

WEEK THREE: USE A PERSONAL TOUCH JULY 4, 2011 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

This week our focus is on the Service Principle "Use A Personal Touch".

When we talk to people and find out what brings them to our library, it helps us determine what might be useful to them. Using this information to offer individual service is another way to let people know they are welcome and appreciated.



11. I Welcome Every Customer I greet every customer with sincere enthusiasm using the 15/5 Rule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 15 feet, make eye contact and SMILE At 5 feet, maintaining eye contact, greet the customer by name, if known, and the time of day greeting (Good morning, good afternoon, good evening) 	12. I Use Telephone Etiquette I answer the telephone professionally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Within three rings and with a smile in my voice Using the customer's name, when appropriate Asking the caller, "May I please place you on hold?" Allowing the caller to end the call 	13. I Focus on Individual Needs I offer information and services relevant to each customer's specific needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively offering options & suggestions Asking the right questions Demonstrating warmth, compassion, and empathy 	14. I Personalize the Visit I watch and listen in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn customer's preferences Remember them Offer assistance at every level And acting upon them when possible 	15. I make Every Customer Feel Valued I am friendly to every customer in my presence by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stopping all other work and conversations Making eye contact and smiling When appropriate, asking if I can help Using their name Saying thank you
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Sometimes, it takes a great deal of understanding by employees to sum up the needs of a customer. Selling is more than simply producing an item, wrapping it up and taking the money. Staff should be encouraged to talk to customers and understand what they are really looking for, but perhaps can't find without assistance.



And customers like to tell others about service experiences; the good, the bad and the ugly.

So next time you complete a transaction with that well-worn cliché "have a nice day" ask yourself a simple question.

Was that a programmed comment, or was it a genuine expression of care and understanding? What are some other phrases you could use?

Something to think about. . .

Five Most Frustrating Voice Mail Phrases

Voice mail remains a large frustration in this busy business world. And it's not just voice mail. The automated attendant is also on the list. In an effort to help reduce voice mail frustration, here are the five most frustrating phrases that your callers don't want to hear. These tips also apply to your cell phone voice mail.

1. I'm not at my desk right now

DUH? That's a hot lot of news. What a boring statement. Live a little. Let your callers know where you ARE - not where you're not. Tell them, "I AM in the office all this week" OR "I'm in a sales meeting till 3 pm." Let them know if you do or don't check messages.

2. Your call is very important to me

A big time waster. The caller is thinking, "Well, if I'm so darn important, where the heck are you?" And then again, think about it. Maybe the call isn't so important to you. You just don't need this phrase.

3. I'm sorry I missed your call

How dull. Of course you are. (Although, there are probably some that you're not sorry to have missed.) Leave this phrase out! It's a given. Use the time and space for something more valuable. Like where you are and when you will return!! Or, who they can call for the information.

4. I'll call you back as soon as possible

Not interesting and not fun. And based on Telephone Doctor surveys, probably not true. The truth is most people aren't returning their phone calls in a timely fashion. If you're telling your callers you'll call them back, make sure you do. If you think you may not return the call...then try this: "Go ahead and leave your phone number and I'll DECIDE if I'll call you back or not." (Just kidding!) Unreturned phone calls rank high on the frustration list. "As soon as possible" is not an effective phrase. All you need is to say, "I will call you back." (Then do it! Or have it returned on your behalf.)

5. No escape

Remember to tell callers to hit ZERO for the operator if they need more information. Or better yet, give them another name and extension. Although for the most part, that voice mail may come on also. (Then you're into what we call Voice Mail Jail!!!) Main point here is to offer an alternative if you're not there. Plus, you've bought back some time to say something more interesting or helpful to the caller. (Escape may not apply to cell phones.)

Let's talk about voice mail in general. Voice mail, per se, has three parts - the automated attendant, the greeting your callers hear, and the message you leave for someone on their voice mail.

The Automated Attendant

Or as many refer to it..."The Groaner." It's that voice that is a large part of the frustration. Especially when you're not able to get out of the system. (i.e. - no escape).

Is there anyone reading this right now who would argue against the fact that the first voice you hear when you call a company sets the mood, sets the tone for all future interactions? Then why on earth would you leave a robotic, monotone, dull voice to greet your callers? The voice (or digital chip) that came along with your system has a number of options for you. You can record it yourself or you can have one of your employees with a great upbeat voice record it. Or you can find a professional in your area that will be happy to help. Point being...you want a voice that says, "Hey, we're so glad you called." You want a greeting that is warm and friendly.

The Greeting On Your Voice Mail - A reminder: People want to know where you are - not where you're not! It's pretty simple. Leave an escape for the caller. Some place they can get information if needed.

As for "dating" your recording with the day and date, you might want to think twice on this. I don't say it's wrong or bad. But I do say there are too many ways to slip up and not record each day thereby making your recording outdated. And an OUTDATED greeting was high on the list of voice mail no, no's! You sound foolish and the caller wonders what else you might not be doing if you're not updating the greeting. I'd play it safe and not use a day and date.

Which leads us to the message that YOU leave for someone. It's your electronic business card and it needs to be GREAT.

Messages

There are 3 kinds of messages to leave: a poor, an average and a great. The message you leave for someone needs to be GREAT. Here's a sample of each. Which one are you?

Poor: Hi this is Bob. Gimme a call.

Average: Hi this is Bob at Acme Widgets. Call me at 291-1012. (Said wayyyyyyy too fast. - You know exactly what I'm talking about!)

GREAT: Hi Nancy. This is Bob Smith, at Acme Widgets. I'd like to get with you to talk about the plan for the meeting on the 27th. I'll plan on having lunch brought in at our office. I'm excited to get with you on this. I'm at 314 - that's central time in St. Louis, Missouri - 314-291-1012. Again, that's 314-291-1012. Look forward to it, Nancy. If I'm not in, ask for JUDY, at extension 42 and leave a message with her for me there. Thanks.

Let's not make it any more difficult than it really is. Voice mail can and should be a productivity enhancer. The automated attendant was not installed to replace people. It was installed to 1) answer on the first ring, and 2) expedite a phone call. And it does do both. That being said...it's still a big frustration in the business world. Make it less frustrating for your callers!!!

Now that you've read this article, trying calling into your own voice mail system and see how many of these frustrating phrases you use...then eliminate them. REMEMBER - check your cell phone voice mail too.!! Good luck!

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Customer Service I.Q. Quiz

By: Nancy Friedman, The Telephone Doctor

You may not have a lifeline...or phone a friend...or even take 2 wrong answers away...but you will enjoy taking this fun, simple quiz on customer service.

As we all know, it's not rocket science and, of course, most of it is all common sense as they say. However, we all know too that common sense is NOT that common.

So have fun, enjoy the quiz...and good luck!

1. "How can I help you?" belongs:

- A. In the initial greeting.
- B. In the message taking scenario.
- C. Nowhere. I'm not able to help anyone.

2. When I'm not able to help a customer, I should:

- A. Tell them honestly & thank them for their business and hang up.
- B. Give whatever information I can, right or wrong. Wrong information is better than no information.
- C. Get help immediately and advise the person help is on the way.

3. When I'm having a bad day, I should:

- A. Not bother coming into work.
- B. Leave my troubles at the doorstep like the song says.
- C. Tell all my co-workers my troubles to get it off my back.

4. Chewing gum at work is:

- A. OK.
- B. A bad breath refresher.
- C. Downright rude and obnoxious. FAGETABOUTIT!

5. A mirror at my desk will:

- A. Keep my ego in check.
- B. Remind me to smile BEFORE I pick up the phone.
- C. Give me bad luck if it breaks.

6. Basic customer service skills are important to me because:

- A. Everyone needs a refresher.
- B. I need a lot of help.
- C. I never learned any.

7. Internal customer service means:

- A. Be nice to others who come into my office.
- B. The customer is giving me a stomachache.
- C. Treating my co-workers as customers.

8. When using voice mail and leaving a message I should:

- A. Leave my phone number twice and slowly.
- B. Leave a good clean joke to keep them smiling.
- C. Not leave a message...just call back till I reach them.

9. Irrate callers/customers are important to our company because:

- A. It's fun to handle those kinds of calls.
- B. At least we get a second chance to make it right.
- C. I finally get to yell back.

10. Asking questions of the customer will:

- A. Aggravate them.
- B. Show I'm interested in helping.
- C. Be considered being too nosy.

I.Q. Quiz Answer

1. **Correct answer is B.** Anything *after* your name...*erases* your name. And on initial greetings, your name is very important. You have answered the phone to help them. It's a given. Those words are best used in a message taking scenario.
2. **Correct answer is C.** Be sure you let the customer know that help is on the way. That's the most important part.
3. **Correct answer is B.** We need to leave our troubles at the door. Arguments with a spouse or a bad hair day is *your* problem. Telephone Doctor calls that "*emotional leakage*." That's getting angry at Peter and taking it out on Paul. Not fair, not right and no fun.
4. **Correct answer is C.** No gum at work - ever. End of subject. If you have bad breath - use mouthwash.
5. **Correct answer is B.** The old Telephone Doctor adage..."smile BEFORE you pick up the phone," is the way to make every phone call, or customer contact, a great one. Remember, it's hard to be rude when you're smiling.
6. **Correct answer is A.** Everyone can use a brush up course. There's a great saying: "When you're through learning...you're through." Never stop taking those little basic skill lessons you're offered. Even if you do know it all...look how good you'll feel about that!
7. **Correct answer is C.** We need to treat our co-workers as well as we're going to treat our external customers. Remember: We Are Customers To Each Other. We sure don't need any internal conflicts between co-workers and departments.
8. **Correct answer is A.** Voice mail was meant to take an effective message. Give details and speak conversationally so the person receiving the message will enjoy it. Effective messages have concrete information - dates, times, names, situations. Leave your phone number - twice and slowly. Make voice mail work for you...not against you.
9. **Correct answer is B.** Getting a second chance is golden. And irate callers, while certainly not pleasant, can be the challenge of the day. And they can be satisfied.
10. **Correct answer is B.** Listening and questioning skills are very important to excellent customer service.

Staff Recognition— Our Service Principles at Work

How many times a day do you think that phrase is said to someone? Or just how many times has that phrase been said to you in one day? I'm often asked if "Have a nice day" can be said too many times?

The answer: Yes, I guess it could if you're saying it to the same person over and over. That might get annoying.

However, for the average person, hearing a genuine "Have a nice day" can be a good thing to hear - "genuine" being the key word.

Now, some can profess that they were doing the right thing. Almost. Sure the words were there, but the meaning and sincerity sure wasn't. If you're telling the cash register and floor to have a nice day, you're really not doing any good. Try looking in the customer's eyes and say it. It'll mean so much more. And oh, by the way, "Have a nice day" doesn't even count, unless you're smiling.

And then there's the phone call that ends with the same phrase. And because it's impossible to say that phrase while looking into the caller's eyes directly, it needs to be said with more conviction. And yes, that good, old smile still needs to be there, too.

And don't forget, there are so many other ways to end a conversation besides "Have a nice day." Here are just a few. (And I'm betting you can think of a batch of your own.)

"Thanks for calling."

"I enjoyed talking with you."

"Good to hear from you."

"Enjoy your day."

"Have a beautiful day."

As I said, you probably can add to those. Remember, there are lots of synonyms for GOOD. You don't need to be stuck on that one word.

People like to do business with people who are nice and more importantly friendly. It's that simple. And the way you can be extra nice is to look people in the eye when you're talking with them. SMILE, and make it meaningful. On the phone, give the caller your full attention. Even though you've heard the problem or the question 800 times, that one person is most probably going through it for the first time.

Enjoy much health & happiness in the New Year. And **MAKE IT A GREAT DAY!!!**