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Franchising
Insight

FROM

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Secrets of
Successful
Site Selection

Steps to Building
Loyal Clientele

Franchise Marketing
in 2013



Customer Service

STEPS TO BUILDING A LOYAL CLIENTELE



An old Chinese proverb goes something like this: *Not knowing there's a tiger in the bushes will not keep it from harming you.*

The same is true for guest satisfaction: Not knowing whether customers who patronize your stores are impressed, ambivalent, or dissatisfied will not stop those guests from sharing their limited discretionary dollars with competitors, defecting to other brands, and spreading negative word of mouth about their dissatisfactory or mediocre experience. The revenue implications are obvious, which is why actively managing your customer's experience can be so lucrative.

Studies show that dissatisfied customers tell an average of 10 people about a bad service experience. Each of these people tells an additional 10 people. In other words, if we lose one customer,

"People will talk about excellent service as much as poor service if you give them something worth talking about."

we may actually lose 100. Likewise, every satisfied customer can lead to 100 new customers. People will talk about excellent service as much as poor service if you give them something worth talking about.

As a franchise owner, customer service should be your number one priority. If you do everything else right, but fail to provide excellent service to each customer, you will fail as a business. Therefore, while some businesses focus on costs, margins and profits, your focus as a franchisee should be on the total satisfaction of every customer that enters your store. This does not mean you shouldn't care about the "numbers." You are in business to make a profit, and you do care about costs.

The best way to succeed is to build a strong base of loyal customers who continually patronize your stores. It is much easier to bring costs in line when you have a strong customer base and hence high volumes, than it is to focus on costs first and hope to build a loyal clientele second.

Think of your customers as guests in your own home. When you invite people over for dinner, you want them to enjoy the

most pleasant evening possible. You may prepare several desserts (apple pie, cherry pie, ice cream), and allow them to choose the one they prefer. Some may want a taste of each, which is great, since you prepared the desserts for them. Treat your customers the same way! Everything you sell is prepared especially for them.

The phrase "The customer is always right" is rather overused in the restaurant business. Nonetheless, you must believe it and adhere to it. Arguing with customers causes more problems than it solves; they become angry, others in the store overhear the commotion, and everyone tells someone else about the problem. Although you may win the battle, you will always lose the war.

Remember that customers are not perfect. Sometimes they change their minds, forget what they ordered, think a portion is unfair, etc. Even when they are wrong, it is best to maintain a pleasant composure, tell them you are sorry, make things right, and allow them to save face. This will work to your advantage in the long run. Dissatisfied customers who you treat well often become your most loyal advocates.

Franchisors aim to be leaders in their



segment, positioning themselves in the customers' preference, aiming to be the leaders in customer service, always remembering that the customer comes first. As a proud franchisee, part of your goal is to better yourself and increase customer repeat business. You want your customers to enjoy coming to your store because they have a great experience, both in product offering and service. Customers must always be aware that they are buying at your store, therefore:

- Always greet customers: **WELCOME TO XYZ, HOW CAN I HELP YOU!!!**
- Always look your customer in the eye and smile
- Explain to your customers your concept

- After making the sale, say: **ENJOY IT AND THANK YOU FOR COMING TO XYZ!!!**

You have a moral and legal obligation to prepare and serve your products in sanitary and clean surroundings. Failure to maintain your quality through the implementation of the franchisor's company standards can only lead to decreased sales. "Cleanliness is your responsibility and awareness".

A discourteous staff member should never be tolerated. You must hire people who are prepared to serve your customers. Without a steady supply of satisfied customers, your business will not succeed. This principle is sacred to your success. A dirty shop indicates a badly run and

unsuccessful business. No customer will tolerate a dirty counter, or a staff member with dirty fingernails.

Always view your product with the question: "Would I eat this?" View your staff with the question: "Would I want this person serving me?" And lastly, ask yourself each and every day: "Does my shop reflect the concern I have for my business?"

Customers don't care who causes the problems, but want to know whether the problems will be solved. **ALWAYS** avoid arguing with the customer because:

- Your customer might not always be right but as far as you are concerned is always right



- It's useless to try to win over an argument with the customer as you may lose them later
- Your job is to satisfy the customer
- DON'T let a customer leave the store because of unpleasant service
- ALWAYS be patient with your customer's emotions/feelings
- To successfully solve problems of customer dissatisfaction, you have to be able to make them come back to the store again

Remember, your customers are the most important people who visit you at the

store. They don't depend on you, but you have to depend on them. Customers don't interrupt you while you are on duty. Your objective is to facilitate them. Customers are not strangers but part of your business.

You always need to make sure that the latest promotions are up, that the stores are clean and uncluttered and that service is always provided with a smile. The customer must be made to feel welcome. A warm, friendly smile must be part of your uniform!

A customer is not an interruption of your work. He/she is the purpose of your work!

Did you know that a first impression is

made about a person or his business within three to five seconds and that it takes at least six to eight visits to change that impression? During the first three to five seconds, the customer will size up your store with regard to its appearance, the staff, the service, without ever speaking to any of you, members of the staff or even setting a foot to the front counter. Research has proven that a customer is less forgiving of poor service than poor food quality.

To combat bad first impressions, each and every franchisee should make a point of viewing their store through the eyes of potential customers. Stand outside your store and look in as though you were seeing it for the first time. What does your presentation say to the customer? How does your staff respond to the customer? Is the store clean? Are your employees helpful and friendly? Does the store look like a flea market because it is cluttered with every promotional material you have ever received or is it clean and focused and pleasant to look at?

Franchisees should remember the 14 points below and ensure that every employee remembers them as well. Simple points, some quite obvious, but ones that will help franchisees remember how a positive attitude, the extra care in customer service and the products being offered all go hand in hand to create an impression left on a customer.

1. Start each day with a positive attitude

It is a new day - you'll meet new people - you'll make a customer especially pleased.

2. Greet every customer with a pleasant smile

Be warm and enthusiastic. The magic of a smile is amazing. It's one thing you can always give and get back. Besides, it doesn't cost anything to smile!

3. Have a sense of humour

Try to always look at the light side of life.

4. Have eye contact with the customer

Eye contact coupled with your smile will be a winning combination every time!

5. Be gracious in serving

The manner in which you serve reflects your attitude. Customers don't appreciate having food literally thrown at them, nor do they like being spoken to brusquely. You might sometimes be rushed, but the time difference in properly serving and rushing service is negligible.

6. Be careful of the language you use

Most customers DO NOT appreciate objectionable language. If you do use it, leave it at home!

7. Learn about the product

Make sure you understand exactly what the products are that you carry.

8. Sell by suggestion

If a potential customer is hesitant about what they want, it could be their first time at your store! Be helpful by suggesting that they try one of the all time favorites and/or best sellers.

9. Treat customers as if they were your employer

Don't forget you are working for them now! If you really like your business, you owe it to them. Without customers, there wouldn't be a franchise owner!

10. Give children some extra attention

To most parents, their children are the most important aspect of their life. Your special attention to their children will gain parents' appreciation.

11. Do not argue with the customer

If a customer complains unjustly, don't argue because you cannot win. Keep your cool! If you do this, they will normally apologize to you after they get a chance to reflect on their own rudeness.

12. Be gracious to the obnoxious, abusive or loud customer

But immediately tell the owner or manager. He/she can better handle the situation.

13. Have good telephone manners

The manner in which you answer the telephone is a part of customer courtesy. Always say, "Good morning/afternoon/or evening, welcome to COMPANY NAME." Be pleasant and polite.

14. Admit when you have made a mistake

If you've made a mistake, say you are really sorry - and correct the problem immediately. Don't try to cover up the problem or, worse still, ignore it. It doesn't go away!

Customers will return again and again if their total experience left a good impression. This means good quality, good service and good value for their money. A franchisee's continued success is dependent upon their ability to satisfy their customers each and every time. Be honest with yourself, because that is the only way that you will get to understand what needs to be changed.

Think like customers!
Pamper customers!
Respect customers!
Focus on customers!
Exceed expectations!

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