

Giving Lip Service to Customer Service

One of my peeves is when I hear a business on the radio touting, “We’ve got great customer service, come on down and visit us today!” You know what; chances are they are paying that statement lip service. The worst thing you can do to your business is to tell people how great you are, and then not deliver as promised. Customers won’t be very forgiving because they will feel like you lied to them, or tried to manipulate them. Even if you didn’t do it on purpose, you will still leave that perception.

If you are going to promise great service, the consistency at which you offer that service must be impeccable. You have no room for “bad hair days” and moments of less than glory. Each day and each customer must get 100% of your best, or you will underwhelm your customers. In fact, you should probably do the opposite: You should under-promise, and then over-deliver in order to exceed the customer’s expectations. Tell your customers; “We have the worst service in town, come on down and see!” Obviously, I am kidding, but my point is about not promising great service unless you are truly ready to deliver it to each and every customer.

What questions do customers ask themselves when they’re deciding where to spend their hard earned money? Here is the process that most people go through: Let’s just say you wanted to buy a big screen television. The first thing you’re going to ask yourself is: “Who has big screen TVs?” This will help you narrow your choices down to maybe 5 businesses that are in your area. The second thing you’re going to ask yourself is “Who has the best price or the best value for my money?” And, the third thing is: “Where am I going to get the best service?” And that’s where your decision making power presents itself.

This is especially true in commoditized industries like retail, restaurants, real estate and banking. Service can dictate where we’re going to spend our money. A lot of businesses have the same “stuff,” and a lot of businesses have about the same prices, so it is hard to separate yourself from the competition. The only way you can differentiate yourself today, in most cases, is with the level of service that you offer. That is one of the big determining factors on where we consumers are going to spend our money.