

THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. **KNOW AND LISTEN TO YOUR CUSTOMERS.** If you don't really know your customers, how can you understand what they value? And if you don't give them what they value, they will soon take their business elsewhere. Develop several methods for listening to your customers like focus groups, questionnaires, customer panels and just plain one-on-one listening. Every employee can listen for "I wish" statements from customers. For example, "I wish you were open longer hours," or "I wish you would also add this to the product or service." This is a chance to wow your customers and also offer something your competitors don't.

2. **BELIEVE THAT CUSTOMER SERVICE DRIVES PROFIT.** Truly believe. It is not just a "nice thing to do" and there are many statistics and case studies that support this fact. Your bottom line can be positively impacted if your service is good enough so don't let the first place you cut expenses be the customer service department. Competing on price alone is a recipe for disaster. If you work in a non-profit environment, good customer service helps you help your customers more.

3. **ENSURE THAT EVERYONE GETS TRAINING IN CUSTOMER SERVICE, ESPECIALLY IN HOW TO DEAL WITH IRATE, RUDE, OR ABUSIVE CUSTOMERS.** There are many more of them today thanks to our highly stressed world. Ask your company to provide training or look for an online course. I have one available through gettothepointbooks.com and will be offering a webinar on it. Let me know if you are interested.

4. **MAKE SURE YOU CLEARLY UNDERSTAND YOUR SERVICE STRATEGY.** What level of service do you want to offer and how are you going to accomplish it? Are you expected to be a Ritz Carlton or a McDonalds as far as service is concerned? How far are you allowed to go in achieving that level of service? Then check to make sure your systems, procedures and personnel can support and deliver that level.

5. **TRY TO IDENTIFY AND GET RID OF ALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ARE CUSTOMER UNFRIENDLY.** Many companies put up numerous barriers to good customer service. For instance, is your return policy easy to understand and implement? What about your telephone system? Get rid of all your "rupoles" (rules, policies and procedures) that stand between you and your customer. Some organizations have a weekly "What's dumb, what needs to be different" meeting to weed them out.

So how do you measure up? If you don't, call me to help! peggy@peggymorrow.com

Contact me if you would like to talk about a customized team retreat to work on any of your specific team or customer service issues. I can be reached via e-mail at:

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