

MIND MATTERS: MAGNETIC SERVICE

This week I couldn't get to my regular grocery store so decided to try out a Safeway near another appointment. Kill two birds, and all, you know.

What a surprise! Someone at Safeway had obviously spent some time considering how to change the overall experience. Now, instead of bright lights and obnoxious music, I experienced soft lighting and subtle music, plus a host of other changes: redesigned fruit displays, reorganized shelving, new features and foods, and more importantly, a Starbucks! The overall effect was more inviting, warmer and even encouraging. I felt like I'd entered a farmer's market somewhere in Europe.

To create such an effect takes not only hours of research, but the guts to step forward and make a statement. Safeway redesigned the environment and in turn created an experience catered to a specific demographic with a specific psychographic. Apparently, mine.

There's more to great customer service than just redesigning the environment, however. In the book, Magnetic Service by Chip Bell and Bilijack Bell, they claim there are seven secrets to creating passionately devoted customers.

1. Make trust a verb. Trust grows from a sense that the experience can be replicated again and again. To make trust a verb in your company, start with being authentic in your actions and create a track record of meeting your customers' expectations.
2. Focus on customer hopes, not just needs. Minimally meeting your customer's needs isn't enough. To be magnetic, learn to get to what he hopes might happen through you.
3. Add "charisma" to the service mix. Charisma is that something extra, something different from what the customer expected. It's offering something bold, exciting and somewhat daring. It leaves a positive emotional afterglow.
4. Engage the customer's curiosity. People naturally desire to learn. Stimulate that desire by creating a path for participation and opportunities to discover.
5. Give customers an occasional miracle. Surprise your customer with a special gift unexpectedly given and distinctively right for the particular individual. This requires exceptionally good listening skills.
6. Empower customers through comfort. Customers feel empowered when they experience psychological and physical comfort, derived from reliability, predictability and seamless operations.
7. Reveal your character by unveiling your courage. Service with character has a sense of innocence, naturalness, purity and groundedness, all of which come about through knowledge of oneself and commitment to integrity.

Magnetic service is what separates the great companies from the mediocre. It's not complicated, but it's not simple. Seek to delight your customers, commit to doing what it takes, and your business will thrive.

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