

**Remarks by Bill McDermott
Chief Executive Officer, SAP America, Inc.**

**“A Vision with Value:
Helping People Make the Most of Their Abilities”**

**Accepting the “Humanitarian of the Year” Award from Triangle, Inc.
April 13, 2007 -- Boston, Massachusetts**

Thank you very much for that kind introduction. Wow -- “Humanitarian.” What an honor it is to be called that by *you*.

It is such a pleasure to be with you this evening, and I want to thank you for the honor – not only the beautiful award that you handed me -- but also the honor of working with all of you, year-round, to build a better world.

Before proceeding, I want to salute Herb Landsman and the rest of the Triangle Board of Directors, along with Michael Rodrigues and your entire team, for the selfless, visionary work you are doing. [*Confirm names of VIPs to be mentioned.*] You are the great humanitarians in this room – truly people of outstanding abilities helping others make the most of their abilities. It is a privilege to serve your organization. Thank you.

I have been asked to share a few thoughts this evening about our work with Triangle and why it is so important to me personally and to our company as a whole to be involved in this great organization. And I submit to you that it is all about people and having a vision with values. By this I mean having a vision of what *ought* to be and what *can* be – as well as having a set of values that will guide us on our path. I’d like to share with you a few stories from my own life in which I learned the importance of vision and values. And finally, I want to share a bit of my team’s vision for the future and how it intersects with yours.

Commending Triangle

On the subject of vision, perhaps the ancient prophet said it best: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The early founders of Triangle understood this. They saw the sadness and wasted potential of so many people who were denied opportunities to learn and use their abilities. And so they came together in 1971 in a church basement with little more than their vision and firm determination to help people with disabilities learn to lead more independent and dignified lives.

Thirty-five years on, you have served thousands of people and continue to do your good work through the impressive community institution that you have built. You had a vision with values; you worked hard; and you made it happen.

Sometimes, I am sure the victories you win are dramatic – like helping someone move into his or her first apartment, or helping someone secure a great job. Other times,

your clients' progress may be more subtle, like feeling better about the future, or being proud to serve in a friend's wedding and put on formal wear for the first time.

Through it all, Triangle has helped thousands of people achieve success and happiness on their own terms, which is all that anyone can ask for.

Personal Stories and Parallels

I'm grateful to say that achieving success on one's own terms is something I know about. In fact, in the course of preparing my remarks for this evening, I realized that you and I have a lot in common.

For example, sometimes people ask about my secrets for success. It helped that I had great role models, like my late grandfather, basketball Hall of Fame shooting guard Bobby McDermott, who at the time was called "the greatest long-distance shooter in the history of the game." He was, by the way, a member of the Original Celtics – and they played in New York, not Boston!

Thank goodness you had such great role models in the founders of Triangle! And great role models today in your leadership and in the people you serve, who put so much heart and soul into their own efforts to improve their lives.

My first few jobs taught me lessons I'll never forget. For example, when I applied for a job at the Finast supermarket at age 15 -- which was a year younger than the legal minimum -- the applicant line was a block and a half long. I found the store manager and told him I would never turn down overtime if he gave me the job, which he did. I also began bussing tables at an Italian restaurant, and in the summer, I worked for the town of Amityville, Long Island, cleaning streets.

When I was 16, I noticed a help-wanted sign in a local deli on the way home from a restaurant shift. One day I walked in wearing the black tuxedo, bow tie and white gloves that was my uniform at the restaurant, and I approached the deli owner, saying: "I can bring you an understanding of how to serve food to your customers." Imagine his reaction! But he hired me on the spot and put me behind the deli counter, serving as many as 400 customers a day.

A year later, at age 17, I decided to buy the deli, offering \$7,000 in promissory notes and agreeing to pay back the debt in a year or forfeit the store. My mother worked the day shift while I was in school, and my friends and I took over after school. My father and brother also filled in.

That job gave me an education in deal making, marketing, managing a team, and providing great customer service. It was not a job that anyone thought a 17-year-old had the ability to do. But I was not about to let anyone hold me back or tell me what I could not do. Does that sound familiar to any of you? I am sure it does.

At the deli, I realized my customers fell into one of three groups, each with its own distinct needs. For senior citizens who couldn't get out of their homes as easily, I added delivery service. For blue-collar workers who were often short of cash at the end of

the week, I offered credit. And when my biggest competition, a 7-Eleven down the street, imposed a rule allowing only four students in the store at one time, I invited them all to my place and put in video games. Those kids walked the extra distance to my store because I treated them with respect.

Treating people with respect. Giving them what they need. Making a place for people who might otherwise be excluded. Does *that* sound familiar?

By the way, my parents didn't think I was crazy when I decided to buy the deli. They knew that if I thought it was a good idea, I would be driven to succeed. As it turned out, I sold the deli when I was 21 and used the proceeds to pay for my college tuition and buy my parents a beach house in South Carolina. It's their primary residence today.

Stepping up to a challenge with the support of one's family and friends, and using one's abilities to achieve amazing things. Does *that* sound familiar?

Some time later, I went to interview at Xerox in New York City, and my dad dropped me off at the train station. I said, "Dad, I'm going to come back with an employee badge in my pocket." My dad said: "You have nothing to prove to me. Just do your best." But I insisted I would come home with that employee badge.

I went into those interviews as prepared as I could be. I read the Xerox annual report. I read articles about the C.E.O. I put on my best \$99 navy blue pinstripe suit with a burgundy tie, which was the power suit of 1983.

I had six or seven interviews that day, and my final one was with Emerson Fullwood, the general manager of Xerox in Manhattan. To make a long story short, the meeting went very well, and we reached a point when he said: "We're going to be in touch with you through the H.R. department." I said, "Mr. Fullwood, with all due respect, I can't do that." Why not, he asked. "Because in 21 years, I have never broken a promise to my father, and I'm not going to start now. I promised him that I would come home tonight with an employee badge in my pocket." He said, "Bill McDermott, as long as you have not committed any crimes, you are hired."

One of the lessons this story taught me was the importance of not letting anyone – not even my wonderful father – set lower expectations for me. I have never accepted low expectations, and neither should any of you. Does *that* sound familiar? You bet.

Putting People First

From these stories and many more like them that could be told by each of you, it is clear that ordinary people can achieve astonishing things when they work hard, reach out to others, and are guided by vision and values. So here are a few of the values that I have found to be most important in my journey.

First: put *people* first, and help them see the excitement and value that comes from serving others. When I first came to SAP, one of my urgent tasks was to improve the way we treated our employees and our customers. Internally, I wanted to be on the

front lines of helping my team envision and achieve exciting goals. Externally, we worked to put our customers' needs and desires at the center of everything we do.

So whether we are speaking about SAP, Triangle, or any other organization, if you have the desire and humility to serve people in this world, you will become a strong force for good.

Second, and this is something I strongly believe: people accomplish great things when they operate in an environment of trust and empowerment. For a company like SAP, with more than 30,000 customers in 25 industry sectors, there is no way that we as managers can micromanage everything. We must rely on our team mates. That is why we seek out motivated people, help them set exciting goals, give them the tools they need to succeed, and then get out of their way.

For an organization like Triangle, it is much the same. To cite your words, you are helping people gain greater dignity, independence, and the tools they need for economic self-sufficiency. You have created a team of people who come together, day in and day out, to empower others to do their best.

And finally, of course, there is the value of hope and optimism. There are few things more powerful in this world than a human being with a positive attitude. For evidence, just look around this room, and look into the progress being made by the individuals you serve.

Now I don't mean to minimize the serious challenges we still face – problems like prejudice, ignorance, limited resources, and genuine physical challenges. But I am reminded of one of the key messages of a book by Viktor Frankl, called *Man's Search for Meaning*. Frankl survived brutal, harsh conditions in a series of German concentration camps during World War II, and one of his key insights was this: That even in the depths of extreme deprivation and suffering, he and his fellow prisoners had a moral choice to make: whether to give up hope and withdraw from others, which often led to despair and death, or whether to keep hope alive by reaching out to others, helping others, and retaining one's moral dignity and long-term vision. Those people tended to survive and, after the war was over, get back to building better lives.

As advocates of disabled individuals, we cannot look away from the many challenges and obstacles in our path. But we must never give up hope and never stop trying to achieve the vision that we have for this community.

SAP Cares About Creating Abilities and Opportunities

Before closing, I want to reiterate our promise that SAP will never stop working to improve the ability of all people to take part in our economy and society.

As you have heard, SAP is a business software company. In fact, we are the world's leading provider of software for business needs, such financial accounting, planning, customer-relationship management, and coordination of manufacturing operations. Our mission is to help our customers run their businesses better.

By the way, we were very pleased to donate the software and services to help Triangle become a “best-run business.” Our affiliation with Triangle is now entering its [fifth?] year of success.

But why does SAP care about Triangle and similar groups, and making our products more accessible to people with disabilities? Well, for starters, we believe strongly that everyone should have the opportunity to pursue his or her talents to the fullest extent. We believe strongly that workplace barriers to people with disabilities must be eliminated. We support policies that protect the rights of the disabled to participate in the workforce, including Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act.

In short, it is simply the right thing to do to make our software solutions more accessible. We believe software should never be “hard-to-use-ware.” Ever. For anyone.

It is also smart business to promote abilities and opportunities. Consider that there are an estimated 30 million working-age Americans who deal with some form of disability -- and more than 600 million people worldwide. That is an enormous market already, and it is growing larger every year.

Ensuring better software accessibility helps everyone make the most of technology. And thus we have both moral and economic reasons to make accessibility a top priority for SAP.

This is not an easy task. As you know, there are many kinds of disabilities – affecting vision, hearing, motor skills and more -- with each type posing unique challenges. Complete accessibility would require the seamless interaction of multiple technologies produced by multiple vendors – everything from special keyboards to screen readers to mouse pointers, customized business programs, and so on.

So we have not yet achieved complete accessibility across all of our products. But as difficult as it may be, we will be persistent – just as you are persistent.

Because it’s about all doing what other people think cannot be done. Does *that* sound familiar?

Overcoming the Status Quo

I could mention many more parallels between your work and ours, but here is just one more.

As I mentioned before, SAP supports thousands of customers of all sizes with software solutions to help their businesses run better. But here’s a challenge we face: 90 percent of our customers’ information technology spending goes toward maintaining what we call their “legacy” systems – their older computer hardware. This is quite an interesting paradox. At the same time that every organization faces pressures to minimize their IT costs and disruptions, they also face pressures to keep pace with the advancing capabilities of new technologies. And if they don’t change, they won’t remain competitive for very long.

That is the trouble with simply accepting the status quo. If we don't constantly think about change and continuous improvement, we will stagnate and fall behind. This is as true for each of us as individuals as it is for companies and national economies. We all must innovate and adapt to survive.

The same thinking applies to this community. People with different abilities and physical challenges – and the people who serve them – must always be looking to do better. Ignoring the skills and determination of your clients would amount to accepting an old status quo that is morally wrong and economically foolish.

Closing

Speaking of people who were not afraid to challenge the status quo, I was interested to learn that on this date -- April 13 -- in 1943, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated the Jefferson Memorial in Washington D.C., on the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth.

FDR, Jefferson and Massachusetts' own John F. Kennedy are worth remembering here this evening.

It was JFK who once said, as he hosted a group of Nobel prize winners at the White House, that, "This is the most extraordinary collection of talent and human knowledge that has ever been gathered at the White House -- with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone." Of course, we honor Thomas Jefferson today for his insight in writing a Declaration of Independence that envisioned equal access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for *all* people, not just a privileged few.

Likewise, we honor FDR for refusing to accept defeat in either the Great Depression or World War II – or in his own battle with polio. He guided this nation through some of its most difficult hours – and he did it from a wheelchair. Disabled, some might say. Superbly and differently abled, we might say instead.

I do not pretend to be an FDR, Jefferson or Kennedy. What I am is very grateful: for the opportunity to serve alongside you, and to try and change the status quo. I am proud that we share a common vision and values for the future. And please know that we at SAP will continue to be there for you.

Thank you very much for all you do.