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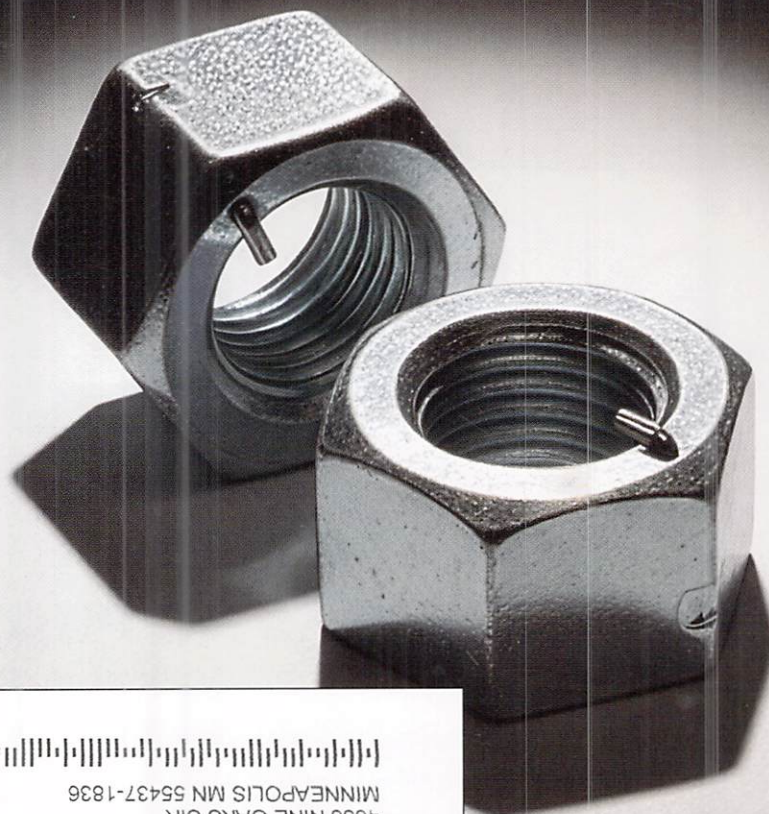
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REDUCE THE FRICTION:

How to Avoid Losing Money Fast with Poor Hours and No Live Support

by John Tschohl



Most firms believe anyone can go to their website and find the answers to everything they need. They tend to love "banker's hours." Many have NO live contact help. With generative artificial intelligence, it is going to get worse.

Most firms believe they can use AI to eliminate employees and avoid humans. About 15 to 20 years ago, many of these same firms outsourced their call centers to India—anything to reduce costs and eliminate sales and customers. Many are still on this suicide watch. Dell did this and destroyed their brand.

At Amazon, Executive Chair Jeff Bezos said: "If you want more of something, reduce the friction." You can call (800.216.1072), email, or chat 24/7 with live humans at Amazon. Sales in 2024 were \$638 billion—a \$63.2 billion dollar increase. Their profit in 2024 was \$59.2 billion.

I call this the Service Strategy. Very few organizations understand how money falls from the sky when they deliver a consistent, AWESOME customer experience. Few organizations are willing to invest in developing a customer-driven workforce from senior management to the front line. Keep in mind, 99% of all customer contact is with your front-line employee—the least trained, least valued, and most important person in any company.

Some examples:

- You can call Chewy.com (800.672.4399) 24/7 and reach live people. The company was co-founded in 2011 by Ryan Cohen, sold to PetSmart in 2017 for \$3.35 billion, and today it is worth \$17.58 billion.
- Call The Mayo Clinic (507.284.2511) 24/7, and a live person answers the

calls in one ring. They are by far the most customer-driven health-care organization in the world. Revenue in 2024 was \$18.79 billion, an increase of 10.3%. Profit was \$1,293 billion. Donations from patients who love The Mayo Clinic were \$540 million in 2024.

- You can call Apple (800.694.7466), and after going through a security check, a live person comes on that can help you for FREE with any Apple products (7 days a week). They are open 7 a.m. – 10:15 p.m. I no longer need to go to their stores. Revenue for the 2024 fiscal year was \$391.04 billion, with net profit of \$93.74 billion.

All these firms have very sharp, talented people who answer the phone live to help. They all make a ton of money, and they continue to grow with incredible profits because they are relentless and deliver an awesome custom experience. Follow in their footsteps.

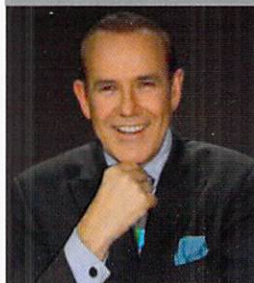
Young people prefer to just use the internet. If your product is only for young people, not using humans and being closed on weekends and evenings is probably OK.

Some examples:

- This weekend, I wanted to replace the Nextgrill I recently bought at The Home Depot. My grill never heats up enough. I called Nextgrill, but they are only open weekdays. I am sure most people do NOT need help over the weekends with their grills. (Really stupid thinking and customer service hours.)
- Costco has a Blackstone grill on sale for \$449, but I wanted to make sure it would work with my direct gas hookup. I went to Blackstone's website, but they have NO phone number. NO email. They do NOT want to talk to customers. Costco said I can buy a conversion kit. I wanted to talk to Blackstone. I found a customer service email. They responded a day later saying it must use a propane tank.

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JOHN TSCHOHL



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 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 X, formerly known as Twitter.

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- RCI, which is the timeshare exchange business for vacations, is closed on Sundays. (I would think Saturday and Sunday would be the busiest days.)

Maybe I am old school and like to talk to humans. For your service and products, this is the question: Is the money/sales with customers 16 to 28 years old, or with those who are 50 to 80 years old?

When you open a new bank account or securities account, the security questions are all designed by 25-year-olds. (Who was your first girlfriend or boyfriend? What was your first car?) Who has the money? Who is your target audience? Very few organizations know they are in customer service.

In my book “Relentless,” I feature customer service roles like those mentioned above. Apple, Amazon, Chewy.com, and

The Mayo Clinic all understand the power of the Service Strategy. It is part of their culture. Become relentless.

If you want to grow faster, reduce the friction, and make it easy for customers to reach you – seven days a week, ideally 24/7. On your website, have easy access to contact for help. Does it cost more money to have live, smart, intelligent employees who pick up the phone? Yes. The revenue from these service leaders I have mentioned is incredible.

Invest in your employees. Train everyone on customer service with something fresh and new every four months. Keep the passion and focus on delivering an extraordinary customer experience with every employee and every transaction. Dominate the market like the service leaders above. This is the Service Strategy. ◀