



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

Written by: Bryan K. Williams

To Engage...Listen to the Voice of Your Customer

Engagement - Part 2

Some people believe that poor is the opposite of excellent, while others believe that excellence is the only standard that matters. For those who commit to excellence, providing engaging service is the only standard worth striving for. As a business, providing what you are supposed to provide does not win the loyalty and admiration of your customers. It takes something more. Serving customers is an honor that should not be taken lightly. Being a service professional is a highly esteemed position to be in, and

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those customers who have been fortunate enough to be served by a true service professional, know exactly what engaging service is all about.

It would be hard for a gentleman to propose to a lady if he did not know who she was; or did not understand the “real” her. What is on her mind? What is important to her? What is she hoping he will provide that no one else can provide quite like him? Knowing the answers to those types of questions will surely heighten the chance of both parties having a successful engagement. This is exactly the case with the relationship between the business and the customer. For the business to engage the customer, it must learn to hear and appreciate the voice of the customer. What does the customer truly want and yearn for? Chances are that customers choose to patronize your business when they don't really have to. They usually can go somewhere else; like your competitor perhaps. Therefore, your customers want to feel taken care of and valued. Regardless of the industry, they want to know that they made the right decision when they chose to give you their hard-earned money. Often times, the more they spend, the more they want to feel engaged. And they deserve it.

In fact, if you close your eyes right now, you can literally hear the voice of each customer you serve. They are saying:

Engage me,
Make me feel special,
Make me feel included,
Make me feel valued,
Make me feel appreciated

Engage me,
Tell me that you're happy to see me,
Tell me that you're happy to serve me,
Tell me that you're happy I chose you, instead of your competitors

Engage me,
Welcome me, as if I were a guest in your own home,
Tell me about the service I am about to receive

Engage me,
Thank me for choosing you,
Tell me it was a pleasure to serve me,
Invite me back,
Tell me that you look forward to serving me again...and mean it genuinely

Engage me,
And I will return the favor by being an engaged customer (and your biggest ambassador)

Engage me,
Engage every part of me,
Engage my emotions, my laughter, my curiosity, my anticipation

Engage me,
I want to be your customer...that's why I'm here,
And I will reward you with my patronage, my referrals, and my loyalty,

Engage me.

It doesn't matter what industry you are in, your customers always deserve the absolute best that you have to offer. Just last night, my wife and I decided to visit a Vietnamese/Thai restaurant. It was about 15 minutes from our home in MD so we decided to give it a try. After driving and getting lost a few times, we finally found the restaurant in a strip mall. When we walked in, our expectations were not extremely high, but the staff and overall service experience impressed us nonetheless. The initial greeting was prompt, the server was knowledgeable, and the food runner took great pride in

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delivering "his" food. It was easy to see that everyone from the manager to the busser was genuinely committed to providing engaging service. To put a memorable conclusion to a wonderful dining experience, the server brought us a tray with two freshly-scented, steaming washcloths. The entire staff then thanked us for choosing their restaurant and wished us a safe trip home. Of course, they invited us back, and needless to say, we WILL go back. They succeeded in turning a potentially bland restaurant visit into a dynamic and engaging service experience.

To recap, everyone on the staff (including the manager) did the following:

- Created an inclusive atmosphere
- Were eager to serve
- Were very welcoming
- Offered a gracious goodbye
- Took pride in turning first-time customers into ambassadors
- Created a total experience that enlivened all of our senses
- Earned our confidence, which will reap the rewards of repeat business (and tons of referrals)

Commit to engaging every customer that chooses your business. Let them know how much you appreciate their patronage and turn them into ambassadors. Starting today, make it a top priority to engage all of your customers, all the time, in all situations.

--Written by Bryan K. Williams
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