

EXCELLENCE - THE ONLY STANDARD FOR YOUR BUSINESS

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In the business world, online and offline, the only way we can stay in business is to attract customers and keep them. We spend a lot of time advertising, looking for referrals and promoting to new and current customers. But what are our customers really looking for?

If you sell software, jewelry, vitamins, books, etcetera, a customer can purchase these products in a multitude of places. Why should a customer purchase the product from you and return to your business for other products? The answer should be because they can expect excellence from you.

Excellence is setting high standards for yourself that your competitors may overlook. You will go beyond the normal standard of customer service to satisfy your customer. You will perform at a level higher than the competition. Your business will be superb.

Can you think of a business that's superb? Can you think of a time when a business offered you a high quality product and they went above and beyond what their competitors offered? What did you do? You probably purchased other products from them and told your family and friends about the experience. What are your customers saying about your business and their experience with you?

If you want your customer to say they were very satisfied, you have to be willing and determined to raise your standards and be better today than you were yesterday. Excelling is an ongoing process that never ends.

How do you start the process?

PAY ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS

Imagine you are buying a pair of earrings as a gift. Store A has what you're looking for in the display cabinet. You ask to see them, you like them, so you make the purchase. The salesperson puts them in a plastic earring holder and places them in a paper bag along with the receipt.

Store B has what you're looking for in the display cabinet. You ask to see them. The salesperson explains the quality and weight to you so you can make an informed decision. You like them so you make the purchase. The salesperson puts them in a beautiful box, offers to gift wrap them for you, at no extra charge, and puts them in a small gift bag. She hands you your receipt and cleaning and care instructions for the earrings.

Which store will you return to for your next purchase?

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Imagine you just purchased a new computer and you're out shopping for a certain software product. You find the product in store A. You ask the salesperson if it's compatible with what you have on your computer system. The software product doesn't give that information. The salesperson doesn't know the answer but tells you if purchase the product and find out later that it won't work you can return it within 10 days of purchase if it is unopened.

You find your software at store B. Again, you're not sure of the compatibility. You ask the salesperson but he doesn't know. He escorts you to the help desk and asks another salesperson. She is not 100% sure but thinks it may be compatible. The salesperson pulls up the software company's web site, finds out it is compatible, and prints the information for you and you make the purchase.

Which store will you return to for your next purchase?

TREAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU WANT TO BE TREATED

You expect the best when you are spending your time and hard-earned money. In turn, you must give your customers the best. When you set up your business, walk through the purchasing process your customers will experience from the moment they click on your web site or drive up to your place of business. As you go through your purchase process ask yourself each step of the way, "Is this how I would like to be treated?" If you get to the point where your answer is no, make the necessary changes.

- When a customer makes a purchase from you ask them about their experience.
- Visit chat rooms and bulletin boards where consumers gather to complain about their shopping experiences. Examine your business and make sure the same complaints cannot be said about your company.

- Think of instances when you received excellent treatment and find ways to incorporate it in your business.

Offer the highest quality, be exceptionally good, go beyond the norm, and show the utmost respect for your customers. They will return again and again and bring others along with them.