

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

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

We want our customers and co-workers to feel special. So every day this week we will focus on a Service Principle that will help us care for customers in a special way.



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:

Are you a gracious business professional? The word gracious is defined as: marked by tact, kindness and courtesy, characterized by charm, good taste and generosity of spirit. Review each of this week’s Service Principles. How will you apply each one to provide service graciously?

Something to think about. . .

The Goodness of Being Gracious

Bill Tucker reflects on how graciousness is not just good manners; it's also a foundation of sales

By Bill Tucker

To my father, being polite or courteous wasn't enough: he was--and demanded the same from those who worked for him--always gracious to customers. To him, graciousness meant being courteous, polite, thoughtful, obliging, responsive and magnanimous. I thought about my father and contrasted how he handled his business as I wrestled with our bank over a service fee.

When a \$250 "Account Analysis Fee" appeared on our monthly statement, I complained to the bank branch manager, who sympathetically told me that I had to speak to the commercial account representative. I called and left a message for him; a week later, I left another message, and then still another. When he finally returned my call, he informed me that he would change our account so there would be no more charges and he would look into refunding the fees they had removed from our account. The next month we were again charged the analysis fee and I realized our account representative had failed to carry through on the commitment he had made.

It's not just the banks. In all types of businesses, CEOs and boards of directors, isolated from customers, under pressure to maximize profits and hounded by stock analysis are allowing the "bean counters" to determine how they approach their customers. They have succumbed to the arguments: That automation can replace the human touch; that customers will put up with "customer service" outsourced overseas; that the wait times, errors and inefficiencies occasioned by reduced staff will be forgiven and that Americans are so shallow that only price makes a difference.

When I first went to work for him, I didn't understand my father's role in his company. He had managers who handled operations and a bookkeeper and secretaries who administered the back office. He arrived at 9 a.m., went to the post office an hour later, took more than an hour for lunch, played golf on Wednesday afternoons, and left for home by 5 p.m. What a life! It was years before I came to the realization that through his interaction with customers, my dad was our company's No. 1 salesperson.

His schedule was based upon connecting with people. He arrived at the office after having coffee with our banker and other businessmen. He timed his visit to the post office to coincide with customers retrieving their mail. Lunch was often with a client. And on Wednesdays he played "customer" golf. He knew his customers: their problems, needs and opinions of our service. In return, they knew, liked, and wanted to do business with him. Not only did he interact with them, he also set the example of how we were to deal with our customers.

Prior to my appointment with a new doctor, I looked him up online and found he had two addresses. I went to the first location, a large building housing a number of offices but not that of the doctor I was scheduled to see. Concerned about being late for my appointment, I called the physician's office and was disdainfully informed that I was in the wrong location and impatiently directed to the correct address.

When I arrived at the doctor's office, the receptionist, without a greeting or smile, handed me a clipboard and ordered me to fill out an attached form and, when I returned with the completed questionnaire, demanded a payment. By the time I saw the doctor I was ready to do battle. He turned out to be a nice guy and a good physician but he almost lost me as a patient before we met.

Different from the doctor's staff, my father insisted that all customers be treated graciously. He was never too busy to say hello, to inquire about family or to offer to help. He built relationships that served us for more than 50 years.

Companies that focus on profit and neglect customer service and satisfaction suffer in the long run. I think of the junk American auto manufacturers turned out in the 1960s and the market share they lost to higher quality--and in some instances, more expensive==foreign imports. There are other well-known examples of the same.

In a world where it is increasingly uncommon to do so, treating your customers graciously is a deciding factor in developing loyal relationships. It's up to the person in charge, to set the example for doing so.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Why go the extra mile? Why go out of your way for others? Besides the great feeling you get in knowing you have helped another in need, there are many reasons that will ultimately benefit you. I use the word "ultimately" because these benefits are not obvious and not immediately recognizable, however, they do have a very positive effect on your success in life.

Going the extra mile will help you stand out from the crowd and be recognized

Going the extra mile will bring out positive emotions in others allowing them to both remember you and feel good about you

Going the extra mile will help you to move ahead of your competition and succeed where others fail

How and when do you go the extra mile?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Reputation is Built on First Impressions

Mom always said, *“There’s no second chance to make a good first impression.”*

Employees create strong impressions that become part of the organization’s reputation.

Who speaks your Reputation?

Who speaks for the organization?

Who interacts with customers?

Who wears the company logo?

Do they create a lasting reputation we want to keep?

The person *behind the phone, behind the counter, and even behind the wheel*, is critically important to our reputation.

Consider...

Everyone in the organization becomes an **“Impression Opportunity.”**

Every **touch point** with a customer is an impression opportunity that **builds or destroys the organization’s reputation**. Your website and online marketing strategies are only a portion of your brand. Other than personal interaction, with are some of our Impression Opportunities?

WORDS TO LIVE BY:

Generosity

Carefully managing my resources so I can freely give to those in need.

Orderliness

Arranging myself and my surroundings to achieve greater efficiency.

How do these words apply to our Service Principles this week?

Did you Know?

"Service" is defined as (we will assume the customer is involved here):

- Work done for others as an occupation or business, or
- An act or a variety of work done for others, especially for pay, or
- Assistance: help, or
- An act of assistance or benefit, or
- Offering services to the public in response to need or demand.

With a definition like that I guess that I am receiving customer service when greeted with a blank stare or a grunt, because that appears to be assistance or the offering of service.

Hospitality is defined* as:

- Cordial and generous reception of or disposition toward guests, or
- An instance of cordial and generous treatment of guests, or
- The act or practice of one who is hospitable; reception and entertainment of strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous liberality, or
- Kindness in welcoming guests or strangers.

Synonyms are: accommodation, affability, amiability, cheer, companionship, comradeship, consideration, conviviality, cordiality, entertainment, friendliness, generosity, geniality, good cheer, good fellowship, heartiness, hospitableness, obligingness, reception, sociability, warmth, welcome.

Hospitality is a much better word than service to describe what we should be providing; words like cordial, generous reception, kindness, consideration and warmth say it equally well. What is being offered to your customers?

Staff Recognition

Internal Customer Service is defined as effectively serving other departments within your organization. How well are you providing other departments with service, products or information to help them do their jobs? How well are you listening to and understanding their concerns? How well are you solving problems for each other to help your organization succeed?