

RELENTLESS ROLE MODELS

In my work with business leaders I offer them two guaranteed principles for turning their companies into exceptional service providers: Rule 1 is “Serve the customer.” Rule 2 is “When in doubt, see Rule 1.”

In my latest book, *Relentless*, I zoom in on what it takes to serve your customers relentlessly.

Being relentless means cultivating a passion for learning, improving, and exceeding expectations in everything you do. It's a race without a finish line. Relentless attention to service is the core principle, belief, and attitude of people who run healthy and hugely successful businesses.

In my mentoring I talk about three companies that today are continuing to reap the benefits of relentless service. They can serve as role models for others who want to nail down their organization's success.

Topping the list is Amazon with \$386 billion in 2020 sales, a 38-percent increase (\$1.5 billion) over the previous year. What accounts for its extraordinary success? Amazon relentlessly offers its customers a level of service that goes far beyond other companies. It offers great prices, with speed and technology that make it easy to purchase and to make returns.

Amazon consistently and relentlessly practices every element of exceptional customer service. And that commitment didn't just happen – it's the result of an obsessive, compulsive focus on the part of founder Jeff Bezos, whose net worth of \$198.3 billion should tell us something about the link between service and success. Amazon's commitment to customer service is very precisely reflected in its stock, which continues to skyrocket.

The Mayo Clinic is another role model for companies that want to offer outstanding customer service. Mayo consistently ranks number 1 among U.S. healthcare providers. In 2020 it had 1.3 million patients, a workforce of 71,400 including 7,000 physicians and scientists, thousands of volunteers, revenues of \$13.9 billion, and philanthropic contributions of \$587 million.

Those figures are beyond impressive, and they're a direct result of Mayo's focus on its customers – in this case, its patients. Care at Mayo Clinic doesn't cost any more than at other large hospitals, but Mayo offers more than extraordinary care – it walks its talk and goes

the last mile to ensure that its patients and their families will be comfortable and well cared for. It even makes password-free computers with free Wi-Fi available throughout its buildings. Mayo is the Ritz-Carlton of healthcare, while other clinics are Motel 6.

Another role model worth imitating is Chewy.com, the largest pet food company in the U.S., if not the world. Chewy is worth \$31.67 billion; its sales for the fiscal year ending July 2021 were \$8.22 billion, a 37.42 percent increase over 2020. It has more than 15,000 employees and partners, with more than 2,000 of the most trusted brands in the pet industry. Founded in 2011, the company was sold to PetSmart in 2017 for an estimated \$3.35 billion. Co-founder Ryan Cohen describes himself as “obsessive, relentless, and contrarian.”

Chewy's goal is to be the most convenient, trusted online destination for pet owners, with great prices, free shipping, speedy delivery, A+ service recovery, and a 100 percent, unconditional satisfaction guarantee on every order. If your dog doesn't like the food you ordered, Chewy.com will give you a refund and tell you not to bother returning the product.

Chewy.com goes above and beyond in other ways, too. This year alone, it sent out more than 5 million handwritten birthday cards to its customers. Its staff includes artists who make oil paintings of the customers' pets and send them during the holidays.

What unites these three companies is their relentless dedication to customer service. They never let up. Being relentless means doing whatever it takes to ensure that your customers will sing your praises. When you're focused on the customer, the impact on your bottom line and your long-term growth is tremendous.

For more information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute, visit www.customer-service.com.

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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 speaks more than 50 times each year and is considered one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. Contact John on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

