

**SAMPLE CHAPTER**  
**LETTUCE-LET US HELP YOUR BOTTOM LINE**

I've worked in government, big business with IBM and now run a small, indeed micro, business as an author and speaker. Over the years, I've learned that whether large or small, there are only two ways to boost the bottom line. Increase revenue or decrease expense. Sometimes, there is little you can do to increase revenue so there's a need to refocus on needless expense. I'm not talking about the slash and burn of staff but involving *all* staff in offering potential solutions.

For example, an airline made huge savings as a result of a suggestion from a new flight attendant. While clearing passenger meal trays into big plastic garbage bags, he noticed that most passengers didn't eat their lettuce and suggested the airline get rid of that garnish on the trays. Initially, this met with some resistance from the executive chefs but as the airline was trying to encourage employee participation, they implemented a three month trial of the removing the garnish, thinking it might only save a few hundred dollars but that they'd humour the employee who made the suggestion.

As they received no complaints from passengers they stopped the lettuce completely and during one year, were amazed to learn that this resulted in savings of over 1.5 million dollars!

Was the lettuce adding value or cost to the flying experience? Obviously, only cost. What is the equivalent of 'lettuce' in your organisation? What are you doing that you've always done that is adding cost-not true value to your customers?

Apologies to the lettuce farmers of this world-but it's not all gloom and doom for them if you think about how lettuce is now sold. Yes you can buy a head of lettuce-organic or otherwise in a supermarket or your local market. But these days, you can also just buy a handful of lettuce leaves, already pre washed.

Yes, it costs more to buy in this manner but many consumers are more time sensitive than cost sensitive-so those who sell lettuce in small, already clean quantities, with no wastage, add value to many time poor consumers. It could be argued that they are also adding cost (to both consumers and the environment) in terms of whatever extra packaging they use. However the point is that they are indeed adding value by giving a choice to that consumer who is happy to pay a bit more.

Again, I ask you to pause and reflect: 'What is the equivalent of *your* lettuce?'

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