

BEST DARN CONSULTING Co. PERIOD

A Passion For The Customer

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Making Price The LAST Factor In Your Customers Buying Decision Is Easier Than Many Experts Would Lead You To Believe

See how a few companies have “figured it out” and found ways to innovate their businesses so customers WANT to do business with them. Whether you agree or not with how these companies operate is Not important. What *is* important is taking the ideas that would make your company better ... and using them.

Minor League Baseball Club

Louisville Cardinals: A. Ray Smith

- Seats steam cleaned and hand wiped daily.
- 25-item checklist: restrooms, concourse, etc.
- \$1.00 hot dogs, 75¢ beer, variety of food available.
- Bands on the concourse and in the stands.
- Picnic area on the concourse, fans allowed to bring their own food.
- Players sign autographs before each game.
- Large, professional-type scoreboard.
- Multiple promotions and drawings.
- Games are locally televised.
- Fireworks after every game.

What Makes The Difference? He treats the customers like they are all relatives. No gouging, clean facilities, blatantly and obviously better than the industry standard in all areas.

Benefit To Customers: More enjoyable atmosphere, they feel appreciated, don't feel plundered.

Benefit To Business: Maximizing price-quantity equation. Customers come regularly for fun rather than a once-in-a-while treat.

Key Words: Clean, Fair, Over-deliver.

Now It's Your Turn: Make a list of every aspect of your business; get an idea from the list above. Survey customers to find out “What do you NOT like about (Your Industry Product/Service)?” Then, brainstorm ways to far exceed what your industry standards are. You must innovate - no one's going to ask for a brass band, but they'll sure like it.

Overnight Delivery Service

Federal Express: Fred Smith

- In early days, won \$27,000 in Vegas to cover payroll.
- Lets customers sound off, employees put themselves in customer's place.
- Customers get response to an inquiry the same day.
- Handles 200,000+ calls a day.
- Process 700,000+ letters/packages a day.
- Phone rarely rings more than one time before being picked up.

What Makes The Difference? Operations system allows for quick response--both in package delivery and customer relations.

Benefit To Customers: High degree of confidence in company's ability to fulfill the big promise of Absolutely, Positively, Overnight. (Currently repositioning to respond to markets' catching up)

Benefit To Business: Customers focus on confidence rather than price. Repeat is automatic.

Key Words: Response, System, Confidence

Now It's Your Turn: What ways can your company can improve response time. One area is in operations - maybe procurement or delivery - the other is your system to handle customer inquiries and complaints. The key is the system.

Steel Mill

Worthington Industries: John McConnel

- Employees have no job description, no policy manual, no organization chart.
- Quality is 5 times industry standard.
- No time clock; all employees are salaried.
- \$3,000 / 90 days profit sharing.
- Must be voted in to profit sharing plan.
- Employees own 30% of stock: stimulates loyalty without supervisors.
- No janitors--everyone cleans their own areas.
- No quality control--each person responsible for their own.
- All employees must make sales calls.
- Haircuts available for \$2 on company time.

What Makes The Difference? The way they treat the employees. They build loyalty, dedication, and strong work ethic simply by treating everyone like they own the place - and they do.

Benefit To Customers: Steel that is higher quality than the average, lower defects which lowers their costs, more input which allows them to control projects.

Benefit To Business: Customers choose the product for reasons other than price reorder is almost automatic. Employees stay longer with the company and try harder.

Key Words: People, Empowerment, Ownership, Front Liners.

Now It's Your Turn: How can you empower your employees to give them more pride in their work? Are your front liners enthusiastic, well versed, well groomed, and the epitome of what your company stands for? If not, how could you change it now?

Women's Apparel Stores

The Limited, Columbus, OH

- 200,000,000 garments thru distribution every year: 3 per woman per year.
- 26 miles of conveyors, ³/₄ million boxes a week.
- Leases planes and ships for their exclusive use.
- 4 to 5 week response: industry standard 5 to 9 months.
- All store cash registers linked to main headquarters.
- Top 100 store managers flown to Vail for special recognition conference.

What Makes The Difference? Operations allow them to respond quickly to fickle fashions. Commitment to responsiveness in all facets of the business including POS information.

Benefit To Customers: Most current fashions will always be on the shelves; prices are substantially lower due to systemization and volume.

Benefit To Business: Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Key Words: Systemization, Response, Reward.

Now It's Your Turn: Would your customers like speedier response? Is it important in your industry? If not, find out what your customers do want. Just ask - they'll tell you.

Full Service Bank

University NH Bank, Palo Alto, CA

- No lines, all employees trained to be tellers.
- Know customers by name, employees all have cards.
- Stamps available at no extra charge.
- No chains on pens, calculators available.
- Office for customers' personal use available.
- Try not to charge overdraft fees.
- Employees get birthday card with \$50, and a rose on Valentine's Day.
- Bank will deliver things to you.
- Bank will open any time.
- Public restrooms.
- Free balloons for kids and shoe shines.

What Makes The Difference? Respect for the customer, enthusiasm of employees, and flexibility of services.

Benefit To Customers: Feel less intimidated by the bank, more likely to have wants and needs met given the flexibility of the organization.

Benefit To Business: More customers completing more transactions - customers may be more likely to use this same bank for other financial needs given its non-threatening atmosphere.

Key Words: Flexibility, Trust, Fun, Non-intimidating.

Now It's Your Turn: How can you make doing business with you less threatening and more enjoyable? How can you show your customers you trust and respect them more as individuals? What can you do to maintain a more flexible attitude?

Summary of Key Points

Extraordinary Customer Service Can Be Achieved Several Ways, Including:

1. Systematizing your operations so that your products or services are the most up-to-date, always consistent and predictable to your customers, and instantly responsive to their needs.
2. Maintaining a "Flexible Attitude" that gives your customers confidence in your ability to solve their individual problems.
3. Empowering your employees thru ownership, rewards, and/or responsibility so that they have increased loyalty to you, greater interest in completely satisfying customers, and top-notch work ethics day in and day out.
4. Showing your customers that you trust them.
5. Delivering a product that far exceeds industry standards or customer expectations.
6. Listening and responding.

7. Ensuring that front liners are treated like the most important person in the company-- because they are.
8. Make what others consider to be mundane, extraordinary.
9. Providing inspired leadership to your crew and customers.

The Reward of Excellent Customer Service ...

Not only will your customers consistently favor your business, they won't even see your competitors as an option. Confidence becomes the number one factor in any purchasing decision and price will be last. The Net Result = You make more money.

Should you be interested in additional information or FREE marketing resources, visit us online at www.bestdarnconsulting.com or give us a call at 800.507.4856.