

**DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,**

In the 1930s, Ole Kirk Christiansen, a Danish carpenter, had a wooden sign hanging on his wall that read, *Det bedste er ikke for godt*: “Only the best is good enough.” Today, Christiansen is remembered as the inventor of Lego, the colorful plastic bricks beloved by children around the world. But in the early days of the Lego company, its signature product was a wooden duck – one built to the highest standards, out of aged beech, with three coats of clear varnish. Lego’s company history tells how Christiansen used his ducks to teach a lesson in quality to his son, Godtfred Kirk:



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K.R. Ravindran at  
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One evening, when I came into the office, I said to my father: “It’s been a good day today, Dad. We’ve earned a little more.” “Oh,” said Dad, “what do you mean?” “Well, I’ve just been to the station with two boxes of our toy ducks for the Danish Co-op. Normally they get three coats of varnish, but since it’s for the Co-op, I only gave them two. So I saved the business a bit of money.” He looked at me in dismay. “Godtfred, fetch those boxes back. Unpack them and give the ducks another coat of varnish. You’re not going to bed until the work’s done – and you’ll do it all on your own.” There was no arguing with Dad. And it was a lesson for me about what quality meant.

Today, Lego’s quality standards are legendary, and its products are the most popular toys in the world: Lego pieces outnumber humans 86 to 1.

We all recognize that this success stems directly from Lego’s business practices – its insistence on quality, efficiency, and innovation. I compare this with our efforts in governance and accountability in Rotary, and realize that sometimes we fall short of the standards expected.

The leaders at the Rotary International, zone, district, and club levels have to maintain the highest standards in governance. The RI president and directors must serve the membership in a meaningful manner; zone leaders must deliver on the investment Rotary makes in them; district leaders must provide dynamic leadership in the district and focus on transparency in accounting and timely reporting of financials; and club leaders must adhere to proper reporting functions and get their clubs onto Rotary Club Central.

Just as Christiansen refused to consider sending a lesser product to any of his clients, so should we refuse to consider giving a lesser effort to any of our work. We must always demand the best of ourselves – in our professional lives, and especially in our Rotary work.

For in Rotary, what is our product? It is not wooden ducks or plastic bricks. It is education, water, health, and peace. It is hope, and it is life itself. For this work, only our best is good enough. I ask you all to remember this – and to do your very best to *Be a Gift to the World*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.R. Ravindran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

K.R. RAVINDRAN  
President, Rotary International

