



*We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.*®

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### *5-Star Employees - Part 2*

Recently, I called a well-known hotel and asked for the concierge desk. Although I was not a guest at the time, I previously stayed at this particular hotel chain several times prior and considered myself to be a loyal customer. The reason I called was to merely get some quick restaurant recommendations. The concierge advised me that since I was not a guest, she could not assist. Even after I advised her that I am a loyal guest that has stayed at the company's hotels several times before, she repeated her stance. Sure she may have been doing what she was told to do by her supervisor, or perhaps she was unaware of how easy it would have been to make some recommendations (after all, she could have also recommended the restaurant in her own hotel). Maybe she just didn't care. That same concierge could have said she would be happy to assist and inquired if I was celebrating a special occasion. Then, she could have made a few recommendations and offered to give me the phone number of the restaurants. The latter approach would have reinforced my expectations of the hotel chain and created more opportunities for me to refer others.

In 5-Star Employees Part 1, I wrote about four commitments that world-class service employees share. Here is the fifth commitment:

*Commitment 5: I will make you feel special, included, valued, and appreciated*

The concierge that I wrote about did not understand that EVERY customer is priceless. The provision of engaging service should be inclusive and be just as important for those who are "potential" customers. Commitment 5 means that 5-star employees must look for every single opportunity to win the hearts of current AND potential customers. Any customer who is in the vicinity of a 5-star employee should feel his or her passion to serve.

Let's assume that I go to a shopping mall and walk into a retail store. I then ask the store employee for directions to the food court. The eagerness of that employee to assist may cause me to return to that store to shop and possibly refer it to others in the future.

Here is another scenario to enliven commitment 5. If I accompany my uncle to the doctor's office, and the doctor's staff is engaging and kind to me as well, then I might return for personal services. If I visit a church with a friend, and the ushers, staff, and congregation are welcoming, then I might be more likely to return.

The point is that EVERYONE is a customer, because everyone has the potential to return and refer others. So if you serve in a business that is dependent on tourism dollars, be just as service-oriented to the locals (if not more). If you serve in a retail environment, be just as engaging to "window shoppers"; be kind to those who express no desire to patronize your business at the current moment...your kindness and engaging demeanor may eventually change their mind.

This particular commitment also has additional relevancy to the current economic climate. I regularly see many businesses that are literally throwing money out the window. For many businesses, revenue is not lost solely because of a recession; it may be lost because customers **choose** not to patronize those businesses. That's right...many times it's a consumer choice to avoid certain businesses because the staff does not make consumers feel special, included, valued, and appreciated.

For example, over the last six months, most decisions that I've made to avoid booking a flight with a particular airline, dining at a certain restaurant, or staying in a hotel had nothing to do with a recession. Those decisions had everything to do with employees giving apathetic service. The point here is that many businesses use "the economy" as a scapegoat for their organization's woes, when all they may need to do is re-focus on the customer.

5-star employees understand this premise. To them, every customer is priceless. If you are a manager and you are reading this, please ensure that your 5-star employees are surrounded by other 5-star employees. These employees yearn to work with team mates who care...who push like they push...and who serve like they serve. From a 5-star employees' perspective, there is nothing better than giving 5-star service in a 5-star organization run by 5-star leaders.

In the next article of this series (5-star employees part 3), I will focus on the final three commitments of 5-star employees.

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