

# Take Pride in Your Work

Craftsmanship is an old-world term. We use it to describe something made by hand: a piece of furniture, a pair of shoes, or a patchwork quilt. Our warp-speed world is too impatient for this. We have an insatiable appetite for things now. That's why we automate. Henry Ford knew how to feed the instant-gratification beast.

William Shakespeare wrote, "How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?" He was an old-world poet who wrote with a dip quill on parchment. Word processing wasn't around at the time. Though his words resonate ancient wisdom, technophiles call it antiquated thinking.

We recently studied companies that have been around for a while. I'm not talking about the youngsters of the Fortune 500 or the infants of Silicon Valley. I'm talking about companies that measure time in centuries, not fiscal quarters.

These companies share many of the same values as better-known companies, but one thing stands out. It's how they talk about quality. All companies brag about their quality. No one says, "Yeah, we're known for mediocre products."

When these centuries-old companies discuss quality, they use the word *craftsmanship*. It conjures up the image of an artisan—a cobbler, tailor, or furniture maker—crafting something into an object of value. It's art. For them, quality is sacred. They don't just make products. They have a relationship with their art. Quality isn't just the right mix of chemical compounds. It's the admixture of sweat and toil that seal in the quality. These artisans sign their work as a painter or sculptor. It's a sign of pride, not just a signature.

Do you put your best work on display for the world to see? Or, do you do just enough to get by? Whether it's a sales call, a customer service experience, or a coaching session, do you seal the quality of your efforts with your signature?

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Author byline: Tom Reilly is a professional speaker and author of twelve books. Tom is literally the guy who wrote the book on *Value-Added Selling* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), the book that started the value selling revolution. For more information on Tom's presentations, training, and products, visit his website [www.TomReillyTraining.com](http://www.TomReillyTraining.com) or call his office, 636-537-3360.

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