

WEEK FOUR: GO THE EXTRA MILE FEBRUARY 21, 2011 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

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.



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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:

The simple concept of making a good first impression is not about meeting someone for the first, although that is obviously a first impression. The first impression we make sets the tone for any interaction that is to follow.

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?

Something to think about. . .

Stay Flexible to Give Your Customers the Best Service

Be Flexible

In customer service, as with most things there is no one right answer. There is almost always more than one way to accomplish something. But we don't always admit it. Too often we focus on one way to do something. Maybe it's the only way we know. Maybe it's the fastest, cheapest or easiest route to helping our customer. But that doesn't make it the best.

Remember, our goal is to help our customers get what they want, within our ability. So we always need to look for alternatives. We need to be creative. We need to think beyond the first solution that comes to mind when we're working with our customers.

Being flexible means being willing to try a different path. (This is good advice in life as well as business.) Always consider other options as possible ways to help your customer get what they came for.

It means offering customers more than one solution. By offering choices we're making it more likely they'll get what they want. There are few things worse than being a customer and someone says "that's the only way you can do it".

Being flexible also means being willing to try new things and go the extra mile for customers. It means being a problem solver rather than an order taker. Customers know the difference. Stay flexible as you provide solutions to your customers. They'll thank you with their loyalty.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to satisfy a customer. What did you do and how did you know the customer was satisfied?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

There is no way to truly replace one-on-one interaction and experiences.

The world is changing and so is the way we, as business owners, interact with our customers.

Although technology can open new avenues of communication and revenue, there is no way to truly replace one-on-one interaction and experiences.

Most of us have had wonderful experiences that have shaped our lives.

It's no different with customer service. You either experience a lovely interaction or you're sorely disappointed. Customer service is an experience and those memories, good or bad, stay with us.

I strongly believe that part of providing outstanding customer service involves providing a total experience. It is all the more important in this day and age when we are hyper-connected electronically but lacking in human connections.

Our customers are also seeking out that personal interaction and want to be treated like an individual and not a transaction. I believe it is worthwhile to stop and consider every aspect of what our customer or client experiences from the time they enter our place of business to the time they walk out our door.

Does our place of business look clean and well-kept or does it look like we are hanging by a thread? Are they treated like a guest? What do they hear? What atmosphere does the lighting create?

There are many low-cost measures we can take to provide the type of experience that make our customers comfortable, secure in doing business with us and want to continue to do so.

Certainly there are many worthwhile investments that we can make in the workplace to create an outstanding experience but many of the elements that make or break the customer experience are simply a matter of time, thoughtfulness and imagination.

I would challenge all of us to consider the overall experience from the customer's perspective. What do they experience from the moment the drive up to the time they walk out your door?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Empowerment is the feeling that customers develop 'about themselves' as a result of interacting with a company through its people, products, processes or services. We empower our customers by asking the right questions to determine their needs.

The most effective and empowering questions create value.

1. **They create clarity:** "Can you explain more about this situation?"
2. **They construct better working relations:** Instead of "Did you make your sales goal?" ask, "How have sales been going?"
3. **They help people think analytically and critically:** "What are the consequences of going this route?"
4. **They inspire people to reflect and see things in fresh, unpredictable ways:** "Why did this work?"
5. **They encourage breakthrough thinking:** "Can that be done in any other way?"
6. **They challenge assumptions:** "What do you think you will lose if you start sharing responsibility for the implementation process?"

They create ownership of solutions: "Based on your experience, what do you suggest we do here?"

How do we empower our customers and co-workers?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

A new customer will develop an impression about your employee (and your business) in their first seven seconds with your employee. In that slice of time, they will judge your employee in eleven different ways, all of which affect how likely they will be to do business with you. The eleven ways we are judged are:

- Cleanliness
- Knowledge
- Professionalism
- Friendliness
- Helpfulness
- Courtesy
- Credibility
- Confidence
- Attractiveness
- Responsiveness
- Understanding

How do we rate in each of these areas? What can we do to improve our image?

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.