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April 3rd, 1991

# Speech at Harvard University

C. William Pollard

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1991

C. WILLIAM POLLARD, CHAIRMAN & CEO  
THE SERVICEMASTER COMPANY  
DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS

Review case study.

Review the idea of Kairos and ServiceMaster Growth.

Size of employee component.

Review the four objectives and how they relate to or focus on the dignity of individuals.

The importance of the family unit.

The importance of work.

The importance of covenants and commitments.

Truth and profit.

Some basic questions.

Can this way of doing business continue to flourish in an increasing pluralistic society?

How does it work in an aggressive acquisition environment?

Is this just a matter of corporate culture or is there something normative here that is generic and transferrable?

The challenge of the 1990's, tomorrow, will be different from today. More change (demographics in Eastern Europe), more choice (Eastern Europe), more diversity (globalization, minorities), more information (education dropout), more technology (health care), more interdependence (ownership).

With all of these changes, however, there is a constant: people who want a mission and purpose, more participation and ownership, more flexibility in time and place of the work, more stability and greater emphasis on foundation and frame of reference. This requires commitments from leadership and the firm, including commitments from leadership to be prepared to serve, to listen and learn before they talk, to walk the talk, not to be caught up in the perks of the office. Recognize a need for a flatter organization so they can keep themselves available and vulnerable to the most important person in the firm: the person closest to the customer. They must be readers and thinkers and not fall into the trap of the arrogance of ignorance. They must be sure of why their business exists and should exist in the future and continue to focus on the benefit to the customer. They must recognize that their primary role is to create opportunities for others. They must be action oriented, doers, not administrators. Change makers committed to be givers, not simply takers from the firm. They must have a set of beliefs or an absolute frame of reference that gives them a standard for doing not only things right, but doing the right thing. The firm must be committed to providing an environment of growing participation and opportunity for employees to

own results, a greater tolerance for diversity with a global perspective. More training and development on the job. Commitment to provide a work environment where learning is a lifelong experience. Where there is elbow room for mistakes. For in the absence of grace there will be no reaching for potential.

The firm must provide an environment for providing peoples' gifts and talents, not correcting their deficiencies. The firm is dependent upon results. It must assure those who are producing those results that there will be a fair and equitable distribution. The firm must provide a clear statement of mission and purpose that allows people to be fulfilled in their work. To choose something to contribute to beyond the bottom line.

Commitment to celibacy.