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BE RELENTLESS IN SERVING YOUR CUSTOMERS

(They pay your salaries)

If you are going to be relentless in serving your customers, you must first understand the meaning of the word relentless. It means an obsession with providing your customers with exceptional service. It's a propulsive, self-directed passion to continue to learn, to improve, and to exceed expectations in everything you do – and it never stops.

I have two rules for being relentless. The first is to serve the customer. The second is: "When in doubt, see rule number one." Serving your customers must be a belief and a commitment shared by everyone in your organization from the front lines to the board room. It's about making extraordinary customer service a central strategy for your company.

Why is being relentless so critical? Because it builds an organization's bottom line and its long-term growth prospects. It's your path to success, and it should be a way of life for your organization going forward. It can't be an add-on; it has to be part of your organization's culture.

Let me give you an example of relentless customer service. A man left his checkbook on the desk of a customer service representative at Metro Bank London. When the employee noticed it, he called the customer, who said he would stop by the next morning to pick it up. The employee said he would deliver it to the customer, even though it was 8 p.m.

The customer said he was at a nearby pub with friends. The employee delivered the checkbook. The customer sent him an email the next day saying that his friends were so impressed with the bank's service that they all would open accounts at the bank. It was a perfect example of how being relentless not only keeps your current customers happy but attracts new customers and their money.

Service recovery is a key element in being relentless. When a customer has a complaint, you should do everything possible to solve the problem quickly and keep the customer coming back. You

can't do that unless you empower your employees by giving them the authority to make decisions in your customers' favor. You must train all your employees and trust them to do what's necessary to keep your customers. That includes compensating customers for any problems they have with your products or services.

All too often, managers and executives fear their employees will "give away the store" if they're empowered to make decisions when customers have complaints. An empowered employee might give a disgruntled customer a \$50 rebate. That's a small investment, when you consider that the satisfied customer will spend hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars with you in the future.

Another important key to being relentless is to use technology at every level to smooth the point of entry for the customer and quickly connect them with the products or services they need. Amazon is a prime example of combining technology with personal contact to attract and keep customers. Do everything you can to make it easy for your customers to do business with you. Remember this: the best way to sell is to make it convenient to buy.

Being relentless in serving your customers will increase your income stream and forge your path to success. Everything you do must revolve around a conviction that your customers rule. You must put their needs at the forefront of everything you do.

Visit www.customer-service.com for more information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute. **RO**

John Tschohl is the founder and president of Service Quality Institute, a global leader in customer service. He is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service, and is the author of several books including Moving Up: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Your Success. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no cost at www.customer-service.com.

