

WEEK THREE: USE A PERSONAL TOUCH FEBRUARY 11, 2013 SERVICE PRINCIPLES NEWSLETTER

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

It’s important to learn about the special touches that each individual prefers, but when we act on our knowledge and “make it happen” we show our spirit to serve and make each customer feel 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 action 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:

Telephone etiquette refers to a set of rules that apply when people make calls to others or when they are receiving a phone call. There are slightly different rules for a variety of situations. Making and receiving personal calls are not the same as making/receiving business calls. Define five rules of telephone etiquette. How are those displayed with our customers?

Something to think about...

6 Principles of Customer Service Etiquette

Customer service etiquette principles should be integrated into every facet of your organization because providing superior customer service is the most effective way to differentiate your business from the competition.

Many employees will walk onto a job with little or no knowledge of how to interact or communicate with customers and without any appreciation of the importance of delivering exceptional customer service.

Employers have a responsibility to set and effectively communicate the ground rules for how an employee should operate within their company. Often an employee is issued a manual or orientation without any formal training on the company's unique culture or way of conducting business. With this lack of understanding, you have employees in effect defining the company's policies based on their social norms, which leads to the loss of productivity, morale, and profitability.

Empower your employees by teaching them the six principles of customer service etiquette. Properly train and educate your employees on how to interact and communicate with customers to deliver superior customer service, cultivate long-term relationships with clients, build customer loyalty, and differentiate your business from the competition.

6 Principles of Customer Service Etiquette:

- Smile and demonstrate good manners. Teach employees to smile, leading by example. Establish a culture of high quality customer service and commit to deliver superior service whether over the phone or face-to-face.
- Make customers feel comfortable, valued, and appreciated.
- Treat customers with respect, empathy, and efficiency.
- Listen actively to be responsive and exceed customer expectations.
- Effectively resolve the customer's problem.

Say "Thank you" and "Please" graciously.

Build prosperous relationships by treating customers as you want to be treated.

Discussion Starter

If listening is such a critical part of good communication, how can we become better listeners?

The fact is that learning to be a good listener can be challenging, but it can be done by practicing a few simple guidelines:

- **Attention:** Give your full attention to the person who is speaking. Multi-tasking and good listening aren't compatible. So stop whatever else you're doing, and give the speaker your attention.
- **Attitude:** Attitude plays a big part in active listening. You are the one that makes the decision to give your attention to the speaker, so if you must, convince yourself that they have something useful to say. They probably do!
- **Focus:** Make sure you are focused on listening - if your mind starts to wander, try adjusting your body position. Take brief notes and write down any questions that you might want to ask them when they finish.
- **Acknowledge:** Whether on the phone or face-to-face, use good voice tone and 'verbal head nods' ("uh huh", "yes", "mmm hmmm", "oh", "I see") to let the speaker know that you are paying attention. Be sure to also incorporate good body language in face-to-face communications. Sit up straight, lean in slightly if appropriate, and maintain good eye contact.
- **Pause:** Before you speak let the speaker finish what they are saying. Don't interrupt - it can give the impression that you aren't listening even if you are. It might even help to take a few breaths between when they finish speaking and you begin. This will also give the impression that you're really considering what they just said.

Confirm: Make sure you are clear about what was said before you respond. Briefly restate or paraphrase what they said so that you can confirm your understanding. For example, "What I heard you say is..." or "If I understand correctly, then..."

As a better listener, you will learn new things, be more helpful and insightful, create an emotional bond between you and the other person, and also build and maintain relationships more easily. And that's the best news I've heard in a long time!

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

When greeting a customer, you only have 5 seconds to make a good first impression. Therefore, the way you approach your customer will have a lasting impact on them and will likely drive the direction of your relationship with them from that point forward.

Here are some tips to give you the advantage when greeting customers initially:

Have a positive attitude.

Greet with their name.

Keep good notes—keep it personal and professional.

Keep focus on customer—not on self.

Ask specifically how you can help them.

Smile. Keep smiling.

Shake hands properly.

Make steady eye contact.

Have an agenda ready.

Give examples of how we use each of these tips to build relationships and provide excellent customer service.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Customers make their purchasing decisions based on how they feel. When they are developing relationships with their service and product supplies, a person who smiles, is inviting, and is easy to talk to ranks high in the preferred qualities that customers list.

Think about the last great customer experience you had. Now think about the last really bad experience you had with a customer support person – there's a fair chance that much of the difference between the two exchanges wasn't about the product or service that the organization provides, but rather was simply a reflection on how personable, how helpful and, yes, how friendly the customer service person was.

While seemingly obvious, what do we actually mean when we talk about "friendliness" in customer service?

Discussion Starters

The importance of asking the right questions is to get the right answers and therefore the right results. Most people ask lousy questions that cripple their results. Lousy questions turn your focus away from what you want and towards more of what you don't want. And since we ask and answer mental questions every day, our questions wield great power over our results.

Here are some examples of weak questions vs. strong questions:

Upon waking up early

Weak: Can I fall back asleep again? Should I go back to bed?

Strong: What would be the best way to start my day? How can I energize myself? Where can I find something inspirational or motivational to read right now?

When contemplating exercise (and feeling unmotivated)

Weak: Is it too hot/cold to exercise? Can I skip it for today? What difference will it make if I just skip a day? Don't I deserve a day off?

Strong: Won't it feel great hitting the showers afterwards? What should I listen to while I work-out? Won't it be wonderful to achieve my fitness goals? How can I make this session more fun?

When considering a dietary improvement

Weak: What foods am I going to have to give up? How am I going to deal with the deprivation? Am I going to have to eat like this *forever*?

Strong: What foods that I like will I get to eat more of? What new foods can I experiment with? Won't it be great when I reach my goal weight? Won't it be wonderful to finally master this area of my life once and for all? Once I succeed at this, who else can I help?

Nearing the end of the workday

Weak: Have I done enough that I can justify quitting for the day? Is this a good time to stop? Can I finish this tomorrow?

Strong: What's next? How can I complete one more task? How much more can I get done today?

When facing an unfamiliar social situation

Weak: How can I avoid looking like an idiot? What should I talk about? How can I keep from being too nervous or shy? How did I get myself into this situation? Can I get out of going?

Strong: Won't it be fun to meet some interesting new people? If I see someone there who's a bit shy, what can I do to make him/her feel more comfortable? What can I expect others at this event to have in common with me?

What's the difference?

How does this affect the way we deliver customer service?