

Call Center Times

Be Relentless - Then Sit Back and Reap the Rewards

by John Tschohl, President and Founder, Service Quality Institute - September 29, 2024

Who do you admire—and why? They might be entertainers or entrepreneurs, athletes or authors. You might admire them because they are leaders of the pack in their chosen fields, because they're wealthy, or because they're successful.

What do those people have in common? I can answer that with three words: They are relentless.

People don't become successful by accident. They set goals and work hard. They practice, study, and do whatever it takes to move ahead and to become the best they can be in whatever it is they are doing. They are relentless in their pursuits.

What's the definition of relentless? It's a propulsive, self-directed passion to continue to learn, improve, and exceed expectations in everything you do. It's a race without a finish line. Let's take a look at some successful people and their commitment to being relentless in serving their customers.

Tom Raffio, president and CEO of Northeast Delta Dental, knows how critical being relentless is to serving the company's current customers and attracting new customers, which has resulted in impressive growth. Under his leadership, the company's revenue grew from \$57 million in 1995 to more than \$483 million in 2023. He did that, in part, by creating a Guarantee of Service Excellence, which backs up seven facets of service with customer refunds. Those guarantees address everything from resolving inquiries immediately or guaranteeing an initial update within one business day to processing claims within 15 calendar days.

Ed Basitan, who was CEO of Delta Airlines during the COVID pandemic in 2020, was also relentless in serving the company's customers. He contacted each of them to let them know the company was extending its SkyMiles Medallion Status for almost two years and was making re-booking of flights free for two additional years. He was relentless in serving the company's customers.

Jeff Bezos built Amazon on customer service. The company anticipates customers' complaints or concerns even before they know they have them. It immediately acknowledges an order, sends an email message when the order has shipped, lets customers easily track their packages, and includes a link to return or replace items.

When Steve Jobs founded Apple, one of the most profitable companies in the world, he did so on two principles: quality products and superior customer service. Apple does everything right and is proof that relentless customer service is fundamental to superior performance.

To build a business that is relentless in serving its customers, you must do several things. Hire people who are personable and train them in the skills and attitudes that will make them customer service heroes. Trust and empower employees to make decisions that will satisfy customers who have a problem with your company or your products. Use a combination of people and technology to make it easy to do business with you. Build speed into everything you do; do it faster, and do it better.

A critical element of being relentless is service recovery. Service recovery is resolving issues customers have with a product or service they purchased from you. This involves four steps: acting quickly, taking responsibility, making an empowered decision, and compensating the customer. Do this, and your customers will never leave you.

“Treat your customers as if they own you . . . because they do,” says Mark Cuban, Shark Tank investor, entrepreneur, and author. “You have to re-earn your customers’ business every day.”

No matter what you’re selling, your customers provide your income stream. Being relentless in serving them will forge your path to success.

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

John Tschohl, who became a millionaire by age 30, is the founder and president of the Service Quality Institute—the global leader in customer service—with operations in more than 40 countries. He is considered one of the world’s foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service and success and has developed 18 customer service training programs, including his best-selling book, *Relentless*, that are used by companies throughout the world. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at www.customer-service.com. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

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