

FOREWORD

By Herb Kelleher

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Let me start out by saying I am not the foremost fan of computers, e-mails, blogging, tweeting or anything that makes contact between people detached and perhaps somewhat sterile. You learn more looking into a Customer's or an Employee's eyes than you can ever learn from an e-mail. To me, computers should always be servants; never masters.

When it comes to corporate IT, I understood why the accountants need computers to close the books but no one ever showed me the value inclusive IT can bring to things that matter to Customers — like on-time arrivals, ease of boarding or ability to respond to a weather delay — until I met Charlie Feld in 2002.

Charlie has a way of connecting with non-IT leaders that makes a complex topic like IT simple to grasp. Many IT people seem to enjoy taking a complex idea and making it more complex or sometimes they say you're going to have to give up your business plan and impair your Customer Service in order to accommodate the technology. Charlie said, to the contrary, the purpose of IT is to promote your business plan and enhance your Customer Service. The interesting part of the framework you will read about in this book was that we were spending enough money on Technology but not getting full, tangible value because we simply weren't managing it right.

Having said that, I still don't think a good manager or leader should hide behind his/her computer. Nothing will ever replace being with Customers and Employees. The IT goal should be to enable you to do more of that because your operation can run more smoothly and get you out of crisis management. This is an important topic and an easy book to read. You should be able to scan it on a Southwest Airlines flight between Dallas and Chicago.