

How May I Be of Service?

By Melissa McGavick, WBN Cranberry Chapter Member, WBN President of the Board 2009 -2010

UGH! So here I am waiting in line for what seems like FOREVER while the kid behind the counter obviously chit chats about something that has zero importance in the scheme of life. The frustration level is continuing to grow as I and the other mid career people waiting in line are watching precious minutes and second slip away while the teenager merrily ignores us. Just give me my tea so I can be on my way. Can't you see by the steam so gently rolling out of my ears, I'm running late? I guess I can't stop in here on my way to meeting anymore. Service is too slow. I wonder how much business would be lost if all of us waiting in line stop coming here when we're in a hurry?

What happened to customer service? Did we even notice that such niceties such as "please" and "thank you" have vanished from the vernacular of many service professionals? How about a pleasant conversation with the young person at the checkout counter at any store? How many people a day has this disgruntled employee person complained that she only has X number of hours, minutes, and seconds left before the end of her shift? I'd like to say, "Hello! You have a job that pays. If *you* don't want it, there are plenty of people who do. So move out of the way!" Normally I shorten it up a bit and in a way to perky manner say something like "Well, at least you're getting a paycheck, some people would love to have one."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, I was at a sales conference last week. How wonderful it was to pull into the front of the hotel and find valets and bell hops tripping over each other to see who was able to help me first. The pleasant demeanor of the young woman at the front desk was refreshing. The dinner server doted over the details of serving me a pleasantly presented array of tasty treats. When the bill arrived, it was hefty enough to take make you pay attention. This hotel and its restaurant were not hurting for business. There were multiple company meeting and conferences all going on at the same time. Last month it was the same situation in another hotel in a different city for a different company conference. Why are people willing to pay so much for a dinner or a hotel room? The answer without question is Quality of Service.

What kind of service are you offering your clients? Are you delivering the kind of world class service that keeps clients coming back even when they have made cuts to other areas of their budget? What is it that makes the top people in your industry stand out? What can you do to outshine them when it comes to service? Price is dictated by supply and demand. The supply of good service is low, and getting harder to find, while the demand for it is up. In this time of companies looking to cut corners to make money, what is it that you can lavish on your customers without a dime spent – SERVICE! It costs nothing to be nice and pay attention to the person you are currently serving yet it has become one of the rarities of modern business. All that said - mom was right after all. You get more flies with honey than vinegar.

Questions for group discussion:

What is the best customer service you ever experienced?

What are the things you do that delight your customers?

What does your competitor do that delights their customers?

What "little things" can you change about or add to your business that would be a pleasant surprise to your customers?



About the Author: Melissa McGavick is President of McGavick Interactive Training, and a professional public speaker. Typically she works with successful business people who want to develop their public speaking and communication skills, leadership potential, and sell their ideas or products more effectively. She can be reached at by phone at 412-400-3414. More information is available at www.mcgavick.net.

Melissa has served as a Chapter Rep and Chapter Chair of the Cranberry WBN chapter, chaired ten different WBN committees, served as both Vice-President (2008-2009) and President (2009-2010) of the WBN Board of Directors. In 2008 she was selected as the WBN Woman of the Year. Melissa has also served in the top leadership positions in four other non-profit organizations, including the Pittsburgh chapter of the Downtown Women's Club, Women Entrepreneurs in Business, Women Think P.I.N.K., and Toastmasters International District 13.

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