

The Soul of the Firm – Study Outline

INTRODUCTION

“It All Starts with the Person”

Question # 1

On the first page of the introduction (page 13) Bill Pollard asks, “Is there a secret to the ServiceMaster success story?” Based on your reading of the whole Introduction and from personal experience as a member now of the ServiceMaster culture, how would you answer this?

Response -

Question # 2

Can we expect the firm to grow profitably and develop its soul? (p18) Support your answer with examples of how you ‘do’ this on a daily basis and from passages in The Soul of the Firm.

Response -

Question # 3

Are we walking on “shaky ground” when we try to mix God and profits? (p21)
What is there in common between God and profit?

Response -

CHAPTER ONE
“More Than a Pair of Hands”

Question # 4

In chapter one of *The Soul of the Firm* we are asked “What kind of employee do you want in your company? What kind of worker do you want to serve you in your home or in your school?”

Response -

Question # 5

What are the three ways that people can contribute to the firm?
What three ServiceMaster objectives do these 3 ways represent?

Response -

CHAPTER TWO
“Do Not Back Away from the “D” Word”

Question # 6

Why is it important to talk about diversity and unity? What is the standard to measure diversity?

Response -

Question # 7

Concerning diversity, we should “beware that in seeking to do a good thing, we do not do the right thing.” Where does ServiceMaster stand in regard to a reference point and challenge concerning diversity?

Response -

CHAPTER THREE
“Harness the Power of Purpose”

Question # 8

Why is mission and purpose important to a firm?

Response -

Question # 9

What effect do the four ServiceMaster objectives have on the way we treat people and their performance?

Response -

CHAPTER FOUR
“The Firm, The Family, and the Promises We Make”

Question # 10
Why is the family important to how we do business?

Response -

CHAPTER FIVE
“Why Do People Work, Anyway?”

Question # 11
Are we moving to a post-job world? Explain.

Response -

CHAPTER SIX
“Does Your Customer Have a Face?”

Question # 12
What is the “business of every firm”?

Response -

Question # 13

There is no such thing as a firm without customers. Customers are people. Who are your three primary customers?

Response -

CHAPTER SEVEN
“Productivity As A Virtue”

Question # 14

How does proper definition of a task contribute to the dignity of a person? (p 81)

Response -

Question # 15

How does productivity become a virtue? (p 83)

Response -

CHAPTER EIGHT
“How Structure Can Strangle the Soul”

Question # 16

Who are the most important people in our business? Why?

Response -

Question # 17

Why do we keep promoting our best performing people further and further away from the customer? And why do we expect and only empower leaders who are far from the customers to be the primary change makers of the firm?

Response -

CHAPTER NINE
“People Innovate and Improve As They Participate and Own Results”

Question # 18

How does the firm grow and keep up with the changing world of its customers? How, then, do you foster, encourage, and empower the people of the firm to initiate change that will create a new dimension of performance?

Response -

Question # 19

What makes the difference between recognizing a good idea from a bad one?

Response -

CHAPTER TEN
“Empowerment Comes From Power”

Question # 20

Putting your “name” over the door or owning your work [and the business] can include owning stock for your financial future. But where does ownership really begin?

Response -

CHAPTER ELEVEN
“The Best Tool For Your Company is Learning”

Question # 21

What business did Peter Drucker say ServiceMaster was in? Why?

Response -

Question # 22

What is the purpose of the firm - to educate or to produce profits? Is the employee a worker or a student? (p 114)

Response -

CHAPTER TWELVE

“Servant Leadership Makes Good Things Happen”

Question # 23

How does one “lead” by “serving”? What does it mean to be a “giver”, not a “taker”?

Response -

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“Build on the Ordinary and Expect the Extraordinary”

Question # 24

Why is it important to remember that “ordinary people” make a difference?

Response -

Question # 25

What are the guideposts to keep in mind as you reach out for the extraordinary?

Response -