

Breaking The Golden Rule Be Relentless

by John Tschohl, President and Founder, Service Quality Institute – October 31, 2020

The well-known Golden Rule...“treat others as you would like to be treated”, sounds like an easy goal, but how true is it? How often do we complain about the way we are treated, but the very next day we are being trite and short with others? Normally, this wouldn't be so bad; we all have our good days and bad days. Our families and friends know the “true us”, so we are often forgiven. But what if the service sector was our job? What if our first impression was our last? What if our disposition caused a future customer to walk away to a competitor? Given this scenario, it's not so easy to chalk up our behavior to a “bad day”. With COVID-19 this is more critical than ever.

Unfortunately, every day employees in every capacity, make a choice NOT to treat others the same way they would like to be treated and their choice not only impacts their job but the company's bottom line. According to John Tschohl, author of Relentless. The entire service process lasts less only a few seconds.” Tschohl says, “Bad service is seen by many consumers as a personal insult. They become angry, depressed, or insecure when sales people ignore them, snap at them or hurry to get rid of them. They are offended when salespeople haven't considered their customers important enough for them to learn the answers to common questions about the merchandise or service they sell.”

Here are some guidelines to follow if your job entails one-on-one communication with a customer/client...

1) **KNOW YOUR JOB!** Many customers become frustrated because the salesperson is not well versed in a product they are asking about or they are not well versed on inventory or procedure (such as a return or credit). Customers can have a very short fuse if they feel their time is being wasted. Tschohl says, “The more you know about your company, the better equipped you are to solve problems and innovate. Strive to learn as much as you can about your company.” If there is a question you don't have the answer to...DON'T MAKE ONE UP AND NEVER EVER SAY “I don't know”, and do nothing to find the answer. If you don't know the answer, seek out a manager and ask him/her. A great thing to say to a customer is “I don't have the answer, but I love learning so I will find that out for you and we will both have the answer. Thank you for asking!”

2) **Think twice about your job choice.** If you have a short-temper, hostility issues, or you naturally do not like being around people (an introvert) DO NOT seek a job which requires you to interact with the public. This is just going to exacerbate your comfort level. Seek out a job that doesn't require you to meet new people every day.

3) **LEAVE YOUR PROBLEMS AT HOME.** This can be difficult, especially if something serious is going on in the background; HOWEVER, it is not fair to spread the poison. If you are having a particularly bad day, try your hardest to put the problem out of your mind and use your job as an escape from the problem, a kind of breather. Fake a smile. Try to see your customers as your allies who didn't create the problem you are dealing with.

4) **Create a new Golden Rule.** Forget the old saying...treat others as you would like to be treated. How about..."Treat others BETTER than you have ever been treated". Wouldn't it be great to know that you could treat another person better than you have ever been treated and that you alone were responsible for that treatment? To be able to say, "I treat people way better than I have ever been treated", would be a great accomplishment. Go beyond where anyone else has ever been!

5) **Think of your own pet peeves.** What drives you crazy? What gets on your nerves? Think about it then...DON'T do it. Maybe it annoys you when you wait for an exceedingly long time for someone to notice when you need help. Maybe you don't like it when the person checking you out is chewing gum. Take your pet peeves and turn them into a list of things you will never do. This can be a powerful tool. Many of us are hypocrites accuse others of the very act that we are committing.

6) **Try turning your job into a game.** Ask yourself how many people you can get to walk away with a smile in a day? How many people can you help today? These little tools can take the monotony out of an everyday job!

Many service employees do not think they have control over their job. This is completely untrue. The employee actually has more power than the manager. The employee is the one who interacts with the customer on a daily basis. The employee's performance of his/her job is what determines whether a customer comes back. Front line employees are the main artery in the business and keep the business alive. They consider customers as their partners in business. On your next day on the job...remember that!



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. His new book *Relentless* is now available. 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..