

SERVICE PRINCIPLES

METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

WEEK FOUR: GO THE EXTRA MILE JANUARY 27, 2014

You have just a few seconds to make a good first impression and it's almost impossible every to change it. So it's worth giving each new encounter your best shot. Much of what you need to do to make a good impression is common sense. But with a little extra thought and preparation, you can hone your intuitive style and make every first impression not just good but great!



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:

The greatest way to make a positive first impression is to demonstrate immediately that the other person, not you, is the center of action and conversation. Illustrate that the spotlight is on you only, and you'll miss opportunities for friendships, jobs, relationships, networking, and service. Show that you are other-centered, and first-time acquaintances will be eager to see you again. How do we demonstrate to our customers that they are the center of our focus?

Something to think about...

Creative Customer Service - How Far Will You Go to Wow a Customer?

A large part of customer service success is creating a seamless experience. Customer needs are anticipated; systems are in place; employees are trained. The company runs like a well-oiled machine. But what happens when the unexpected happens? Customers have an “unusual” request or they simply don’t know the rules of the system? The unexpected, I suggest, provides the opportunity to stretch the system, improve the system, or even forget the system and Wow a customer.

I arrived late at a hotel in Cambridge, MA the night before an 8 am training, dressed for the cold weather in brown boots and heavy trousers. When I got to my room I unpacked my lovely, gray suit only to discover that I had left my black heels at home. I looked down at my feet and had to admit the brown boots were not even an option.

I went to the concierge for help. It was after 10 pm. Nothing was open. All of the shops in the area opened at 9 am, no help again. I was desperate. I pressed the concierge, “There’s nothing that can be done?” Silence. I put on my best pathetic gaze and repeated, “Nothing...?”

The concierge contemplated further then asked, “What size are you?” Full of hope I blurted out my shoe size for all to hear. The concierge stepped out from behind the desk, pointed to the black heels on her feet and asked, “Will these work?” I could have kissed her. She gave me the shoes right off of her feet!

After conducting a program in Fort Smith, AR I wanted to have a nice dinner. The hotel there recommended an Italian restaurant, but neglected to mention that they take reservations only. I arrived early at the restaurant, about 5:30 pm, and requested a table for one, non-smoking.

The first question in response was, “Reservation?” I said, “No.” The second question was, “Do you have a date joining you?” I said, “Don’t rub it in.” The gentleman behind the desk was well humored and friendly and explained the reservation situation. I confessed I didn’t know and was from out of state.

He attempted to accommodate me in the schedule. The non-smoking section was full so he asked one of his servers about the smoking habits of the guests in the smoking section, “What about the Jones’?” The server said, “They smoke like chimneys. She wouldn’t be comfortable there.” “What about the Smith’s?” “They’re chain smokers too.”

The gentleman disappeared for a few minutes and upon returning produced a table for one in the non-smoking section. I was reading the menu when a server seated a table of five. They started to pull out cigarettes. I gasped quietly. The server quickly reappeared and said, “I’m sorry. This is the non-smoking section. Follow me.” This happened two more times with different servers. The gentleman had rearranged the entire floor plan of the restaurant to accommodate me!

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For companies with excellent systems in place, the next frontier in customer service is Wow, handling the unexpected creatively. I have observed that companies and professionals practicing creative customer service successfully have two things in common

The first commonality is that they care. Management cares. Employees care. Everyone cares a great deal about people. They like to help people solve problems. In fact, not helping people would be like kicking a puppy. The concierge at the hotel cared about my shoe predicament and personally decided to go above and beyond. How much does your company care? How much do you care?

The second commonality is that employees have authority. Even when people care, if their hands are tied they can't help. In addition, employees who aren't especially "caring" might be motivated to be creative for customers simply because it feels good to exercise their authority. The gentleman managing the restaurant that night cared and had the authority to accommodate a guest who didn't know the reservation rules. Do you have enough authority to be creative?

With all of the advances in technology, doing a good job isn't good enough to separate from the pack. The prize will go to the one creating new frontiers. How far will you go to Wow a customer?



DISCUSSION STARTERS:

We talk a lot about giving our customers what they want. Because if we fail to give them what they want they'll leave us. That's what customer loyalty is all about. But as we do this, we should keep in mind some guidelines.

First, we sometimes forget to ask their customer what he wants until its too late. We keep trying different things, assuming they'll find them interesting. Finally, as they run away (in fear) we ask the all important question "what do you want?"

Going overboard means doing too much. It means you're not sure of what your customers really want so you throw everything but the kitchen sink at them. But instead of attracting them, this is what overwhelms them and repels them.

There's a difference in going the extra mile and going overboard. Sure we want to thrill them so they like doing business with us. If we give them a positive and memorable experience they'll be more loyal. And we can do this by going the extra mile. But if we go too far and fail to discover what they really want, we can chase customers away forever.

How do you discover what your customers want? And what do you to go the extra mile without going overboard?

Encouraging Words...

Thoroughness

Knowing what factors will diminish the effectiveness of my work or words if neglected.

Truthfulness

Earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts

A Thought...

No one ever attains very eminent success by simply doing what is required of him; it is the amount and excellence of what is over and above the required, that determines the greatness of ultimate distinction.

Did you Know?

In order for one to be successful, one would need to **work earnestly, think positively, develop good character, continue to learn and be prepared to go the extra mile**. Nothing extraordinary will be achieved unless one is prepared to go the extra mile.

“Do more than is required.

What is the distance between someone who achieves their goals consistently and those who spend their lives and careers **merely following? The extra mile.**” - *Gary Ryan Blair*

Staff Recognition

Our service Principles at Work

In a world where mediocrity is becoming alarmingly common, it's a refreshing change to encounter people who are willing to go the extra mile.

If we are lucky we encounter such people on a daily basis. A checkout clerk who is particularly courteous, a co-worker who helps you do something not in their job description, or even a family member who does something to lighten your load.

Going beyond what others expect of you can never be a bad thing. It's a great principle to live by no matter who you are or what you do.

Your attitude is something that shines out beyond the boundaries of what you present to others. There's nothing that beats the feeling when someone surprises you by going the extra mile.