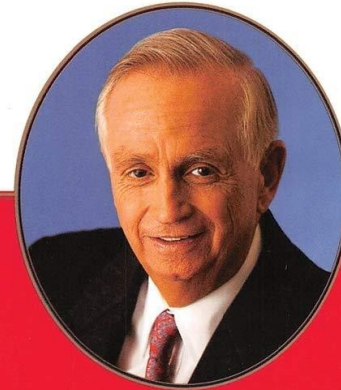


# The Spirit To Serve Marriott's Way

By J.W. Marriot & Kathi Ann Brown

“The foundations of a great company lie in more fundamental attributes”

# THE SPIRIT TO SERVE



  
**Marriott's  
Way**

**J. W. MARRIOTT, JR., AND KATHI ANN BROWN**  
FOREWORD BY JIM COLLINS, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *BUILT TO LAST*

## Book Overview

- In the bestselling tradition of *The HP Way*, *The Spirit to Serve* describes how one of the most successful businessmen of the twentieth century built the Marriott enterprise from a respectable \$50-million-a-year business into the \$12-billion international giant it is today. Told in J.W. Marriott, Jr.'s own words, *The Spirit to Serve* distills years of hard-earned wisdom and experience into twelve timeless lessons that managers at any level can implement in their own business lives. From effectively managing and motivating employees to preserving order amid change, Marriott recounts in vivid detail both his successes and his failures and what he learned from them.

## Laying Down A Foundation

- In 1927, JW Marriott Snr. moved with his wife from Utah to Washington DC. Their first step into the hospitality industry was a small franchise selling root beer. Marriott Snr. later established a chain of restaurants called Hot Shoppes, which flourished through the Great Depression. In 1937, noticing that passengers on the newly emerging airlines wanted to eat, he formed a successful in-flight catering business. This was followed by contracts for cafeterias feeding government workers through the war years, and later for industrial canteens including General Motors' and Ford's.

## Laying A Foundation pt.2

- The first Marriott hotel was not opened until 1957, by which time JW 'Bill' Marriott Jnr had finished college and joined the company. Seeing the potential of the expanding hotel business, he took over the lodging section of the firm and began opening more hotels. By the 1960s, Bill Marriott voiced the hope that 'one day' the company could equal the success of the Howard Johnson chain, which then seem to line every American highway.

## The People Difference

- This 'employee first' policy is almost a cliché, but the company actually puts its money where its mouth is with a profit-sharing program in place since 1959, better than average training systems and a free phone line to counsellors and experts to solve non-work problems. This, and a culture of openness which ensures that staff at all levels of the organization are listened to, has led Marriott to being judged one of *Fortune* magazine's 'Top 50 companies to work for'.

What happens  
when we don't  
focus on people?

- In contrast, chains focused only on making money, which do not try to produce any service 'buzz', have had only average growth. It is only when a person feels that they are at the front line of a noble idea (in this case, making hotel guests feel welcomed and valued) that they will be motivated.
- 'If you treat your people right, they will treat guests right'.

## Being a Hands-On Manager

- "If a manager is hands-on, more likely she's also on top of her business. She can pick up immediately on problems, concerns, or issues and take care of them before they fester or grow. Conversely, a manager who doesn't know his staff by name, who doesn't spend the bulk of the day walking the heart of the house, will eventually have problems. He's just not going to have the same rapport with associates or the knowledge base to make decisions as do his hands-on counterparts."



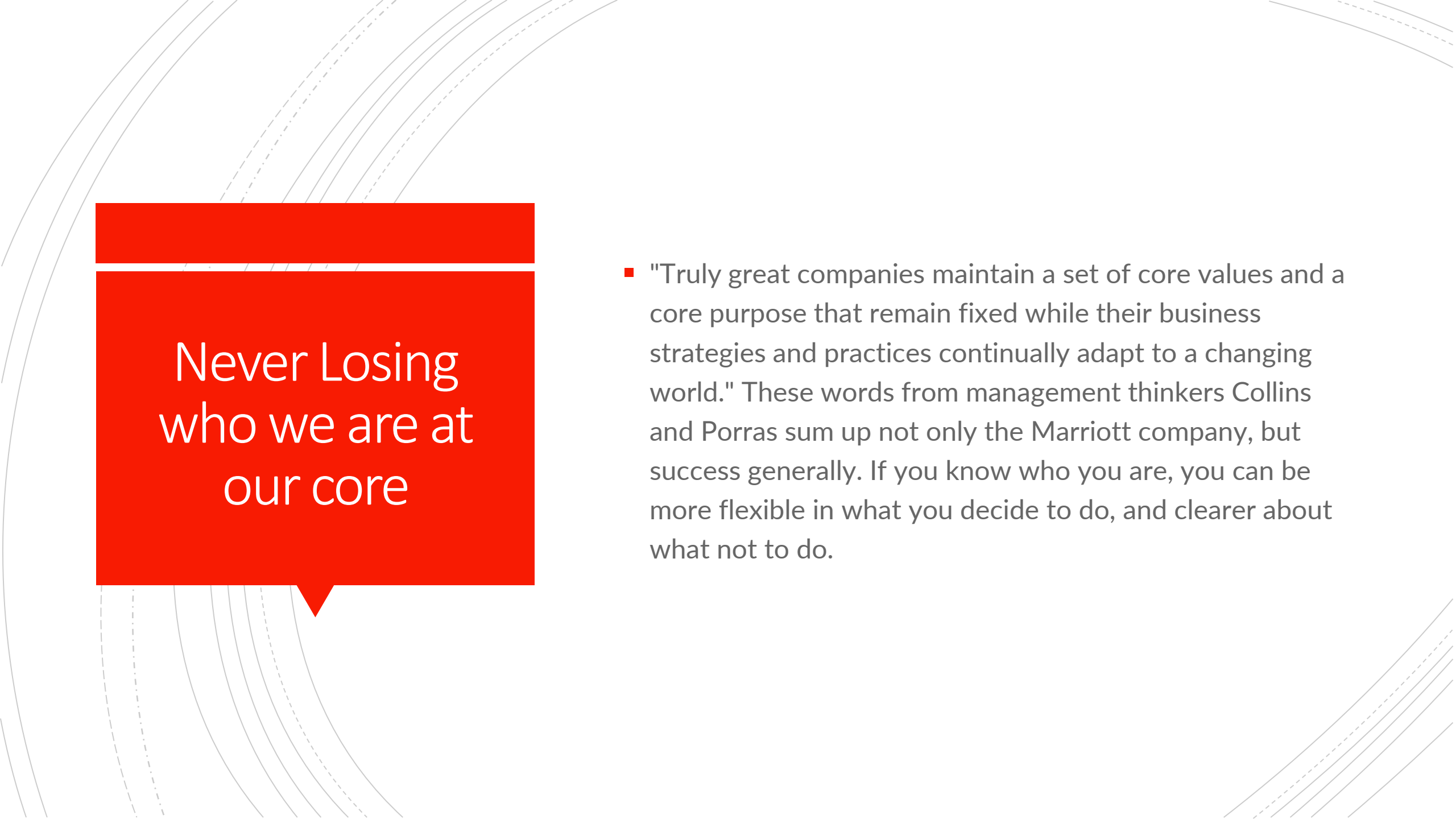
## Change amid order, order amid change

- The company realized that its growth would be limited if it only ran 'full service' hotels, and looked into the idea of building other types of lodging, including medium priced, budget and long-stay. Since the fear was that these sideways moves would dilute the Marriott brand, there was fierce internal debate about what to do; many Marriott staffers thought it would be twenty-five years of work down the drain.
- Those in favor won, and the company began building the 'Courtyard by Marriott' hotels. Suddenly, the huge mid-priced and budget hotel market became their oyster, and the company grew exponentially. It was able to do this without harming the full-service Marriott brand because the cheaper hotels were run on the same strict quality control lines.

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text "There is always room for improvements". The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the right.

There is always  
room for  
improvements

- "Maybe we are a little fanatical about the way things should be done. But for us, the idea of having systems and procedures for everything is very natural and logical: If you want to produce a consistent result, you need to figure out how to do it, write it down, practice it, and keep improving it until there's nothing left to improve. (Of course, we at Marriott believe that there's always something to improve)"

The background features several thin, curved lines in shades of gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion and depth. A prominent red speech bubble with a white border is positioned on the left side, containing the text.

Never Losing  
who we are at  
our core

- "Truly great companies maintain a set of core values and a core purpose that remain fixed while their business strategies and practices continually adapt to a changing world." These words from management thinkers Collins and Porras sum up not only the Marriott company, but success generally. If you know who you are, you can be more flexible in what you decide to do, and clearer about what not to do.

"The art of progress is to  
preserve order amid  
change and to preserve  
change amid order."  
-Alfred North Whitehead

- Unlike other chains, amid the expansion it did not lose its commitment to the customer, or its relentless service improvement goals.
- "Companies that don't risk anything will inevitably find themselves falling behind those that do. You can lead change or it can lead you."
- However, risk-taking only makes sense when you have a core set of values which do not change.

# Citations

- *The spirit to serve: Marriott: Summary & Review: Tom Butler*. Bowdon. (n.d.). Retrieved January 13, 2022, from <http://www.butler-bowdon.com/jw-marriott-jnr---the-spirit-to-serve-marriotts-way.html>
- Marriott, J. W., & Brown, K. A. (2000). *The spirit to serve: Marriott's way*. HarperCollins