

WEEK FOUR: GO THE EXTRA MILE JANUARY 24, 2011

This week our focus is on the Service Principle “Go The Extra Mile”

Our customers expect to be “satisfied” with our service. It is our job to go beyond “satisfy”. When we do we are showing our customers how special they are to us. That’s called going the extra mile.



16. I Make Great First Impressions I ensure a great first impression every time through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My appearance The appearance of my area Following “clean as you go” throughout the building 	17. I Stay Flexible When responding to customer requests, I ensure each customer is satisfied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking questions to learn more Determining the customer’s needs Thinking of creative ways to help them 	18. I provide service graciously I am more than my job. I care for every customer by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being prepared to assist Showing that I am genuinely glad to help them Demonstrating that I genuinely care about them accomplishing their goals 	19. I Do More I am empowered to serve our customers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting upon opportunities to do more than is asked Going the extra mile whenever possible—to make the customer feel special Being a capable problem solver 	20. I show Genuine Appreciation I show genuine appreciation by thanking each customer for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the library Sharing feedback with us
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Customers get to choose where they spend their money and time, and are more likely to do so with businesses and people who provide the best and friendliest service. Perhaps even more importantly, customers are more likely to frequent places where they can feel good about themselves. What five things can you do to make your customer glad they spent time in the library?

Something to think about. . .

Go the Extra Mile, It's Not Crowded There

Many people credit themselves with coining the phrase, "the customer is always right." These five words echo a basic truth, but just practicing these words is no longer enough. In today's front line battles for market position, customer service must go beyond merely satisfying the basic needs of your customers. Customer service must be proactive, not reactive. Customer service must anticipate the ever-changing needs of customers and be prepared at all times to provide top quality service.

The first step in determining the needs of your customers is to identify their needs; needs that must be fully understood by everyone in your organization. You must then go beyond just satisfying their needs; you must take customer service to new levels. Offer your customers a service your competitors lack, or provide a service that will "out-distance" your competitors. In many cases, providing a better quality product will keep your customers coming back to your services and products for many years.

Many businesses today seem content to greet customers with a smile or to answer their questions enthusiastically. Being cordial and knowledgeable are constants of customer service, but to truly separate your business from the competition, it simply is not enough. You have to provide more than the constants because constants are expected. You have to offer more services and perform them better than your competition.

An important aspect of customer service that is often overlooked is communication with customers. Are your customers aware of all the services you offer? Are they aware of the materials and programs you offer? An open line of communication with your customers is vital for the success of your business.

Competition is tough today. By providing only the constants of customer service, you will not remain competitive. Don't use short cut methods to try and satisfy your customers' needs. This will only work in the short run, and you're in business for the long haul. A sound, all-encompassing customer service program will lead you in the right direction.

For your customer service program to be a success your entire organization must be committed to improving service. Determine your customers' needs, formulate a program that will not only meet their needs but exceed them and, finally, implement the program. You will reap the benefits for years to come.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Many people ask me if there is one simple thing they can do that will make the biggest impact for better customer service. This is not easy, as there is no quick fix for problem service or some miracle elixir that by magic will transform an organization into a first class customer driven company. It is a combination of many things put together. But there is a simple concept. It falls back on the original concept of managing the Moment of Truth and creating Moments of Magic.

The simple concept has to do with managing the first impression. I am not talking about meeting someone for the first time, although that is obviously a first impression. I am talking about the first impression we make that may set the tone for any interaction that is to follow.

Here is a very basic example. When you walk into work in the morning, how do you greet your coworkers? Do you strive for a positive early morning greeting? Or, are you one of those people who claim not to be an "early morning" person - at least not until you have had your three cups of coffee? So what if you are not an "early morning" person. Your goal is to make the people you work with want to be around you the rest of the day. Your early-morning greeting is simply setting the tone for any interaction that is to follow.

How do you dress for success? Dressing for success does not mean wearing a business suit, tie, etc. It means dressing appropriately for the situation.

What do your body language and facial expressions tell people? Body language, eye contact, facial expressions are read, sensed and interpreted by those around you.

How do you answer the phone? Do the people calling you feel that you welcome their call, or do they feel as if they are an interruption?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Customer appreciation is one of those terms that is bandied about so much that it has lost its meaning. Car dealers, furniture stores, banks all hold "customer appreciation days." (Google the term and see what all pops up.) I'm just waiting for the Internal Revenue Service (or the US Congress) to hold a customer appreciation day!

So many "thank you" statements have become mechanical. Even vending machine flash "Have a nice day" on its screen after you make a purchase. We've become numb to these statements of "appreciation."

Customers can be pretty cynical about these attempts at such marketing hype, so imagine how pleasantly surprised our customers are when they **actually feel** *appreciated as a customer*.

What can we do to show our sincere appreciation to our customers?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Maximize every customer opportunity.

Knowing how to greet and engage customers doesn't matter if you don't do it with every customer.

The ability to help customers make informed decisions about our materials or services doesn't matter if you don't do it with every customer.

Recommending additional resources that will enhance a customer's experience doesn't matter if you don't do it with every customer.

Having fabulous new materials or incredible programs doesn't matter if people don't know about them. Sure, you can post signs to that effect but nothing reinforces the message more than an employee enthusiastically telling me about them. But it doesn't matter if you don't do it with every customer.

Did you Know?

Loyalty Goes Both Ways

We all want our customers to be loyal. So here is a thought:

In order to get your customers to be loyal to you, you need to be loyal to your customers.

Are you loyal to your customers? Do they know it? Do they feel it? What are you doing to prove it?

Loyalty is about creating value, building a strong relationship, developing trust, having an understanding of their business, knowing their wants and needs, making them feel special, letting them know you appreciate them – and much more.

While there may be lots of things you can do to prove your loyalty, it really isn't that difficult. All of the above mentioned – and more – is just common sense. These are the things we should be doing for our customers. So, I have a little exercise/assignment for you to do. It shouldn't take very long. Here it is:

Write down all of the things you think you are doing, or should be doing, to show your loyalty to your customers. You can start with the list above. Then add more. Be specific and write down how you are (or should be) doing it. Ask a few others what they think and add to the list. Pat yourself on the back for the ones you are doing already, and start doing the ones you aren't.

That is it. A simple assignment on the surface that will hopefully bring you closer to understanding the value you are giving to your customers – as well as the loyalty you are showing them. After all, why should your customers be loyal to you, if you can't prove your loyalty to them?

Staff Recognition

It takes energy and commitment to deliver consistently uplifting service. Praise is the spark that lights the fire. Frequent recognition is the fuel that keeps the fire burning. Use plenty of both to keep the climate warm for your co-workers and the customers they serve.