RICK CONLOW INTERNATIONAL

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Superstar Customer Service How to create Moments of Magnificence for your customers!

By Rick Conlow

Customer service in the United States has received an unprecedented amount of attention in the last decade, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the American Society for Quality report that the additional focus isn't making a difference.

Regardless of the quality and re-engineering approaches introduced by Tom Peters, W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, Philip Crosby and others over the past several years, research concludes that customer service continues to erode at a dizzying rate.

Harry Beckwith, who wrote *Selling the Invisible*, agrees with the bad news. He says, "Service in this country is so bad that you can offer above-average service and still stink."

So, what really is the root of the problem?

The reasons some experts give include:

- **poor hiring practices,**
- **downsized companies and service, acquisitions and mergers,**
- **limited labor pools,**
- **lack of training,**
- **lack of support and**
- **lack of management commitment.**

But these reasons are just excuses. Organizations like Federal Express and Disney deliver exceptional service in spite of their circumstances or challenges.

An article entitled, "The Death of Manners," which was featured in the Sunday magazine section of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, reveals a more compelling reason. According to the article, people aren't as civil as they used to be. In fact, they are often rude and discourteous. The cover photo was, appropriately enough, a picture of a herd of pigs!

I'm sure you've experienced enough insensitive or rude behavior from customer service people that this isn't news to you, but it's interesting to see it confirmed in cold, hard data.

For example, in a survey conducted by market research firm Yankelovich Partners, 90% of the people questioned said they feel they pay enough to get the highest level of service. Yet, 69% of these customers reported that the customer service people they deal with don't seem to care.

In other words, there remains a significant gap between what companies are delivering and what customers want. This presents a huge opportunity for the people in organizations that really do care. And since you are reading this, I presume that includes you!

How can you take advantage of this opportunity?
It's simple. Deliver planned – not random – acts of kindness to achieve "Moments of Magnificence" one customer at a time.

Let me explain.

Say you are a service rep for a major retailer. You don't feel well, but you go to work anyhow. Your supervisor strongly reminds you about the importance of complete paperwork and says you will be written up for any more mistakes. Now, the store opens and customers approach you.

I'd like you to consider two questions:

1. *Is your sickness or your boss's reprimand a good reason to give poor service to those customers?*
2. *Is it your customers' problem that you have problems?*

The answer to both of these questions has to be an emphatic, "No!" Great service requires you to move from self-concern to a concern for others.

Superstar Customer Service teaches that there are five moments of truth where you have the opportunity to create happy or unhappy customers. It is your responsibility to manage them. By doing so, you can overcome internal or external stresses that don't matter to the customer and deliver ***Moments of Magnificence*** – not mediocrity or misery.

Here are the Moments of Magnificence defined and how you can apply them right now to reap immediate results!

1. Mental Psyche
How to be positive and treat customers right even when you don't feel like it.

The first step to satisfying the customer has nothing to do with the customer, but it has everything to do with you.

With peak performance strategies, it only takes a few moments to "self-manage" your attitude. Acknowledge how you are feeling and refocus on the customer using the visualize, verbalize and vitalize steps.

2. The Greeting
How to be courteous and friendly.

It only takes a few moments to be nice. Smile, be prompt, pay attention and *use uncommonly good manners in dealing with people.*

3. Meeting the Need
How to help the customer solve his problem proactively.

Be a good listener, ask key questions and be genuinely helpful. It only takes a few moments to do it right. *Then, do it with a sense of urgency!*

4. Follow-through
How to go the extra mile to be of service.

Follow-up with e-mails, send a thank you note, ask if you can be of further assistance, point out additional products or call back to check the results. It only takes a few moments to exceed the customer's expectation. *Do this proactively and you'll become a legend in the customer's mind.*

5. Handling Problems
How to deal with the person and the problem in difficult situations.

Deal with the person first. Listen, empathize and apologize. Then solve the problem.

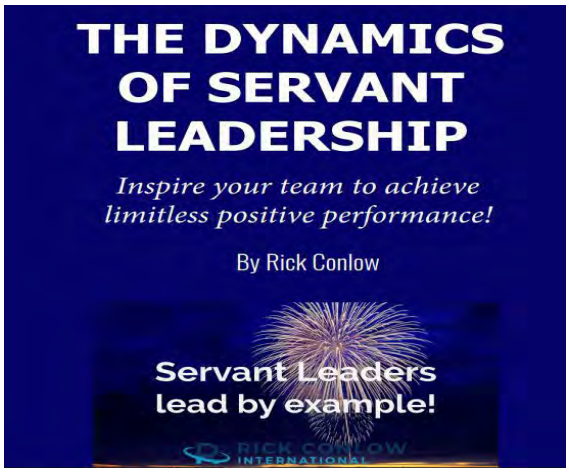
It only takes a few moments to demonstrate you care when the chips are down.

While Superstar Customer Service is not a cure-all, it does give you proven and practical steps to show your customers that you care and to keep them coming back. After all, whose responsibility is it to satisfy the customer? It's your job! Superstar Customer Service gives you the tools to succeed!

Rick Conlow is Founder of Rick Conlow International. Rick is also author of *Superstar Customer Service*, *Excellence in Management*, *Superstar Leadership*, *Achieving Supervisory Excellence*, *GOALPOWER*, and ***The 5 Dynamics of Servant Leadership*** and others. Rick has helped organizations increase sales 212%, achieve record sales results – 75% in one year, improve repeat and referral business by 20%, increase customer retention to 99%, reduce complaints by 57% and achieve 48 quality awards.

Check out our RCI resources!

Click the pictures for details.



Reach out to us if we can be of service!

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