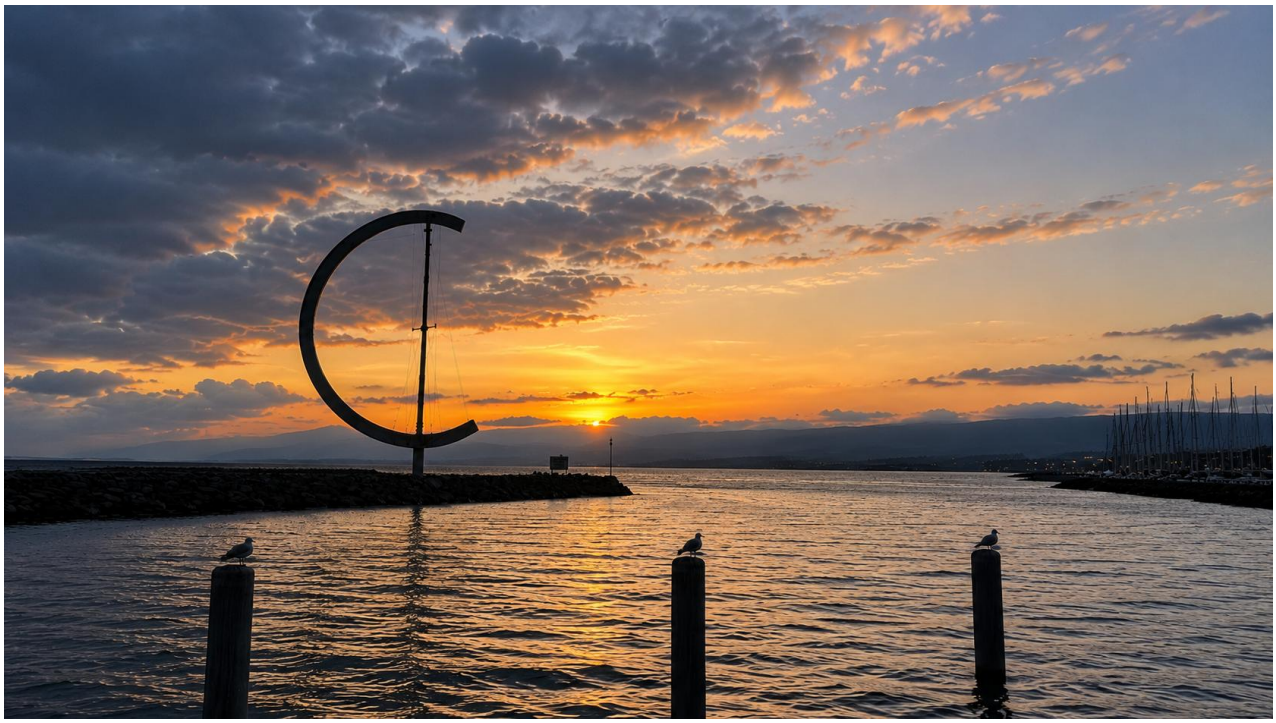
## Corporate Courtesy© - The goodwill on your personal balance sheet

What is your personal market cap?
Our most valuable assets might never appear on a balance sheet.
Our reputation. The tust we have earned. The relationships built over decades.
Yet how carefully do you manage these assets?
In Corporate Courtesy©, I reflect on goodwill, the unwritten code of honour behind professional introductions, and the surprisingly high cost of missing a beat.
I leave you with a personal question: Who would stand beside your hospital bed if you were seriously ill? And for whom would you do the same?



The big “C” of courtesy – Lausanne sunset, 25.10.2026

An early start today. An early flight. Reading about Anthropic’s astronomical valuation made me think about something quite different: **our Personal Market Cap.**

Consider Ryanair. Its flying machines are recorded at approximately €11 billion on its balance sheet. Yet investors value the company at around €24 billion, almost 2.4 times its book equity. Apparently there is trust in the company to do well despite rough global seas. Many an established airline has traded below the book value of its equity!

Why? Investors look beyond the assets. They consider the business model, knowledge, reputation, relationships and the promise of future value creation.

Part of that value comes from the trust, reputation and relationships a company has carefully built over the years. In everyday language, we might call this goodwill.

Here is the accounting paradox: much of the goodwill a company builds over decades never appears on its balance sheet.

## Some of our most valuable assets are precisely those that cannot be formally accounted for.

Now, let's be honest. **What are you worth beyond your tangible assets?**

Your knowledge, experience, reputation, credibility and personal brand. And perhaps above all: **your relationships.**

The contacts in your telephone, on LinkedIn, perhaps Instagram. People you have met, helped, learned from, worked with and whose trust you have earned over years, sometimes decades.

## How carefully are you managing this priceless asset?

I ask this myself regularly. And I do not always like the answer.

I promise to review an application letter and fail to dedicate the time to it. I connect two people and fail to follow up. I neglect to check in with someone who is unwell.

Too many stimuli. Too many priorities. Too many balls in the air.

Yet, apart from the first and last day of our lives, we all have exactly 24 hours a day. How we choose to dedicate those hours is up to us.

There used to be an unwritten code of honour in corporate life.

When someone from your network introduced you to another person, you responded. Even if you could not help. Out of respect for the person who trusted you enough to make that introduction.

When I introduce you to someone, I am lending you a little of the trust and credibility I have built with that person. When you ignore the introduction, you disregard that investment.

I increasingly see this basic principle being neglected. By colleagues, HR departments, business contacts and sometimes friends.

## Perhaps we need a little Courtesy Accounting©.

Before ignoring that message or introduction, consider three things:

1. **The cost:** What would responding actually cost you? Two minutes? And what might silence cost your reputation?

2. **The value to others:** What opportunity, reassurance or encouragement could your response create?

3. **The value to yourself:** What goodwill are you building, preserving or quietly destroying?

And one final thought.

Perhaps this is the relationship litmus test: who would stand beside your hospital bed if you were seriously ill? And for whom would you do the same?

The answers may tell you more about the true value of your network than any number of LinkedIn connections ever could.

#CorporateCourtesy #PersonalBrand #Leadership #Networking