

FOREWORD BY MARGARET KELLY, CEO OF RE/MAX

Fred

2.0

NEW IDEAS
ON HOW TO
KEEP DELIVERING
EXTRAORDINARY
RESULTS



MARK SANBORN

Author of the New York Times Bestseller The Fred Factor

“Mark Sanborn has done it again. Regardless of what department you work in or what your job description says, *Fred 2.0* demonstrates you can provide greater service, build better relationships, and create more value. It is not just a recipe for finding more satisfaction at work; it’s a blueprint for fixing our global economy.”

MICHAEL HYATT

New York Times bestselling author and former CEO of
Thomas Nelson Publishers

“At Zappos we have been using *The Fred Factor* for several years to inspire our employees to take ownership of customer service and to use their own experiences to live and deliver *wow*.”

TONY HSIEH

CEO of Zappos.com Inc. and *New York Times* bestselling author of
Delivering Happiness

“I promise that if you take Mark Sanborn’s advice to heart and begin a more ‘Fred-like’ existence, you will never view yourself the same way again.”

JOHN C. MAXWELL

Popular speaker and bestselling author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws
of Leadership*

“In *Fred 2.0* Mark Sanborn shares extraordinary examples of people who are committed to service. This book encourages us as individuals and companies to live with intent, passion, and integrity as our guiding principles. *Fred 2.0* is a book everyone in a service business will want to read and share!”

JENNIFER M. GRIFFITH

President of Commerce National Bank

“When Mark Sanborn first introduced us to Fred, he challenged us to do our jobs better. Now with *Fred 2.0*, he inspires us to take our service to the next level.”

HARVEY MACKAY

New York Times #1 bestselling author of *Swim with the Sharks without Being Eaten Alive*

“This must-read book continues to ‘deliver’ heartwarming stories and suggestions on how to lead an extraordinary life. *Fred 2.0* shares a slew of Fred stories that undoubtedly inspire and perhaps even elicit a tear. *The Fred Factor* has had a measurable impact on our university employees, and *Fred 2.0* is destined to create an even bigger ripple effect. Fred embodies the culture and work environment we strive for at UCF.”

BETH SCHEITZACH

Manager of organizational development and training at the University of Central Florida

Fred 2.0



Fred

2.0

NEW IDEAS
ON HOW TO
KEEP DELIVERING
EXTRAORDINARY
RESULTS

MARK SANBORN



*Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois*

Visit Tyndale online at www.tyndale.com.

Visit Mark Sanborn's website at www.marksanborn.com.

TYNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Fred 2.0: New Ideas on How to Keep Delivering Extraordinary Results

Copyright © 2013 by Mark Sanborn. All rights reserved.

Author photograph copyright © April 2008 by Ray NG Photography. All rights reserved.

Designed by Mark Anthony Lane II

Edited by Stephanie Rische

Published in association with Yates & Yates (www.yates2.com).

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*,[®] NIV[®] Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.[™] Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sanborn, Mark.

Fred 2.0 : new ideas on how to keep delivering extraordinary results /
Mark Sanborn.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-4143-6220-5

1. Success—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4598.3.S26 2013

158—dc23

2012040337

Printed in the United States of America

19 18 17 16 15 14 13
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Foreword *xi*

Introduction: Why Fred 2.0? *xiii*

CHAPTER 1	Normal Is Overrated	1
CHAPTER 2	What Ever Happened to Fred?	11
CHAPTER 3	It's Always about Service	21
CHAPTER 4	Start with Commitment	31
CHAPTER 5	Work with Passion	43
CHAPTER 6	Cultivate Your Creativity	51
CHAPTER 7	Develop Your Difference	63
CHAPTER 8	Build Better Relationships	73
CHAPTER 9	Elevate the Experience	87
CHAPTER 10	Renew Your Resolve	101
CHAPTER 11	What If You're a Head Fred?	113
CHAPTER 12	Build a Team Fred	125
CHAPTER 13	Raise a Fred Jr.	137
CHAPTER 14	Create a Community of Freds	149
CHAPTER 15	Best Always	163

Afterword *175*

Acknowledgments *179*

About the Author *181*

Foreword

I FIRST LEARNED about the real-life mailman Fred Shea several years ago when Mark Sanborn spoke at a conference I was attending. The principles Mark taught that day—that everybody can make a difference, that relationships are vital, that it’s possible to add value in every area, that you can keep reinventing yourself—have the power to change lives and corporate cultures.

These principles resonated with me because they’re woven into my organization, the worldwide RE/MAX network of nearly ninety thousand real estate agents. We simply wouldn’t be where we are today without many of the core values Mark communicates so well. I remember returning to the office and sharing his “Fred principles” with my leadership team. They were impressed.

A big takeaway from Mark’s work is that it’s not enough to know how to be a Fred; you have to take action on that understanding. Put what you know to work for you, and you have all you need to create customers for life.

Fred 2.0 is a fascinating step forward for the concept. Read it and you’ll understand how to keep the energy of Fred alive

and well in your organization, year after year. The book serves as an advanced course in how to go beyond the ordinary to create extraordinary experiences for your clients, no matter what type of business you're in. It also teaches you to dig deeper within to change your attitude and outlook so you can share the Fred message with others.

Fred 2.0 explains how maintaining a creative focus on service can drive the results you're seeking. I think the lessons in this book will truly benefit readers, whether they work on their own or lead massive organizations. It's all here—it's just a matter of absorbing the message and putting it into practice every day.

Mark's Fred principles are insightful, practical, and motivational—and they can do amazing things for your career and your life. In the end, Mark is absolutely correct in saying that business relies on relationships. So when you focus on creating winning results for people—whether they're clients, colleagues, friends, or even strangers—you open yourself up to a world of possibilities and a life of success.

Margaret Kelly, CEO of RE/MAX

Introduction

Why Fred 2.0?

I'M IN ONE of America's busiest airports, milling around with dozens of other travelers. Due to some extreme weather conditions, all of us are anxiously awaiting an update on our plane's departure—or lack thereof.

This is not an unusual place for me to be, since I travel for a living—or at least it feels that way sometimes. I used to work in sales and marketing, and now I'm in the idea business—speaking, writing, and advising leaders. So in the past thirty years I have gained a certain intimacy with the hospitality industry in general and with airlines, airports, and hotels in particular.

Today I notice that, despite the anxiety of passengers, the airline personnel show little concern—with one notable exception. The lone gate agent.

While the other airline employees who have come and gone for the past two hours of the weather delay seem nonplussed by the passengers' angst, the gate agent has shown genuine concern and empathy. She has been hustling to get as much information as possible from her various sources.

She is also the object of misplaced aggression. She isn't

personally responsible for the weather, but you'd never know that from the carping of some of the passengers. We listen to her latest announcement.

"I apologize that I can't give you more information," she offers sincerely. "If there were anything more I could do, I would. Right now I'm waiting to hear from our pilots if and when the flight will be departing. I will provide an update every ten minutes, even if the best I can offer is 'I still don't know.'"

The four basic Fred principles:

1. **Everybody makes a difference.**
2. **It is all built on relationship.**
3. **You can add value to everything you do.**
4. **You can reinvent yourself continually.**

The man next to me is wearing a sport coat without a tie. He says, almost to himself, "I just wish there were more Freds like her at this airline."

Freds?

"Excuse me," I say, "but you just said something about the gate agent being a *Fred*. What did you mean by that?"

"Oh, it's a phrase we use at our company for someone who does a great job regardless of their circumstances. We got the idea from a book we studied a few years ago. It's called *The Fred Factor*, and it's about an amazing postal carrier in Denver."¹

"I'm familiar with the book." I smile. "I wrote it."

"No kidding? Hey, great to meet you!" He reaches out to shake my hand. "Your book raised our awareness about how each of us could deliver more value and be of greater service to

¹ If you would like to know the story of the real-life Fred the Postman, you can download a free copy of *The Fred Factor* at <http://www.marksanborn.com/fredfactorstory>.

each other and to our customers. We even give out a monthly Fred award.”

After a pause, he continues, “But I’m just wondering, what ever happened to Fred? Do you have any plans to write a follow-up book?”

I’ve been asked that question (or a variation on it) dozens of times since *The Fred Factor* was released. I’ve received e-mails, phone calls, letters, and packages from individuals, organizations, and schools that have embraced the Fred philosophy. Every time I hear from someone who has been positively impacted by the message of Fred the Postman through my books and speeches, I’m gratified. But what is an author to do with those lingering follow-up questions?

The way I see it, if you get asked the same questions enough times, you should answer them.

How’s Fred doing now?

What can I do to keep delivering extraordinary results?

What are some new ways I can apply these principles in my work and life?

Good questions. I will answer them in the pages ahead.

Mark Sanborn

NORMAL IS OVERRATED

We all carry the seeds of greatness within us, but we need an image as a point of focus in order that they may sprout.

EPICETUS

THE FRED CONCEPT is based on the story of the real-life postal carrier Fred Shea, who delivered my mail for nearly a decade. When I first met Fred, I was so impressed by his performance that I started paying attention, taking notes about him and talking about him in my speeches and seminars, and ultimately writing a book about him. The account of his ability to take the ordinary job of putting mail in a box day after day and make it extraordinary made a connection with those who heard or read it.

It's hard to believe that a simple story about a mailman took off the way it did, but since *The Fred Factor* was released in 2004, it went on to become the number six bestselling business book of the year, according to *Businessweek* magazine. Since that time it has sold more than 1.6 million copies in the United States and around the world.

I share that because it is gratifying to know that someone

who does an ordinary job in an extraordinary way can have such a powerful impact on people around the world.

Don't settle for normal. Choose to be extraordinary.

Why did the book succeed? I think a main reason is because it wasn't about a big name like Bill Gates or Warren Buffett. When we read about such titans of business success, we tend to think, *Well, yeah, they're geniuses. I'm just an ordinary person working at a normal job. They're among the richest people on the planet!*

What does Fred have to work with? He has a blue-gray uniform and a bag. That's pretty much it once he leaves the substation. And yet he makes artistry out of his work.

If Fred can be extraordinary in what could be a tedious job, then there is no reason why you and I can't reinvent our own work, whatever it may be.

MAILMAN MIKE'S STORY

We all love a good story, and the best stories are true.

So let me tell you a story about another incredible mail carrier. He is beloved by the people on his route for his cheerfulness, his encouragement, and his love for both his work and his customers. He consistently goes beyond the call of duty and has become such an important part of his customers' lives that they tell others about the incredible work he does. His commitment to his job and his community has even gotten him media attention.

He's Mailman Mike, from West Covina, California.

I learned about Mike from Angela Carter, who contacted me after reading *The Fred Factor*.

“After reading your book,” she wrote, “I thought to myself, *He just has to hear about our mailman. . . .*”

Mike’s name is Michael Flowers, but on his route he’s better known by the name Brother Love. He’s committed to his wife and three children—and also to the people he delivers mail to.

Angela related the story of when she first met Mailman Mike. She was going through a difficult period in her life and was dealing with deep sadness. As she was going into her house, Mike yelled out from across the street, “Hi, beautiful!” His simple encouragement was music to her ears.

From that point on, she began talking to Mike each day when he delivered her mail. She also discovered how much Mike meant to the other people on the route. Angela sent me pictures and notes to illustrate her point.

Mike, Angela says, knows everyone on his route by name, along with some of the circumstances they are facing. She has no idea how he can remember so much about those he serves.

For instance, each year Mike deep-fries turkeys for people on his route and gives them as Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts. (If he misses someone on Thanksgiving, he makes sure they get a turkey at Christmas.) When he was featured in the local newspaper, some of his customers had the article framed and presented it to him.

On Mother’s Day, Mike brought Angela flowers.

“I call Mrs. Carter *Mom*,” Mike said. “There are several people in my life I give that name to. It’s a title I do not take lightly. I feel the people who inspire me deserve a better salutation from me than just *Mrs.* What’s even better is that they allow me to call them *Mom*. How sweet is that?”

But then came trouble. The postal service reorganized

routes, and Mike was assigned a new area. His customers were distraught. They asked if they could get him back, but they were told flatly that it wasn't possible.

The Bible says, "With God all things are possible." With customers who are raving fans, many things are possible too.

Thanks to guidance from the newspaper editor who wrote the article about Mike, this neighborhood mounted a campaign, starting with their congresswoman. Then Angela went door-to-door with a petition. She was amazed at the response.

"I couldn't believe how Mike was so humble, yet his life had touched so many."

The group's persistence paid off. One hundred days after Mike was taken off the route, he was reassigned to his old territory.

With her letter, Angela included a picture of her street, taken the day Mike returned. Neighbors had tied yellow ribbons to every tree and bush to welcome him back.

The newspaper article includes this quote by Michael Flowers, aka Brother Love: "If God didn't give me anything else, he gave me love."

FREDS AND MIKES ARE EVERYWHERE

In the years since *The Fred Factor* came out, I've received hundreds of similar stories about Freds—individuals who turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. These people are diverse in their jobs, backgrounds, and life experiences. In addition to stories about postal carriers, I've heard numerous accounts of customer service professionals who went above and beyond the call of duty. But Freds also showed up in unexpected places. Some

educators adopted the principles in their schools, businesses implemented company-wide Fred initiatives, and a prison instituted a program for inmates using *The Fred Factor*. A city was even declared Fredville, USA. (You'll read many of these stories and examples in the pages ahead.)

What makes these stories fascinating is that they stand in stark contrast to indifferent employees, unhelpful coworkers, and rude experiences—what we often think of as “normal.” When we run into a Fred, we are pleasantly surprised, if not outright delighted.

Frankly, if the anecdotes and stories were normal and unremarkable, I wouldn't be writing about them because you wouldn't be interested in reading them.

The common trait that all these individuals share? None of them settled for normal, average, or ordinary. They all chose to be better than normal; they chose to be extraordinary.

WHY BE NORMAL?

We don't talk much about normal unless we want to get back to it after a period of upheaval. That's because normal is what we get used to. Normal is easy, familiar. But is that the best we can aim for each day—to be normal?

Peggy Noonan, one of my favorite writers, recently commented that people who run for president often try to come across as normal. In her column, she points out that wanting to be the leader of the free world really isn't normal, and it isn't something most people aspire to or are capable of. But she doesn't see it as a bad thing that they're different from the average person. “Anyway,” she says, “normal is overrated.”

I love to ski, and being from Colorado, I get many opportunities to do so. When I meet people on ski lifts, they tell me they love the mountain experience and are sad when they have to head home to normal. I hear a similar sentiment when

If you want more out of life, go for more. Raise your expectations. Settle up, rather than down.

I'm vacationing at the beach. Even after people are congratulated on receiving an award, they sometimes talk about how they'll feel when things are back to normal.

Is it possible that we aim too low? Maybe the thrill of the ski run, the relaxation of the beach,

or the exhilaration of an award should be our benchmark for normal rather than the monotony of everyday life.

No one can live on the mountaintop all the time. And it is often said that valleys help us appreciate the high points in life. But while that may be true, too many people seem to accept the valley as a permanent residence.

I like to *aspire higher*. If you want more out of life, go for more. Raise your expectations. Settle up, rather than down.

In other words, *recalibrate to great*.

PURSUE EXTRAORDINARY

“Nobody can prevent you from choosing to be extraordinary.”

In 2004, management guru Tom Peters chose this quote from *The Fred Factor* as one of his favorites of the year. The statement is simple but true. Whether you are encouraged, taught, rewarded, or recognized for being extraordinary, at the end of the day it is a choice *you* have to make. No one else can

make it for you—not your employer, not your spouse, not your friend. It’s something you have to pursue yourself.

The Benefits of Extraordinary

So what’s the point of exerting extra thought and effort into being extraordinary?

You will receive many benefits from being extraordinary. But after studying extraordinary individuals and organizations for more than twenty-five years, I’ve identified four of the most powerful benefits.

1. **Extraordinary brings us delight.** Just as a spectacular sunrise has the ability to jump-start our senses and remind us of the wonders of life, an extraordinary act or experience, whether we provide it or experience it, increases our joy. That is why stories of the extraordinary go viral. They are not just unusual—they are inspirational. We want to share the delight with others.
2. **Extraordinary sets us apart.** Goethe said there are so many echoes and so few voices. Many resources, it seems, are undifferentiated commodities that we could get from anyone, anywhere, anytime. Employees who offer nothing different from other employees are interchangeable—and they likely won’t go far in their careers.

If everything we provide, as individuals or organizations, is exactly the same as what others provide,

there is no reason for customers to choose us, our products, or our services above others. That means the competition always will be based on price—lowest price, to be exact. If we want to be in demand as an employee or employer, or as a product or service provider, we need to make sure we offer customers the ultimate differentiator: an extraordinary experience.

3. **Extraordinary defends our position.** The price for sloppiness and mediocrity is higher today than it ever has been. If consumers can get better service or value elsewhere, they'll abandon the inferior for the superior without giving a second thought to loyalty. It is difficult and expensive to get customers, land a job, and form new relationships. If we aren't committed to continually delighting the important people in our businesses (and in our lives), we run the risk that they'll go elsewhere. Our best defense is when someone says, "There is nobody like him or her. I won't accept a substitute."
4. **Extraordinary determines our happiness and success.** A life well lived is the sum of extraordinary effort, extraordinary relationships, and extraordinary results. There's nothing wrong with ordinary if that's all we aspire to. The problem, as I see it, is that many people would like to be extraordinary but fear disappointment, so they settle. Normal becomes enough—not because it is desirable, but because it is a safer alternative to the pursuit of the extraordinary.

Pastor and author Bill Hybels says, “Personally, I’ve never understood inactivity. Why a person would sit when he could soar, spectate when he could play, or atrophy when he could develop is beyond me.”

The good news is that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary isn’t as big as you might think.

Alecia Is Extraordinary

My family enjoys eating at a Mexican restaurant in our neighborhood. One night my wife, Darla, wasn’t feeling well and asked the boys and me to bring back an order for her when we finished dining.

The three of us loaded up and drove to the restaurant. When our waitress, Alecia, came to take our order, I said, “My wife is under the weather, so I’m going to order her food now. If you’ll just try to time it so it’s ready to go when we’re finished, I’d be grateful.”

Alecia was attentive and cheerful as she served us that evening. At the end of our meal, she brought out a bag with two Styrofoam containers of food for Darla. On one she’d written in red ink, “Hope you’re feeling better. {Smiley face.} Alecia.”

When we got home, Darla asked, “Who’s Alecia?”

After I explained, she was touched by Alecia’s thoughtfulness.

The next time we ate at that restaurant, we asked if we could be seated in Alecia’s section. Again, she did an extraordinary job.

A few weeks later when we returned, we asked if Alecia was working.

“She is, but her section is full,” the hostess informed us.

“That’s fine,” we said. “We’ll wait.”

Alecia wasn't a manager. She didn't have any special privileges. And she certainly didn't have a company budget. Yet with just a tiny bit of extra effort and a red pen, she took her service from ordinary to extraordinary.

We all have that same opportunity to go beyond the typical, beyond what is normal or expected. If we choose, we can do things—large and small—that enrich the lives of those we live and work with, as well as our own lives.

After all, normal is overrated.

THE FRED CHECKLIST

- Goes beyond what is expected
- Isn't content with being "normal"
- Does ordinary things in an extraordinary way
- Loves his/her job
- Cares about the people he/she works with and for