

## Customer Service Skills Workshop Presentation...

*Thanks Jeanette.... and thanks for including Buller Printing Ltd in your Customer Service Survey.*

*...and also for the compliment in acknowledging us for our business skills by scoring us as high as you did!*

I just need to tell you that neither of us are authorities on the subject of Customer Service Skills...

but we **can** tell you about the formula **we** use to win customer loyalty that ensures us of 'repeat business' from the **same** clients over and over again.

Frankly, it's common sense really.....because if you've invested heavily in **owning** your own business, the last thing you'd want to do is demonstrate **poor service skills** and scare away the very people who can make you successful.... Because they provide the **return on investment** that's necessary to ensure your survival in the business world.

Robyn and I have operated **our** business for over 43 years...and we quickly learnt by our early mistakes how crucial it is to make the client feel that... **they're** the most important person on the premises from the **very moment** they walk through your door.

It also didn't take long to realise that ...

*you never get a second chance to make a first impression...*

so... we learnt the importance of **acknowledging their presence** , (*especially if we're serving someone else*)...and later... after we've made them feel that they've come to the right place... we learnt that it's **paramount** to make the client feel that their **experience** on our property is such that they'll **want** to return again.

And so...we always try and treat everyone in the same manner that **we'd** expect to be treated ....and by doing so, .....we reckon **we become instant winners**... every time!

In a small community... a service provider has to rely on the same customer returning time and time again.. over and over... for years and years....and **unless** they feel **good** about using your services... their future patronage **can't** be guaranteed.

It's a proven fact that it costs **far less** to retain the goodwill of a customer's repeat business ...than it is to **advertise** ...in an effort to attract **new** clients... because **more often than not**... the advertising budget just **isn't** there... especially during an economical downturn like we're all experiencing now.

At the end of the day we're proud to be able to say that... by having **all the right** principles of retail trading in place and by practicing daily, the **service skills** necessary to survive in business for as long as we have....is proof that we must have '*got it right*'... because we're still here!

Another most important aspect of maintaining a successful business is to teach each and every staff member how to **meet and greet** ....and how to answer telephone enquiries correctly.

No matter how your answering technique is worded....it's equally important to actually answer the call **before** the phone gets to ring **four** times...because by the time it gets to the **fifth** ring, an impatient client may **already** be thinking of calling your nearest competitor instead!

Likewise...it's really important to respond to email enquiries at the earliest opportunity....even if it's just to say,

YEP...*'got your email and I'll be in touch soon'*.

Once the client's been re-assured that *you're on to it*....and that you'll follow up within a certain time frame....the next most important thing is **to make sure you do!**

*...and the same goes for a telephone 'answer-phone' enquiry.*

One good method we use... is to **email** or **TXT** our clients... just to give them a *progress report* on how their job's going.

This re-assures them that everything's under control... and they don't have to think about whether their job's on track for the tight delivery date that's been promised.

Regarding staff training....

if a business owner **leads by example**...right from **punctuality** on arriving at work on time... to personal grooming and appearance...

to telephone answering... and maintaining a cheerful, helpful attitude during **each and every** encounter with clients **and staff**...the flow-on affect will rub off onto the staff and they'll actually ' **emulate the actions of management**' ... ..and so everyone ends up on the *same page* by creating the perception that **you're all working in a great place** and the **customers** will recognise and acknowledge the professionalism by giving you their repeat business.

It's really not hard to welcome a customer enthusiastically with a friendly smile and demonstrating a positive attitude by engaging in conversation. ..and then to simply **thank them** for coming in just as they're leaving....

**It can only leave a lasting impression.**

Having said that... we all have an '*off day*' now and again... and we constantly have to remind **ourselves and** our staff ...how easy it is to let your guard down, especially if your day isn't going well or ...if some underlying work related *or personal issue* is preventing you from being at your best. So.....at Buller Printing...we use our '*mission statement*' which we had enlarged for everyone to see when entering our shop.

*A customer is the most  
important visitor on our  
premises.*

*You are not dependent on us.*

*We are dependent on you.*

*You are not an interruption  
on our work.*

*You are the purpose of it.*

*You are not an outsider  
to our business.*

*You are part of it.*

*We are not doing you a  
favour by serving you.*

*You are doing us a favour  
by giving us the opportunity of  
providing our services to you.*

*Thank you for your custom!*

I noted that the **Customer Service Skills Workshop posters that Jeanette distributed** say....

*How very important it is to practice improving attitude every day in every situation... because it's one of the most important "soft skills" that can make such a difference....especially when overcoming negativity.*

And on the subject of attitude and negativity.....there are circumstances when a customer enters a shop with a bit of a negative attitude... or for whatever reason ....might have a bit of an un-realistic expectation....and for some business owners,.... the first reaction might be to tell them to *'buggar off'* and take their attitude with them!

But of course it's far more prudent to *accept the challenge* and *turn the circumstances around* by playing a psychological **game**.

It's not that hard to win their confidence by demonstrating exceptional service skills ...and just being the best you can...and more often than not.... you'll have won the services of a fantastic **free** advertising vehicle for your business... because a happy and contented customer will no doubt tell 5 or 6 others

of their experience....but if they walk out the door disgruntled and un-satisfied....they might well tell a dozen others of their poor experience.

*Both business owners and their staff have to remember that it's the customers that pay the wages....and without them the business couldn't operate.*

So it's better to work on the really cheap form of advertising and *always* be the best you can be.

Also....*worthy of a mention...* is that.... if the retail premises are kept clean and tidy with clean front windows and even an occasional sweeping of the footpath out front....the client will perceive the service-provider to be professional and *'the place they should be heading for... when they next need your services.*

***So...In Summary...***

We reckon that in our experience of retail business there's ...

***5 KEY Customer Service Skills...***that will guarantee to win **loyalty** and **repeat business** for any business owner if they follow the following advice.

*The first one is...*

- 1. EMPATHY** – *to identify and understand your customers' needs and to ensure a positive response... you have to **step into their shoes** by building relationships....and most importantly...you have to know your products.*

*...and the second one is...*

- 2. POSITIVITY** – *tiny changes in phrasing a comment can lead to dramatic results in the way your customers perceive your knowledge skills and services.*

*Then there's...*

- 3. PATIENCE** - *sometimes your customers might be impatient, have a negative attitude or...maybe have an unrealistic expectation.*

*They may even be angry with you!*

*Sometimes your client will need extra attention to understand things.*

*Sometimes circumstances will be difficult to handle.*

*The worst thing you can do in these circumstances is to lose your cool!*

*Patience helps you deliver a better service while...being **IMPATIENT** not only impedes your ability to enjoy life's experiences...but makes us **worse** at doing things...like delivering great customer service..*

*The fourth key customer service skill is...*

**4. CLARITY IN COMMUNICATION** – *clarity isn't just important for making customers feel good about using your services.*

*As a business....it can also make a big impact on your bottom line at the end of the financial year.*

*One tip that I find helpful...especially when talking a customer through something technical... is to think about how I would explain the same instructions to a **5-year old**.*

*But there's an obvious warning of caution with this tip...*

**Be respectful...***and don't actually treat your customers like children. It's about using simple... easy-to-understand language.*

*...and the last one is...*

**5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** – *will prove to us that these skills will help deliver better support to our customers which will be rewarded by winning loyalty and repeat business... because our clients will have the confidence and assurance that they have come to the right place for **exceptional service and satisfaction.***

***So...In Conclusion....and on a lighter note...***

*There'll no doubt be instances when a client might question the price of a service... and in 99% of these instances the reason is because they have absolutely no idea of the many aspects of **costing out** the commercial reality of retail supply and services.*

*So...it's really important to have all the right answers in order to satisfy the client's questions...in order to maintain their confidence.*

*But having said that...*

*the client may have **also** overlooked the fact that the expertise and knowledge the service provider has had to gain in order to perform their service may be the result*

*of years and years of dedicated study and great economical expense....which at the end of the day has its special value....which must be included somewhere along the line.*

*....and in these circumstances it isn't un-expected that the itemisation of your invoice may well be similar to the following light-hearted analogy...*

*Once upon a time, in the basement of a large building, there sat a huge, highly complex furnace system that had been patched together and extended over generations into a spider-web of conduits, boilers and gas lines.*

*One day the furnace released a cloud of black smoke and abruptly died.*

*Technicians tried for weeks to revive it, but to no avail.*

*Finally a specialist was called in. He wordlessly descended into the basement and spent long minutes intently studying the web of pipes and ducts.*

*After a time he reached into his bag and pulled forth a silver hammer. He approached one of the burners and rapped it sharply...just once.*

*Almost immediately, the furnace began to work.*

*Later, the owners of the building disputed the engineer's \$10,000 invoice. This was too much to pay, they felt, for just five minutes' work. So they requested an itemised invoice.*

*The engineer was glad to comply, sending his itemisation  
by return mail:*

*“Hitting furnace with hammer” .....\$1.00.*

*“Knowing where to hit” .....\$9,999.*

So....once again.....the value of the knowledge,  
the sacrifices of time and financial investment  
made in educating oneself to know your products  
well enough to solve problems and deliver  
exceptional services....has to be factored into the  
charge-out rate along with overheads,materials and  
labour etc.

Thanks again for inviting us to share our experience of  
**Customer Service Skills**....and I think the most  
important message for business owners and their staff  
...is to continue striving to improve customer service  
...by developing positive attitudes....along with all the  
other skills necessary **to make the difference.**

Because....**it's the difference** between yourself and  
your nearest competitor that clients will evaluate  
when choosing who to patronise.

And....finally...just to borrow Winston Churchill's  
quote once again...

*Attitude is a little thing  
... that makes a **big** difference!*

*Cheers!*