



WHEN CUSTOMER SERVICE BECOMES A CLICHÉ

I'm a nice customer. You all know me – I'm the one who never complains no matter what kind of service I get. I'll go into a restaurant and I'll sit while the waitress gossips with her boyfriend and never bothers to look and see if my hamburger is ready to go. Sometimes someone who came in later than I did, gets my hamburger, but I don't complain. If the soup is cold or the cream for the coffee is sour, whatever happens, I try to be nice about it.

It's the same when I go to a store to buy something. I try to be thoughtful of the other person. If I get a snooty sales person who gets rattled because I want to look at several things before I make up my mind, I'm polite as can be. I don't believe rudeness in return is the answer. I wasn't raised that way. And it's seldom I take anything back to a store. I've found people are just about always disagreeable to me when I do. Life is short – too short for indulging in these unpleasant little scrimmages for the sake of a dollar.

I bought a toaster that burned out after two weeks. I've found people are so busy telling me I had burned it out on purpose, that I didn't get a chance to ask them if they knew where I could send it to have it repaired. I never kick; I never nag, I never criticise, and I wouldn't dream of making a scene, as I've seen people doing in public places. I think that's awful. No, I'm the nice customer. And I'll tell you what else I am. I am also the customer who never comes back!

That's my little revenge for getting pushed too much. That's why I take whatever they hand out, because I know I'm not coming back. It's true that this way doesn't relieve my feelings right off, as telling what I think of them would, but in the long run, it's a far more deadly revenge.

In fact, a nice customer like myself, multiplied by others of my kind, can just about ruin a business. And there are a lot of nice people in the world just like me. When we get pushed far enough we go down the street to another motor business, and have our needs serviced there. They're smart enough to hire help who appreciate nice customers.

They say he who laughs best, is he who laughs last. I laugh when I see them so frantically spending their money on advertising to get me back, when they could have made me welcome in the first place with a few kind words and a smile.

Customer service

Customer service is a cliché, if ever there was one. The name of the game is making customer service pay. It never ceases to amaze me how most businesses go about tackling the question of customer service. What most of them do is to start by spending large amounts of money in an attempt to impress their customers.

What they fail to do is to find out if this will make them money or not. Great customer service without bottom line results is a waste of time and money. The following three steps are necessary to achieving great, meaningful, customer service.

1. Consistency

It's no good if whatever you do differs each day. Your customers will want to know that whenever they visit your business the service will be the same.

2. Make it easy for customer to buy

You see, with consistency comes trust. By building consistency into your sales process, you will ensure you systematically surpass their expectations every time they buy from you and there will be no unpleasant surprises.

3. Introduce the WOW factor

This is the way to create raving fans. The fundamentals of creating great customer service involve creating a system to make sure your customer's expectations are surpassed, every time. Having satisfied customer implies that you have given them all they've wanted, but nothing more. But if you're going to surpass their expectations, you must systematically go beyond their expectations. For every single day you need to be getting better.

People are willing to pay for service – when it's service they desire. If the service exceeds their expectations, they will stay with you and they will say good things about your business. But if your service is poor, they'll walk away, they'll talk negatively about your business and they'll balk at coming back.

Be consistent, always smile and give your customer's more than they expect. And be sure they leave with a smile on their face. **mb**

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