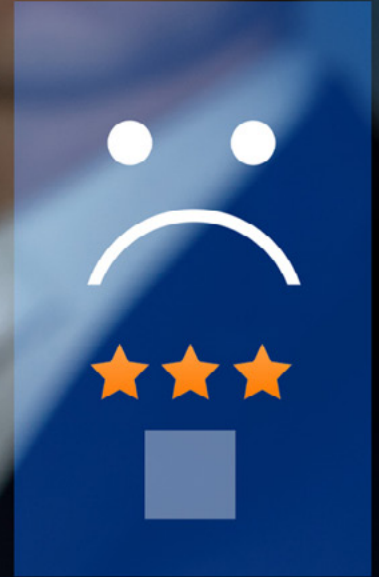
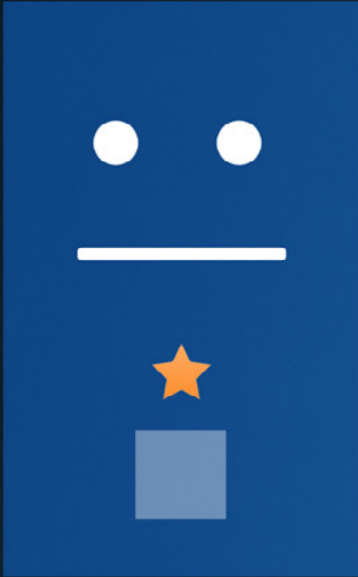


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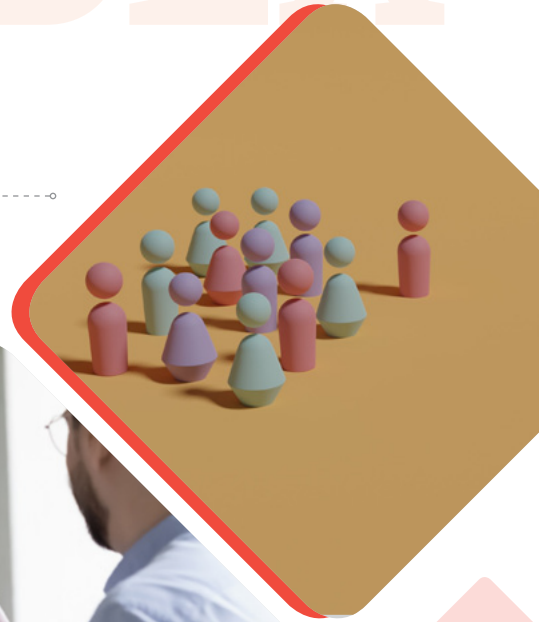
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Inclusive design benefits your customer, and ultimately your brand
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Ex-NBA star explains why it's important
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Be Relentless In Serving Your Customers

The keys to great customer service are in the hands of your frontline employees



By **John Tschohl**, Service Quality Institute

If you want your organization to grow and succeed long-term, you have got to be a service leader. If you want to be a service leader, you have to be relentless. You have to have a propulsive, self-directed passion to continue to learn, improve, and exceed expectations in everything you do. And it must be a lifetime commitment.

New and returning customers come into your business every day – and they all expect the same thing: great customer service. Most of them do not get it because top management does not fully understand the importance of service and has not committed to providing it.



In one sense, Covid-19 gave companies a reason not to focus on customer service. They were struggling to stay open and to have enough warm bodies to serve their customers. Going above and beyond to provide awesome customer service was not on their “menu.”

Now that things are back to normal, many companies still are not making customer service a priority. If you were to ask CEOs of every company in the United States — if not the world — how they would rank their customer service on a scale of 1 to 10, most would give themselves a 10. Customers would strongly disagree. Look at Walmart, which built its business on customer service and great prices. It still has great prices, but customer service has fallen by the wayside.

Then look at Amazon, a shining star when it comes to awesome service. I continue to be amazed that more companies do not copy Amazon; it does everything right. If you want proof of the financial benefits of providing great customer service, take note of this: In 2022, Amazon had sales of \$514 billion, an increase of \$44.2 billion over the previous year. Other companies you would do well to emulate include Costco, NE Delta Dental, and Chewy.com.

I’ve been writing about customer service and providing customer service training programs to companies throughout the world longer than anyone else in the industry. What I constantly stress is that the keys to great customer service are in the hands of your front-line employees. They have 99 percent of the contact with your customers, but they are the least valued and least trained.

Why is that? One reason is the inertia of top management. They do not understand or recognize the importance of customer service, so they do not provide employees with the training that will help them take great care of their customers. They think that, if they provide training of any type, it will be money wasted because those employees will eventually leave them. What they do not recognize is that, if they do not provide that training, their customers will leave them.

They also do not understand — or appreciate — the importance of exceeding customers’ expectations. They take better care of their machines and technology than they do their customers. Just as manufacturing companies spend a lot of money to maintain their machines, you must invest in maintaining your employees to ensure that they are operating on all cylinders.

When you provide service that is above and beyond what customers expect, they will bring their friends — and their money — to you. You can spend millions of dollars on marketing and advertising or you can provide service that is so exceptional that your customers tell others about it and help drive your business through word-of-mouth advertising.

Everything you do should revolve around the conviction that providing great customer service is critical to your success. Good service will not get you into the game; you need to provide service that is relentlessly awesome.

If you are to be successful, you must recognize, reaffirm, and reprioritize your goals. You must refocus your organizational mission to make providing awesome customer service your top priority.

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John Tschohl is the Founder and President of the Service Quality Institute. He is considered one of the world’s foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service and recently released his latest book, “Relentless.”



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