

Overt Operations...How to Beat Your Competitors by John Tschohl

I was looking for a word that describes the passion that I have and how to relate to companies what I believe about “Customer Service.” It’s what I firmly believe is necessary to operate in the world today. The word is “Overt” or done or shown publicly and not secret. I have been dealing with customer service in a *overt* manner for 46 years. It has been the focus of my entire adult life. Here’s what I have discovered and continue to share with companies:

It’s ALL about Training.

Why do I believe in investing in continuous employee training and development? Some organizations ignore continuous training sessions for employees as they feel they are expensive and employees miss out on their work time which causes delays in completion of projects. What they don’t understand are the benefits of these continuous training sessions and how they contribute to the organization in the overall bigger picture! Benefits of conducting these programs are far greater and long-lasting.



Training makes superstars.

A constant training program allows you to develop and strengthen the skills of your employees that they need or should improve upon. It takes care of issues you are having now and corrects behavior and attitudes. It ensures the same mistakes are not repeated again. It is a great way to promote productivity and teamwork.

Training helps employees find what they love to do.

Lower your training costs while increasing employee training effectiveness. Show them that they are valued. Show them they are appreciated. Challenge them to work harder. Challenge them to move up the ladder and become more satisfied with their job and their earning potential. In the words of Steve Jobs *“Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don’t lose faith. I’m convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You’ve got to find what you love.”*

Training helps employees connect the dots.

Another note about Steve Jobs is he looked at training as “dots”. *It was impossible to connect the dots looking forward but it was very, very clear looking backward. You have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future*”. That is why I strongly believe in continuous training

as it empowers employees. It gives them confidence and keeps them up-to-date on new developments in their industry and the marketplace. It keeps them aware of what the consumer is looking for and how to provide an awesome customer experience. Armed with this information, employees have the confidence to perform better, and to come up with new ideas for the company and each other. They become one unit, all going after the same goals. A team of competent and knowledgeable employees is all that a company needs to compete successfully and hold a strong position in the industry.

Smart leaders put people before numbers.

Take a look at all the great companies of the world, Amazon, Apple, Costco, Metro Bank, etc. etc. Their goal, their mission statement is the same, they are all fanatics about training and customer service. They all have their employee's training and welfare foremost in the business plan. Disney attributes its enviable achievement in employee commitment and customer service to "pixie dust." The formula for pixie dust is not secret. It is Training + Communication + Care = Pride. You'll notice that training is number one.

So, what are you waiting for?

Organizations of all kinds seem to handcuff their employees with rules and policies. They clearly tell employees "Do what you are told. Follow the rules." That's where training and communicating take center stage for me. The best companies put employee growth at the center of their strategies. I believe renewal and reinforcement is essential. It's a serious error for management to turn their backs and not become active in on-going training. It's a disservice to their employees.

When your employees are happy and loyal, you reduce the costs of training, have happy employees, happy customers and you increase your effectiveness in the marketplace. It's a win/win for everyone and it dramatically affects your bottom-line.

"You can never be too fanatical about service. Make it your goal to have 100% customer service every time, every day, always!"--John Tschohl



John Tschohl is an international service strategist and speaker. He is founder and president of the Service Quality Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Described by Time and Entrepreneur magazines as a customer service guru, he has written several books on customer service. He will release shortly the 11th Edition of Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service. The Service Quality Institute (<http://www.customer-service.com>) has developed more than 26 customer service training programs that have been distributed and presented throughout the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

