

WEEK TWO: ACT IN THE MOMENT MARCH 5, 2012 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

This week our focus is on the Service Principle “Act In The Moment”

Unanticipated Service: The service that surprises and delights your customer.



6. I Respond Positively When Speaking with Others I respond positively and show I care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Concentrating on the customer -Attentively listening while making eye contact -Responding with sincerity and, when appropriate saying “I’m happy to take care of that for you” -Using the customer’s name if I know it -Ensuring complete satisfaction 	7. I L.E.A.R.N. to wow the Customer I show I care when presented with a customer issue by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Owning the problem -I use the L.E.A.R.N. process of listening, empathizing, apologizing, reacting and notifying to resolve, wow and build trust 	8. I know our Library System I can answer customers’ questions because I know about the Library’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Facilities -Materials -Services -Procedures and processes -Monthly events, activities, training classes and/or meetings 	9. I Anticipate Needs I anticipate our customers’ needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Watching for cues -Listening thoroughly -Acting before being asked 	10. I Act on Knowledge I ensure the success of the system each day by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowing our regular customers by name -Proactively accommodating our customers’ needs -Keeping myself up to date and knowledgeable about sources of information
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Anticipating a customer’s needs is an important part of any businesses. Anticipating needs also provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. A business that takes the extra step of anticipating and providing for an obvious corollary need can generate loyal, repeat customers.

While much of this may involve remembering or noting the desires of the individual customer, it also largely means putting yourself in a customer’s place, which takes a little practice.

Discuss five ways you can put yourself in your customer’s place and improve your anticipation of a customer’s needs.

Something to think about. . .

Six Keys to Creating “Wow” Customer Service Experiences

Customers of every kind of business imaginable these days bemoan the state of customer service. While the global economy and the Internet have given businesses the opportunity to serve more clients than ever before, the trend has also given way to impersonal, lackluster customer service. It’s unfortunate that most businesses today don’t realize that they are regularly losing valuable customers if they don’t focus on providing an exceptional customer service experience.

In most businesses, once a customer begins dealing with the customer service department, he or she is already in a negative mindset. The best customer service representatives aren’t those that simply neutralize the problem. Outstanding customer service representatives take a negative and turn it into a positive that ensures the customer is not only happy, but is convinced he or she has had an outstanding experience – the Wow Factor – that he would not have gotten with any other company.

The key ingredients of the Wow experience are:

- Seamless Service
- Trustworthy Service
- Attentiveness
- Resourcefulness
- Courtesy
- Pro-active Service

Seamless Service means providing everything the customer needs, not just what is required to meet the minimum standards. It’s about making sure that they don’t have to wait and wonder. Customers will appreciate a smooth, seamless process for addressing their needs. If there are several steps needed to take care of their concerns, keep them in the loop – update them by email or with a quick phone call so that they know you are working on the situation and progress is being made. By keeping them abreast of what is going on, you are letting them know you haven’t forgotten about them and that you understand their concerns – reassurance and communication are powerful customer service tools.

Trustworthy Service is essential to retaining customers. Promising a customer anything and delivering nothing is the surest way to not only lose a customer, but get the kind of “word of mouth” bad press that can ruin you. *Under promise and over deliver* – If you promise a satisfactory solution and then go the extra mile to not only satisfy the customer, but gain their appreciation and “Wow” them, you will get word of mouth that will bring new customers to you.

Attentive Service means paying attention during and after the initial contact. How many times have you contacted customer service and been subjected to an obviously scripted response from the customer service representative? Does it give you the feeling they aren’t really listening, but just trying to get to the end of their canned presentation?

Attentiveness should run through every customer service experience, from listening carefully to the customer's concerns to following up after the exchange is over to make sure their needs have been met. Listening isn't just about hearing – it is about understanding what is really being said. The words are just the beginning – what about the customer's tone of voice? Her mood? Is she disappointed, angry or frustrated? Keying in to the customer's mood and responding appropriately is essential, and it means *not* following a script.

Resourcefulness means finding solutions when there appear to be none. Many companies have iron-clad policies that must be followed whenever a problem arises; however, sometimes a customer won't be satisfied by the "company line" approach. Resourceful customer service representatives know that there is always a way to move beyond the standard procedures in order to make a customer happy. Resourcefulness involves *finding a solution* when a solution isn't apparent. This may mean moving up the chain of command *before* the customer demands to talk to your superior. Companies with excellent customer service also give their representatives some leeway so that they can come up with creative solutions on their own. When a customer senses that you are going beyond the norm to help them, they will feel valued and respected.

Courtesy is a commodity that is becoming rarer every day. It takes so little to be polite but it is becoming a lost art. Say please when you ask a customer a question, thank them for their information and take your time talking to them. Nothing makes a customer feel more devalued than being treated like a number. Use the person's name, make requests rather than demands and *know when to apologize*. When something goes wrong for a customer, they want to hear that you understand their frustration and that you are genuinely sorry that they are being inconvenienced. It takes nothing to say, "I'm so sorry you aren't satisfied and I hope we can do something to correct this."

Pro-Active Service means not waiting for the customer to come up with a solution that you simply follow through on. A pro-active customer service representative *anticipates the needs of the customer and follows through*. Don't wait for the customer to ask you what you are willing to do – anticipate the question and answer it before they can ask. If they call and say they aren't satisfied, apologize and immediately suggest some solutions. Customers want you to take the lead – acknowledge their unhappiness, offer a solution or solutions and explain to them how you are going to follow through. Pro-Active service means taking the lead, which will reassure your customers that you know what you are doing and that you will follow through.

If you keep these six keys in mind – seamless service, trustworthiness, attentiveness, resourcefulness, courtesy and pro-active service – you will be able to offer every customer the **Wow Customer Service Experience** that inspires loyalty and keeps customers coming back for more.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

The "Wow!" Factor is that unnamed quality in a product or service that elicits a "Wow!" from the customer the first time they encounter it. Give an example of something you did recently to Wow a customer.

Did you Know?

Here are five secrets to showing your customers you really do care about their situations when interacting with them:

1. Listen!

Take the time to listen to the “pain” the customer is trying to share with you. There is a reason why we have two ears and one mouth. Listen for the content and not the method of communication the customer is using. Use active listen skills such as

- Nodding your head
- Leaning forward to show interest
- Saying “I hear what you saying,” “I see what you mean,” or “tell me more”
- Stop doing something else and devoted all your attention to listening.
- Look at the customer
- Be patience and not interrupt the customer before adding your thoughts

You might be the first person that day that took time to listen to that person. Make the most of it.

2. Respond

Respond to the customer in the following ways:

- Use inflection in your voice (avoid sounding monotone)
- Don’t use “whatever,” “yeah, right,” “if you say so”

3. Check your body language

Make sure your body language is saying to the customer, “I want to help you.” Make sure you are doing the following:

- Smile
- Stand erect
- Hands at your side, but never on your hips
- Avoid leaning against the counter or slouching in the chair (especially while speaking on the telephone as the customer can hear your disinterest)
- Look and act alive

4. Show Empathy (Understand the Pain)

Show the customers that you understand their “pain.” Make comments such as

“I can understand why you would feel that way.”

“If I were in your shoes I would feel the same way”

“I would be disappointed, too, if that happened to me.”

Most customers just want to be listened to and understood. Show them that you understand their “pain” and solution come much earlier.

5. Commit to Action

Let the customer know that action will be taken; and then act. One without the other is just a broken promise. Share with the customer your clear plan of action such as the following:

"I am personally going to take care of this for you. What we are going to do is..."

"I need to get additional information before I take care of this for you. I am going to talk with my manager. Would you mind waiting?"

These are just some of the tools you can use to keep your customers happy and increase revenues. Apply them today to show that you care about your customers.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

It is always nicer to get a pat on the back rather than to get stabbed in the back. If you're wondering "how do I change my negative attitude," start by observing how you communicate with coworkers. If you practice asking useful questions, giving accolades and being gracious at work for two weeks, you'll notice a difference in the people you work with and in your own feelings about work.

Stay Positive Checkup Questions:

- **How often do you show appreciation at work?**
- **Are there opportunities to energize your coworkers?**

What is the key to increasing a positive attitude in the workplace?