

THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

The Olympic mood has really caught on. My wife and I were at a petrol station recently and we were having difficulty attracting the attention of the attendants to respond to us. They were standing at the corner talking to each other. When we finally got them to fill the petrol and check the engine oil, we discovered that the wall against which the attendants were leaning carried an advertisement.

The advertisement had a picture of several attendants lined up at the starting blocks of a 100 meter dash. Each in his / her lane and each with one symbol of the several services offered by the station. The legend next to the pictures talked of the Olympic spirit and a constant striving to be better and faster at service. When we drew the attention of the sulking and lethargic attendant who was serving us and his supervisor to the obvious irony of the situation, they just shrugged their shoulders and carried on at their own pace.

Perhaps they were always this slow and we did not notice. The advertising hoarding definitely showed up the contradiction. We were distinctly dissatisfied both by the service and the patent in-authenticity of the claim the hoarding was making.

In my consulting practice I have come across this very often. Vision, Mission and Values statements proudly displayed across organizations where the employees act in contradiction to them; corporate branding that explicitly promises a customer experience of very high quality with inadequate investment in ensuring efficient delivery processes.