer would leave the office certain of an eventual dismissal and leave the company as Ogilvy smiled.

The right writer would eventually throw a fit in the face of the boss.

"But, Mr. Ogilvy, it's the best advertising copy ever written and I know it will help our client."

"Well, fine lad, now I'll take the time to read it."

Ogilvy taught by tough example, the importance of editing to the point of excellence. "This is worthy of the Ogilvy brand."

Paul said to the church at Colosse, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance ..." (Col. 3:23-24).

As leaders, we must coach our teams to produce excellence in every attempt to do anything.

The best test I know is to ask the question, "Is this the best

work you can do? Do you believe this work is excellent?"

Most of us have at one time or another felt like "finished" is excellent.

Sometimes we just don't do our best work. That's where a leader becomes engaged and does her best work.

Leaders cannot demand excellence and expect to receive it as a matter of routine.

But a leader can inspire excellence by work ethic, modeling, and consistency. Excellence cannot become a sometime thing.

The best test of excellence is to note what can be done to improve the work. Can something be done to make it better? If so, the work has yet to achieve excellence. Ogilvy taught "write until you get it right."

"But I was excellent yesterday" doesn't seem to fulfill our calling to work "as unto the Lord."

Teach the way to excellence.

Model excellence.

Inspire sustained, consistent excellence.

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Today's Scripture

"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and officials because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (Dan. 6:3).

Platform tip No. 103

Platform authority cannot be claimed.

We shouldn't say, "I'm an authority in leadership."

Authority is given to us by our audience. When we repeatedly deliver relevant content, and our audience returns for more, we become an authority.

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