

WEEK FOUR: GO THE EXTRA MILE SEPTEMBER 5, 2011 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

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

Go the Extra Mile means that we go beyond the minimum requirements of our job and provide a higher level of service.



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"> • Action 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:

We are each responsible for the appearance of our area. Give yourself a vigorous visual audit. Your customers do it every day. What can you do now to improve your visual image? How about change the toner cartridge in your printer, update or remove old items hanging on the walls, find a better place to stash that box gathering dust in the corner. Take a look around you. What impression does your area give a visitor?

Something to think about. . .

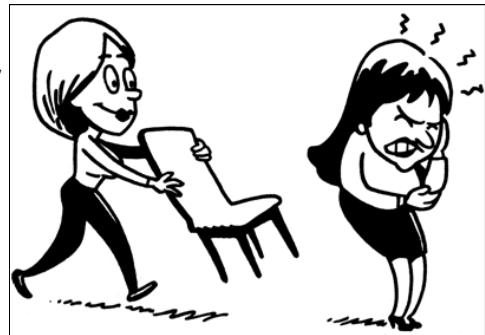
You May Never Know What's Really Going On

We meet people face-to-face, at counters, in meetings, in writing and over the phone. Often our moments of contact are brief, fragmented, and mere snapshots in the longer movie of their lives.

We form impressions based upon these moments, and act upon those feelings. But we may never know what's really going on.

The next time you encounter someone who triggers a negative reaction by their tone of voice, body posture, odd request or persistent misunderstanding, take a moment to pause and consider.

This other person may have health or financial difficulties you will never know about. This other person may be in the middle of a crisis or some unanticipated trouble. This other person has a life that is not revealed by your short moment together. This other person may be a lot like you.



Given that I may never know 'what's really going on' with those who trigger my negative emotions, I've adopted two principles that serve me (and them) very well:

1. *Practice generosity*

For the upset customer, I give something more than they expected. For frustrated staff, I offer an extra pat on the back. For the disgruntled vendor or supplier, I give them the benefit of the doubt.

2. *Exercise compassion*

To the angry customer I say gently, 'You must be having a tough day.' To the befuddled sales clerk I offer, 'Thanks for your help. I know this can be confusing.' To the forever unsatisfied I state, 'It's OK. You deserve to get what you really want.'

Note that my principles are to *practice* generosity and *exercise* compassion. This isn't always easy. It takes effort, a bit like doing sit-ups. But it does get easier over time, and makes me feel better, too.

Key Learning Point

You win loyalty when people see you are on their side, not against them. The next time you experience a negative reaction to another person's words, actions or behavior, do some mental sit-ups before you reply. Then practice generosity and exercise compassion.

Action Steps

Discuss this with your colleagues, friends and family members. Find out what kind of person bothers, irritates or gets you hopping mad. Then brainstorm what might be happening or hurting in someone else's life that has them acting up or behaving towards you that way.

If you were in that painful position, what generous gesture or compassionate kindness might you appreciate most? What nice things could someone say that would help you out? What kind actions could someone do that would ease or heal your pain?

The next time someone upset or angry appears in your life, take the initiative to do something right: practice generosity, exercise compassion.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Customer Astonishment: 10 Secrets to World-Class Customer Care

#1: Be Customer Champions! Know what your team stands for and communicate it through words and actions. Champion your core purpose in direct response to what your customers want and need the most.

#2: Get Connected. Make communication linkage a top priority that demonstrates the importance of all of your customers, internal and external.

#3: Get It Together. Quickly resolve internal conflicts so they do not become apparent and weaken the customer's confidence in your team. Achieve crystal clear agreement on team priorities and individual responsibilities.

#4: Know Your Customers. Listen to them. Observe them. Make a commitment to NO SURPRISES, except on their birthdays. What you promise is what they get and more.

#5: Know the Bear. There is a bear out there, behind you. Faster is not fast enough. Reliable is not reliable enough. World-Class means you set a standard for the world to follow. The bear cannot keep up.

#6: Take Ownership. Champion the idea that "I am the one." For each member of your team, this means "I am the one who first spoke with the customer. And, at the end of the day, I am the one who will follow through to be sure WE met their needs."

#7: Stake Your Reputation. Create your very own Hallmarks of Professional Excellence. Seize those crucial moments of truth in a way that shows your true commitment to each customer.

#8: Add Value at Each Step of the Way. Be sure that whatever it is that you do, you do it with the customer in mind.

#9: Smooth the Way. Always treat the customer as an honored guest. Never place your convenience above that of the customer. Your professionalism will shine as you do.

#10: Create Options. Never say "No" to the customer. NO is often uncreative. YES is great, but may be over-commitment. The customer needs options. Create them. Even partial solutions are better than roadblocks. Be a world-class problem solver!

Use these 10 tips and you will achieve your goals and prosper. They will help you set your own mark for world-class customer care.

Did you Know?

Most businesses think that they know what their customers expect and are meeting those expectations. Are you really sure you know what they expect? How do you know? Is that good enough? Maybe it is time that you ask them. It does not need to be a formal survey or comment cards, but those are always good. It could be as simple as just asking questions like:

How was everything today? What could we do to be of greater assistance? Were you able to find, do, or get what you wanted?

I am sure that you can come up with more of your own questions that may be more specific or appropriate for your situation. Although asking is important because it shows your customers that you care, in the long run, it is even more important that you do something with the information you receive rather than from the answers that you get. Realize that even if you do not ask the questions, your customers are grading you and keeping a mental scorecard. You should also know that just meeting their expectations will only get you a grade of "C."

Staff Recognition

Our service Principles at Work

Have you met service providers who are frustrated, tired or just burnt out?

They may look frantic or exhausted. They may sound sad or just plain bored.

Their pride in service has faded away and their passion has all but disappeared. They are just going through the motions, watching the clock, earning a living and waiting for the day's demise.

Have you met one of these tired men or women? Have you ever *been* one?

Serving others is the essence of a fulfilling business and social life. But service requires a contribution, an exchange of energy between two players

You can't serve others well unless you've learned to serve yourself.

If you are too worn out to serve with a smile on your face and a glow of goodness in your heart, you need rest and rejuvenation right away. Do what's best for your customers – and for you. Take a break. Serve yourself.

Take a walk. Spend time with nature. Listen to music. Read and be inspired. Splurge on a favorite food. Get a backrub. Give a hug. Talk to an old friend. Drink something healthy. Take a short nap. Watch the clouds go by. Visit an art gallery or a playground. Take a class. Throw a party. Write a poem. Call your mother. Watch a movie that will make you laugh or cry. Step in the shower and sing out loud. Enjoy a long, hot soak in the tub.

Do whatever lifts you up, clears your mind and turns you back 'on' for delivering superior service.