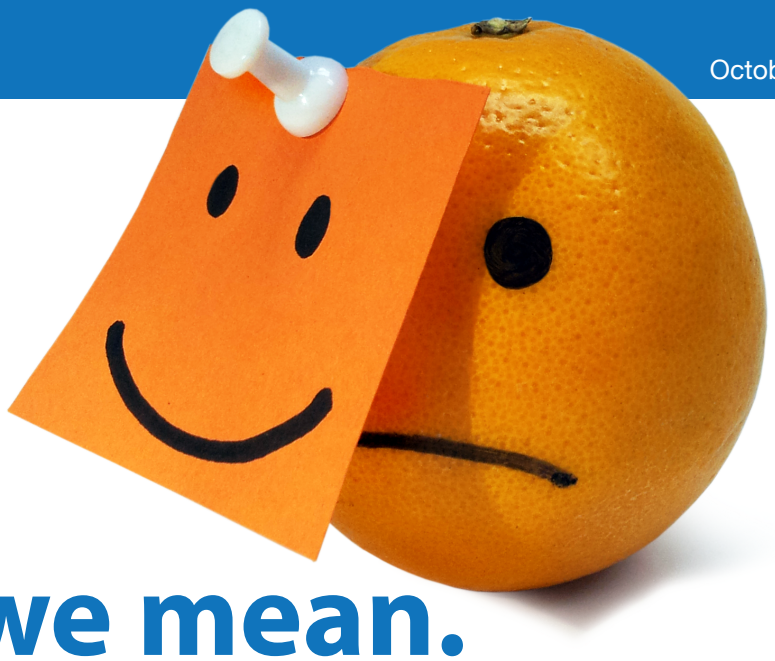

Say what we mean. Mean what we say.

"Your car is ready but there's no rush. Take your time."

"Here are your car keys so you don't have to be delayed collecting your car. It's RM15.00."

These two statements were said to me within a span of 3-5 minutes as I was having lunch while waiting for my car to be washed.

Taken separately or together the messages convey different impressions, which made me think about frontline sales or service staff who speak similarly: do their words and action communicate true intentions?

"Take your time" may sound like a customer-friendly request but the words, *"Here are your car keys… It's RM15.00"* suggest otherwise. The latter implied, *"Hey! Other cars need the space and I need you to remove your car now!"*

Like the words "Trust me!" or "Ours is the best product in the marketplace" or "Customers are our greatest asset" or "I lead by example," what is said is often not matched by the right behavior or action. Similarly, the merits of a particular product touted in an advertising campaign are not always consistent with the actions of the people representing it.

Each of our action and behavior is accumulated and stored in the memory banks of people who interact with us. By adding up these various experiences and processing them through their own internal perception filters, people form their views about who we are and what we are communicating to them.

For instance, when was the last time you asked your 12-year old son if he *knew* you loved him? Have you ever asked if he *felt* your love for him in the past week?

We have good and noble intentions. But how are we communicating that to those around us? Are we aware that our intentions may not be aligned with our external behavior? It hurts our credibility and puts at risk the trust bank we are trying to fill for our customers, suppliers, employees, friends and loved ones.

By FC Law, Country Director – Six Seconds Malaysia, Founder and Managing Consultant of The Solutions Gallery
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