



The Customer Service Strategy

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#201

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Empowerment Takes a Miracle to Happen

I have a new Walgreen's store which just opened next to my local bank. I was among the first few customers in the store last week. I have been waiting to switch my prescriptions from the present drug store, Prairie Store owned by Lunds. They are super slow, incompetent and expensive. When another drugstore chain closed down they transferred our prescriptions to them. In Bloomington, where I live, there are probably 25 pharmacies to choose from.

Usually when a new retail drug store opens up they have specials to get you to move your prescriptions to their store. The real money is made as people walk to the back of the store buying other products before they pick up their prescription.

I really wanted to switch but I wanted a deal. The assistant manger greeted me as I came into the store. I might have been one of the first 2 or 3 customers. It was about 8:05 AM. He directed me to the pharmacy and I asked for the special for moving all my prescriptions. She said they had none. This was her first day on the job.

I asked if she could make an empowered decision. She said NO she would be fired. (Most employees do not want to get fired their first day on the job in slow economy.) I love to push people to the limit to see what can happen. Without fail this is the response. [Same is true for your organization.](#)

She called the store manager who came over along with the assistant store manager. They said there is normally a \$25 coupon but they could not break store policies to give it to me. There was also a District Manager who could not make the big decision for \$25.

The store manager said in 2 weeks they were running an ad in the newspaper for \$25 and I should wait until then and clip the coupon and bring it in. Since I started in 1980 helping companies drive a service culture and train their employees on customer service I have noticed ALMOST all firms are addicted to advertising. They never hesitate spending a fortune on marketing and advertising. Walgreen's in Bloomington will spend thousands of dollars on this ad when it comes out. I suspect the cost for each person that responds to the \$25 coupon will be more than \$50 a person. This is before the \$25 coupon discount.

Most customers probably would not come back. Four managers were unable to make a \$25 empowered decision to make an immediate sale with long term implications. The real question is why does Walgreen's not train its management team on empowerment? You can imagine if management will NOT make an empowered decision there is little chance an employee will.

When I talk about employees making fast empowered decisions on the spot to take

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Train The Trainer

September 14-17, 2009

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(Includes \$1,500 in facilitator material and license to buy participant materials at significant discounts)

Worldwide Customer Service conference in Minneapolis

September 18-20, 2009

care of a customer to the customer's satisfaction, this is one of the most powerful marketing tools you can use. Empowerment does not exist. I have rarely seen employees in any of the service leaders make an empowered decision. Their greatest fear is they will be fired.

This is a brand new Walgreen's store. They must have spent at least \$1 million on the land, building the store and stocking it with product. No one appears to have been trained on customer service, customer experience and empowerment. I bet they have a huge ad budget. Seldom do firms understand the power of a service strategy which creates word of mouth advertising. Now lets take the \$25 discount they would not give me to immediately move all my prescriptions (I would have been their first prescription customer). If Walgreens went to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, local TV or radio station and walks in with \$25 and ask to speak to the Sales Manager to buy a media campaign for Walgreen's to attract new customers. How many words or seconds would they give them on any of these media outlets?

Empowerment is marketing money. You want employees to have one single objective each day. To have overly happy customers. [This creates customer loyalty and word-of-mouth advertising](#). Trying to get employees and management to use empowerment is often like asking for 2 miracles to happen at the same time. If you can get employees to make empowered decisions, it will significantly impact your brand, reduce costs and help you keep loyal customers. You want to WOW the customer in every transaction.

John Tschohl Public Seminars

Bucharest, Romania

September 24, 2009

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The top 4 managers would not make a \$25 empowered decision to make a long term sale for thousands of dollars. I keep thinking this is crazy. Then I realized if everyone was good at customer service my business would be a disaster. Customer service does not exist in the US. The addiction to advertising and store renovation and design is still 100 times more important to most CEO's. Very little has changed since I started with Feelings in January 1980 except the rhetoric.

When I talk about empowerment I am not talking million dollar decisions. The vast majority will fall under \$50.

Lessons to be Learned:

1. Train everyone in management first on empowerment.
2. Force and demand empowerment.
3. Train all employees on empowerment.
4. Understand that marketing and advertising is expensive and 50% is wasted (No one know's which half is wasted).
5. Celebrate any employee who makes empowered decisions and bends and breaks rules to take care of a customer. Make a really big deal out of this.
6. Confront any manager or employee who does not make empowered decisions.

Driving a Service Culture

If you want to drive a service culture you need a new customer service training program at least every 4-6 months. Too many organizations believe their is a magic training program just like there is a magic ad. If you show the same program twice, the second time the employees will fall asleep, get bored, not pay attention and you will waste all your money. Labor time is the single biggest expense in training the total workforce.

If you want awesome service you need to provide customer service training for the

total workforce every 4-6 months to maintain the impact and to change attitudes and behaviors and help employees master the skills. There is NO magic program.

Progressive Insurance has been running for the last year the greatest commercials. They are awesome and probably considered "home run commercials." Each week they change the commercial. View them at <http://www.progressive.com/commercials/progressive-commercials.aspx> If this was a training program management would never invest in the production costs to create a new program weekly. They typically believe that one powerful program will change the lives of their employees for life. Does not happen. You are working with humans. If your interested in our products take a look at this link on our web site

<http://www.customer-service.com/t-Service-Culture.aspx>

Thank God It's Monday

Roxanne Emmerich, a fellow collage, just released a great book called "Thank God It's Monday". Well written, Easy to read. If you are looking for an outstanding book that you can share with your staff, this book is worth your time and money. Visit her web site www.thankgoditsmonday.com

Hot SQI Products

If you want leading edge customer service training programs SQI has a variety of tools that work. You can view each product on our web site. This includes the video, leader guide, participant book, technique card, customer service performance standard and certificate. We have a money back guarantee on our products. If unhappy for any reason just return the product for a complete refund after you have trained your entire staff. No time frame. In 37 years we have had 2 returns from customers who used the program and did not like it. Total value was under \$800. www.customer-service.com

Worldwide Customer Service Conference September 18-20

Service Quality Institute is holding a 3 day Worldwide Customer Service Conference in Minneapolis for our channel partners and customers on September 18-20. If you would like to attend or get more information click here

<http://www.customer-service.com/c-61-sqi-worldwide-conference.aspx> The registration sheet is also on this link. Registration is \$300. Our new training program, Remember Me, will be introduced at the conference.

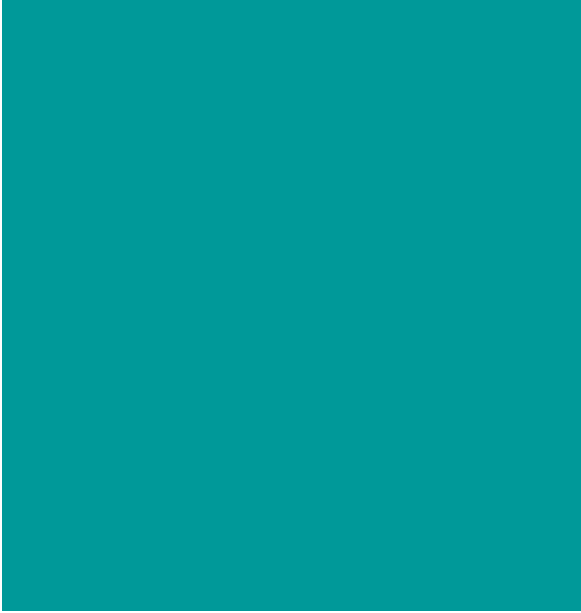
If you want to network with channel partners and customers from across the world this is the event you need to attend. Minnesota in September is a beautiful place to be.

Channel Partners Needed

We are looking for new channel partners across the world who love customer service, can sell concepts and ideas and who want to have their own business. Please contact Carmen Velasco for Latin America, Carmen@servicequality.com or Tom Chapman for the rest of the world TomChapman@servicequality.com

The vast majority of our sales come from Channel Partners.

Please forward this newsletter to a friend who could benefit from it, or have them send us a message with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.



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