

RED CARPET CUSTOMER SERVICE – WHAT’S YOUR BUZZ?

Heard the phrase “red carpet customer service?” It’s being thrown around as if it were an every day experience. Perhaps it is, in Hollywood. However, the rest of us have gotten used to mediocre service at best.

What about your company? Can you, without hesitation, honestly state that your customers consistently receive the very best in customer service from those who work for you? Are your employees brimming with excitement and pride over the way they take care of your customers?

If your company is like most then, quite frankly, probably not! Nine out of ten people say it should be easy to provide customer service, yet literally half the time they do not have a positive experience, according to a recent survey by Creative Strategies and Connell Associates. In the same study four out of five people said they stopped doing business with a company because of bad customer service.

Some smart organizational leaders are beginning to realize that by going the extra mile they create a positive buzz that keeps their customers coming back for more and bringing friends! These leaders in the customer experience understand that by committing to extraordinary “red carpet” service, they are laying the foundation for extraordinary bottom line results.

Consider the following two examples of organizations, that once committing to exception service, increased their bottom line.

The Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center increased their revenues by 14.4% in just one year’s time.

High Point University increased their campus visits by 70% and enrollment by 63% in three years time.

What do the leaders of these organizations know about red carpet service that most leaders don't?

MISSION AND VALUES MATTER. In organizations with a reputation for being extraordinary, the mission and value statements are more than just platitudes for the website and wall posters. They are the guiding principles behind every action – and each team member knows clearly and tangibly how they express their mission within the context of their job.

Stop an employee at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Conventions Center and they will tell you exactly what their values are and how they individually put those into action. Each employee is consistently and continually trained in the Gaylord Service Basics.

Make your value statement a living breathing document and you'll be on your way to red carpet service.

A COMMITMENT TO WOW!! Good customer service isn't enough for these organizations. They want to WOW you! Visit High Point University and your parking spot will be reserved by name, your tour – given via golf cart – will include no more than 2 families, and you just might meet University President Nido Qubein. When your child moves into the dorm during his or her freshman year, you can stay in the car. A group of upperclassman and faculty will be on hand to unload the trunk and help with the move. If that weren't enough – you can relax at home too. There is valet parking after hours so your child does not have to walk alone across the campus at night. WOW!!

Strive to surprise your customers in unforgettable ways that will have them buzzing about their star treatment!

THEIR PEOPLE ARE FIRST. When Arthur Keith became General Manager of the Gaylord Opryland he made his STARS (Gaylord employees) number one. That has made all the difference as evidenced by their continually rising customer satisfaction scores. They are at 80% or more occupancy at all times – a statistic almost unheard of in the hotel industry. They also put their money where their mouth is. Every employee has an opportunity to receive a \$200.00 bonus quarterly. One third of that bonus is based on customer satisfaction scores.

Red carpet service providers are consistent in living their values, hiring carefully, committing to the WOW and putting their people first. Develop these habits in your leadership team and you'll be giving celebrity service and reaping superstar results.

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