

July, 2019

Today's Restaurant

The Foodservice Industry Newspaper

Empowerment...Never use "No"

By: John Tschohl, President of Service Quality Institute



"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others".—Bill Gates

A company's success lies in empowered employees.

It is important to train employees and make sure they have trust in what empowerment will bring to a company. Satisfying customers quickly benefits everyone. Moreover, happy, empowered, fulfilled employees are the key to creating "over-happy customers" for your company.

When employees are empowered and given responsibility, they use their talents and skills to maximize the opportunities.

Empowerment means every employee has to make fast decisions in favor of the customer. It's important that we are honest and sincere in our efforts to service our customers. The only way we can do that is by empowering employees to satisfy the customer quickly and to their satisfaction.

In my book **Empowerment a Way of Life**, I illustrate four challenges that all businesses face. They are:

- 1st: Many executives don't trust the customer. They believe the customer is trying to take advantage of them. Employees feel the same way.
- 2nd: We don't trust employees. We pay them as little as we can and have even less confidence in their ability to make decisions. We have a belief that our lying, cheating customers are going to take advantage of our incompetent employees.
- 3rd: With Empowerment you don't need as many managers and supervisors. They're not overly excited about losing their perceived power, nor are they thrilled about the potential of losing their jobs.
- 4th: Very few employees are on their knees at night praying for Empowerment. It's just too risky.

Never use “No”. The first rule of excellent customer service is to never use “no”. People who always manage to find a way to make things happen, to always find a “yes” and do it, are priceless. Give your employees the tools and the trust to use empowerment for the benefit of the customer and the company. Empowerment is NOT about breaking the rules, but *bending* them to keep the customer happy. It is making fast decisions on the spot in favor of customers.

Hyatt Hotels treats different customers differently. Since they know who their best customers are, they're working not to charge them more, but to give them more. They're setting out to randomly cover bar tabs, offer free massages, and provide other services that they could otherwise charge for. If they do it in a corporate, by-the-book way, it'll feel fake and will fail. **But**, if they empower their employees to actually be generous, it can't help but work.

“Not My Job” Three words that can kill an entire organization. Empowerment allows the employee to make a decision on the spot for the customer instead of working their way through a paralyzed system to figure out what to do next. Give employees the authority to take action. No one should have to go “higher up” to get permission to help a customer. Empower everyone to break the rules thus allowing employees to have input and control over their work. When people with problems call your company, the first employee who answers the phone should be able to solve the problem.

What Are You Building? In a world of mediocrity that relentlessly races to the bottom, you lose if you also race to the bottom. The only way to win is to race to the top and empowerment is one of your most valuable tools. My definition of empowerment is getting an employee to make a fast decision, on the spot, in favor of the customer. If the customer wins, your organization wins.

Understand what drives customer value, then figure out where empowerment can improve the quality, speed, and cost with which that value is delivered. Empowering people in the organization to use their best judgment turns out to be faster and cheaper—but only if you hire the right people and reward them for having the right attitude.

I have been passionate about Empowerment and continue to *preach* on the subject. It is a tool for every successful company to use to deliver exemplary service to every person that walks through your doors.

“Your empowered team will drive your business and crush your competition”—John Tschohl

John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service in the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.