

REMEMBER THE SERVICE

The hospitality industry includes food services, accommodations, recreation, and entertainment. This is a huge industry and one that contributes a great deal to the economy.

If I look up “hospitality” in the dictionary, the definition refers to hospitable treatment. If I look up “hospitable”, the definition includes promising or suggesting generous and cordial welcome and offering a pleasant or sustaining environment.

In the hospitality industry, it is that generous and cordial welcome that makes or breaks the business. Customer service plays a strong role when it comes to welcoming your guests. You may work hard and invest lots of dollars into making your hotel room lavish, your ski slopes challenging and your menu mouth watering, but without the proper customer service, there will be little customer loyalty to your business.

Whether your business is part of the hospitality industry or not, ask yourself if you have customer service measures in place to ensure the customer a “generous and cordial welcome”. Below are a few suggestions for you and your employees to follow.

- Smile! As a customer, I really appreciate being looked in the eye and given an honest smile. Recognizing the customer as a real person, not just an object, is the first thing you can do to welcome them to your business.



- Feel free to use names, but keep them respectful. I never mind being addressed as miss or ma’am, Ms King is great and even the more causal Bev is absolutely fine, but boy do I get tired of being “honey” and “sweetie”. Those terms will kill a tip faster than spilling food on my lap.
- Keep the personal lives away from the customer. When you are providing me service, I do not want to hear about last night’s date, the fight with your mother or how sick you were this morning. Give me, the paying customer, your 100% attention!
- Don’t let systems and procedures keep you from fulfilling the customer’s needs. Yes, I realize that some customers will take advantage far beyond their value, but 99% of the time you should be able to go around the normal policies and procedures to make

things just right for them. The good word-of-mouth will come back to you two-fold.

- Touch all the senses. Sight, smell, sound, touch and taste are all elements that invite and impress the customer. Don't be slack on anything that will leave a negative impression. Also, don't overdo. My personal senses do not welcome strong perfumes, loud blaring noises and flashing lights. To others, these are the elements that are sought. Know your customer well enough to know what type of environment they are looking for.
- Finally, follow through on your promises. Train your employees well enough that they can make decisions and perform their duties in ways that delight and make memories. Okay, that may sound extreme, but how nice it is to have someone remember an experience from your place of business for months and years down the road.

Remember that the performance of every employee is crucial to your business having a totally satisfied customer.

It takes constant energy to ensure that the above items are happening each and every time a customer frequents your place of business. We all tend to get bogged down in the day-to-day drudgeries of managing our work day. Make "hospitality" a part of what your business is all about. Recognize those employees that are able to pass on that cordial welcome and let every customer know that they are the most important responsibility that you have today.

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