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RETAIL. DESIGN. INNOVATION. HOME.

2026 GOLD NUGGET AWARDS

GRAND AWARD WINNERS &
AWARD OF MERIT HONOREES
PART ONE



BE RELENTLESS IN SERVING YOUR CUSTOMERS

It's the hook for customer loyalty

The key to success is providing exceptional customer service. I don't care if you work for a financial company, a retail chain, or a car dealership. If you don't serve your customers, and serve them well, they will leave you.

Exceptional customer service keeps customers and their wallets coming back to you. But there is a critical element of customer service that is often overlooked: you must be relentless in providing your customers with service that is so great, they wouldn't think of spending their money with your competitors.

You and everyone else in your organization, from top executives to the frontline employees, must be obsessed with providing your customers with the best service possible. It means that you have 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, and it reflects the core principles, beliefs, and attitudes of every employee in a healthy and hugely successful business.

When you are relentless, you make customer service part of your company's culture by weaving it into every aspect of the organizational fabric. The first step is to understand the definition of customer service. It's putting customers first, doing what you say you'll do, when you say you'll do it, and doing whatever you can to solve their problems with your products or services (and doing it quickly).

Too many execs at publicly held companies make shareholder returns on their investments their top priority. What they fail to realize is that if the company isn't providing products and services that attract and retain customers, revenues will drop and so will profits. They'll be faced with spending huge amounts of money in marketing and advertising to replace those customers, much more than it would have cost to solve their problems and retain their business.

Being relentless means making customer service a core strategy. That includes consistently training every employee in the skills required to serve the customers, and giving them the tools to do so. One of those tools is empowerment. It's imperative that you give them the authority to make decisions that will benefit your customers

quickly, without seeking managerial or executive approval.

Speed of thought, action, and consequences is the standout tool of empowered employees. Identify roadblocks that impede empowerment, including policies and procedures that are preventing your employees from making decisions quickly and responsibly – then eliminate them.

It's also important to measure the results of relentlessness. Track your customer referral rate. How many new customers did you attract because you made your other customers happy? Track social media. How do people talk about your company? Track first contact resolutions. What percentage of customer concerns were resolved with only one point of contact? Track your defection rate. How many customers have stopped doing business with you? That includes "abandoned cart" transactions. It's imperative to know where you are so you can take steps to get you to where you want to be.

No one is perfect; we all make mistakes. That's where service recovery comes in. Service recovery is how an organization owns up to its mistakes, solves the problems, provides compensation, and restores customer loyalty. You must listen to your customers, be empathetic, take responsibility for the problem, and do whatever it takes to satisfy them.

Make a commitment to be relentless. And remember this: Being relentless in serving your customers will forge your path to success by building your bottom line and long-term growth. If you're relentless in providing extraordinary customer service, you'll be successful.

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

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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.

