

**Exceptional
Customer Service:
Create an Impressive Reputation
for Your Organization**

**Central and Western Iowa Tourism
April 7, 2021: 9:30 – 11:30 am
Brenda Clark Hamilton, MA Ed.**

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**Gratitude/Positivity:
*Always a great place to start...***

**Please enter in
the chat box
one thing you
are thankful
for today!**



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Exceptional Customer Service

- I. Laying the Foundation
- II. 'Customer Service 101'
- III. Put Yourself in Their Shoes
- IV. Dealing Effectively With Upset Customers
- V. Finding Your Inner Resilience During Stressful Times

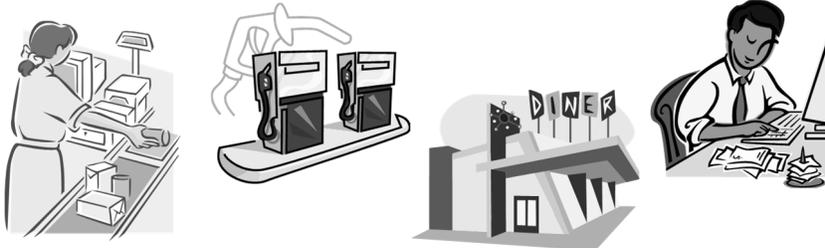
|| Your smile
is your LOGO,
your personality
is your BUSINESS
CARD, how
you leave
others feeling
after having
an experience
with you
becomes
your TRADEMARK. ||

Jay Danzie

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I. Laying the Foundation

*Think of the individuals and businesses that you turn to for your product and service needs.
What is it that keeps you coming back?*



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What are your top 'pet peeves' when it comes to other companies' customer service?



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• **Who are your customers?**



“Make every interaction count, even the small ones. They are all relevant.”

- Shep Hyken

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II. 'Customer Service 101'

Which has a greater impact on an organization's reputation?

- a) The organization's advertising
- b) The actual service that customers receive at the organization



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What's Our Common Goal?

What do we want people to say about the Western and Central Iowa Tourism Regions?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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The “Meat & Potatoes” of Great Customer Service!



1. Be friendly, kind, and a good listener.
2. Do what you say you will do...or more!
3. Find a way to say ‘yes’ and/or to pleasantly surprise customers.
4. Recognize that each employee is a representative of your company. Their attitude, integrity, and professionalism (or lack of) speak volumes about your company.
5. Realize that your words, actions, tone of voice, and demeanor constantly broadcast to customers how much you value them! Leave no doubt in your customers’ minds that they are important to you.

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How do your customers RATE you?

- **Reliability**
- **Assurance/Trust**
 - *Product Knowledge*
 - *Company Knowledge*
 - *Listening Skills*
 - *Problem-Solving Skills*
- **Tangibles***

- **Empathy**
- **Responsiveness**



--from *Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*, Performance Research Associates, New York: AMACOM

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“Tell your staff to be HOSPITABLE with guests:

- **Help**
- **Observe**
- **Serve**
- **Personalize**
- **Impress**
- **Thank**
- **Anticipate**
- **Befriend**
- **Listen**
- **Engage”**



(www.hotevaluations.com/au)

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“Customer service has always been the hallmark of the travel and tourism industry. And the new travel consumer has grown accustomed to a higher level of customer service due to the upsurge in widespread usage of technologies that effortlessly provide a high level of personalization, limitless options and over-the-top customer service.

On a local level, most consumers have experienced smaller companies, such as local grocery chains, contractors, healthcare providers and retailers, adjust and accommodate to their needs like they have never done before. All of a sudden, almost everybody was offering home delivery. Retailers created parking places for pick-ups where items can be ordered ahead of time and then delivered and placed in the trunk of their cars.”

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“And finally, those entities who would never take an appointment or reservation previously, started utilizing these systems quickly. Now they could pace the arrival or the departure of their customers to ensure not only a high level of service, but their customers’ safety was considered at the same time.

Has this caused the new consumer to expect to see adjustments in how they are treated across the board from a service perspective? And if so, what adjustments do travel and hospitality providers need to implement immediately? A high level of customer service will be even more important during the reopening stages post-COVID travel.”

-Frank Belzer, “The New Travel Consumer,” travelpulse.com, 3.31.21

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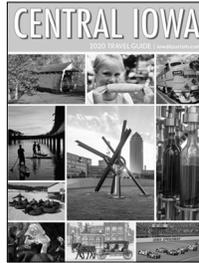
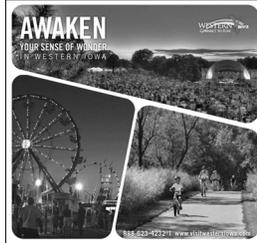
Two Final Thoughts on Daily Customer Service Excellence

- *Take a lesson from the Williamsport hospital study*
- *Take a lesson from the Blow Dryer Incident of 2016*



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What feelings will visitors associate with their time in Central & Western Iowa?



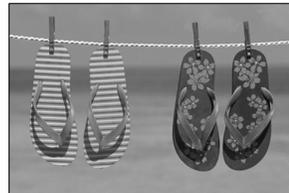
“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” –*Maya Angelou*

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III. Put Yourself in Their Shoes

The average American tells _____ people when they have had a poor customer service experience.
(American Express, 2017)

- a. 3
- b. 5
- c. 10
- d. 15



e. Everyone they know

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- **47% of customers say they will stop buying from a company if they have a subpar experience.**
- **Attracting a new customer is 6-7 times more costly than retaining a current one.**
- **It takes 12 positive customer service experiences to make up for one poor one.**



(Sales Force, 2019)

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- **The traveler and/or vacationer mindset**
 - *Tired; Stressed*
 - *Valuable vacation days and money*
 - *Needs and wants*



- **Six ways to put yourself in their shoes...**



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1. Make their visit as stress-free as possible.

- Think *easy!* 
- Anticipate their needs (*vs. responding*)
- Be empathetic, patient, and understanding
- Seek to go 'above & beyond' in your service



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2. Make them feel good about interacting with you.

- Pay attention to your greeting
- Take personal responsibility for customer needs and requests



- Be careful about 'fine-print' on offers
- Maintain professional appearance, behaviors, and attitude by *all staff members at all times!*

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- Use professional phone etiquette:

1. The Salutation
 (“*Good morning*”)

2. The Identification
 (“*XYZ Resort—
 This is Brenda*”)

3. The Solicitation
 (“*How may I help
 you?*”)

- Minimize background noise

- No eating or drinking



- Five Qualities:

1. *Alert*
2. *Pleasant*
3. *Conversational*
4. *Articulate*
5. *Expressive*

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3. Provide exceptional internal customer service.

- *Part of your pay...*

- It’s contagious...
Leave a bad mood or personal problems at home!



- Be friendly, kind, helpful, and pleasant to coworkers. Be complimentary of your team members and organization, especially in front of customers!

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**True or False,
and Why?**

“As long as I’m providing great service to our guests, it doesn’t matter if I’m inconsiderate or short-tempered to my colleagues. We’re just coworkers, after all.”

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- **If you had to rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 regarding how pleasant, helpful, easy to get along with, accommodating, and considerate that you are to your coworkers, what number would you give yourself?**
- **Would others describe you as someone who goes ‘above and beyond’ to provide excellent service/teamwork to your coworkers?**
- **Are you someone who contributes to teamwork/cooperation between team members, departments, and shifts? Or someone who nitpicks others and contributes to divisions between individuals and/or departments?**

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4. Know who you are dealing with.

- The Director
- The Analytical
- The Relator
- The Socializer
- The Bargain-Shoppper
- The Killing Time Customer



(adapted from the work of Rick Segel)

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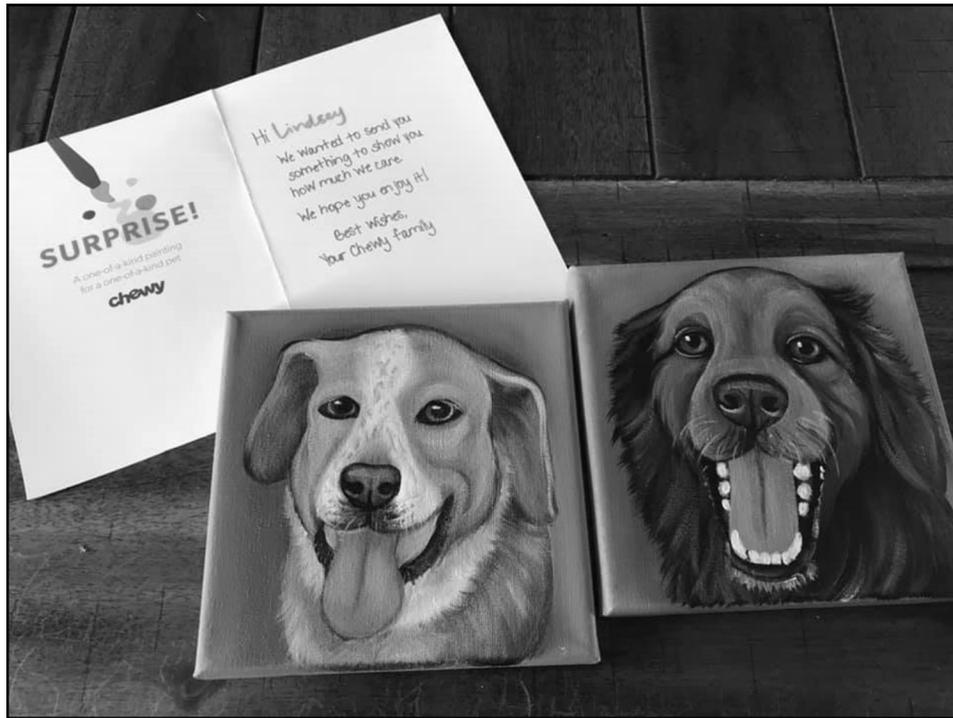
5. Give them a pleasant surprise.

- Pleasant surprises are wonderful ways to make customers feel wonderful about you, your organization, and community!



How many times will people retell the story?

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold water or fresh-baked cookies at hotel check-in • Small treat in hotel room with handwritten note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An especially pleasant public restroom • Coupon for free shot glass, playing cards • Offer to take the group picture
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- **Consider partnering to create a doubly-pleasant surprise.**



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What's Perfect for Dinner on a Tuesday?!

Why tacos from Cinco De Mayo in Algona! We have the perfect pair for you today! \$45 and you get this fantastic tee and \$20 gift certificate from Cinco in Algona!

Take your bestie for tacos and margaritas at Cinco De Mayo, while looking fantastic in this tee!



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6. Give Them a Positive Memorable Event to Talk About.

- Fred Lee's *Law of the Memorable Event*



- Social media:
 - Monitor (e.g., *Trip Advisor*; *Yelp*) to find out what stories are being told, and to respond appropriately
 - Use social media to your advantage (e.g., *have a fun photo-op*)

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- Brainstorm the possibility of **Experiential Travel**



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IV. Dealing Effectively With Upset Customers

- Anyone in the service industry will have customer complaints.
- If you handle a complaint well, it is an opportunity to gain a more loyal customer.



'Honest Mistake' vs. 'Being Blown Off'

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Wisdom, please...

Based upon your experience as a customer yourself, and in working with customers, what are the do's and don'ts of handling an upset customer?



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The HEAT Method of Service Recovery



- **H**ear them out (*Let them talk, then paraphrase; Fix the person first, then the problem*)
- **E**mpathize (*Acknowledge their inconvenience*)
- **A**pologize (*Sincerely apologize; Let them know you are here to help; Tell them what you will do, and when*)
- **T**ake action (*Follow through; Thank them for making you aware of the situation*)

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Insights on Enforcing Rules

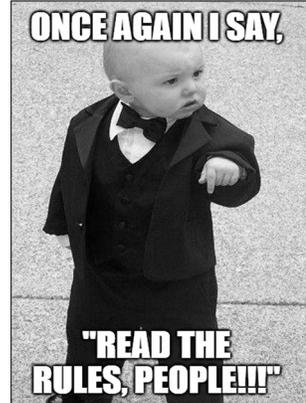
- **Make sure the rules are clearly communicated.** (*e.g., signs; websites*)
- **Make sure all staff understand the reason for the rules.**
- **Be consistent in rule enforcement.**
- **Treat everyone with dignity and respect.**



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When Someone Is Breaking a Rule...

- **Check your interpretation**; Don't assume the person knows the rule and is purposefully breaking it. Don't take it personally.
- **Try to address as privately as possible**; Respect personal space.
- **Be highly aware of your body language and tone of voice.** Tone should be sincere, caring, empathetic, and assertive. Avoid 'squaring off,' 'arms akimbo,' and arms crossed.



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Basic Framework for Addressing Someone Breaking a Rule

1. **State the rule** in a nonconfrontational manner. (e.g., "You might not be aware, but...")
2. **State why we have the rule.**
3. **Listen and empathize.** (Perhaps find something to agree with.)
4. **Give options.** (If appropriate, apologize for the inconvenience, or offer to help in some way.)
5. **Thank them.**

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1. **State the rule** in a nonconfrontational manner.
(“You might not be aware, but we have a no-food-or-drink policy in the museum.”)
2. **State why we have the rule.** *(“We have so many expensive artifacts that are really hard to replace if they get damaged from spills.”)*
3. **Listen and empathize.**
(“I know it’s frustrating. I love my coffee in the morning, too.”)
4. **Give options.** *(“If you’d like, we have a small lobby area where you can drink coffee, or there’s a great little coffee shop just down the street, if you’d like to take a break & come back later; your admission is good all day. I even have a 15% off coupon for the coffee shop, if you’d like one.”)*
5. **Thank them.** *(“Thank you. I really appreciate your cooperation in keeping our museum first-rate. It’s a great asset for our region.”)*

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During service recovery, remember...

- *Better they tell you than fifty (or five thousand!) others.*
- *An upset customer truly can be an opportunity to gain a more loyal customer.*
- *Stay calm by QTIP: Quit Taking It Personally*
- *Watch your body language and tone of voice.*
- *Know if you have any atonement options.*



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Do's and Don'ts of Deescalating Situations with Angry Customers



DO NOT...

- **Interrupt.**
- **Say, “Calm down.”**
- **Blame another department.**
- **Argue back.**
- **Use confusing jargon.**

DO...

- **Humanize yourself and them as much as possible.**

DO...

- **Use voice match.**
- **Tell them you are taking notes because you want to get it right.**
- **Remember that people under stress hate to be left in the dark.**
- **De-stress yourself regularly.**

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Phrases to use if you want to make angry customers more angry!

- **“No.”**
- **“I can’t.”**
- **“I don’t know.”**
- **“You’ll have to...”**
- **“You should have...”**
- **“I’ll be honest with you...”**

--adapted from *Beyond Hello*, Davis, Aurora:
Now Hear This Publishing



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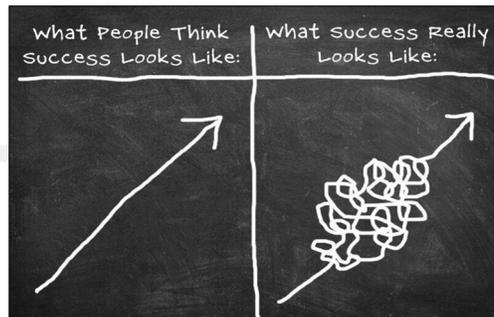
V. Finding Your Inner Resilience During Stressful Times

It is not easy working with customers all day, every day, and remaining upbeat and pleasant at all times...especially when you've had the year we have had!



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This is a time when we need to be gritty, and when we need to model grit and resilience for our team members, communities, and customers.



WE CAN DO HARD THINGS

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Resilience Strategy #1:

Be aware of your words and thoughts. Don't let your mind defeat you before you even begin.

- This is going to be a disaster.
- The numbers are going to go back up, and we'll have to close our doors again. Why even bother?
- People aren't going to be willing to travel and shop again; they've gotten too used to being at home.
- Our business will never be successful again.
- We might as well just keep our doors closed for good.



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- We've made it this far, and we can finally see the light at the end of this tunnel. I'm not giving up now!
- So many people who have been cautious are now vaccinated and can't wait to get out of the house and go somewhere!
- My team and I are ready, capable, and excited to serve the public once again.
- There might be some challenges, but this is not my first rodeo. I've been through difficult times before. I'm smart, tough, and capable.
- When the going gets rough, I dig in and get stronger.
- I'm excited and ready for this new chapter to begin. Bring it on!

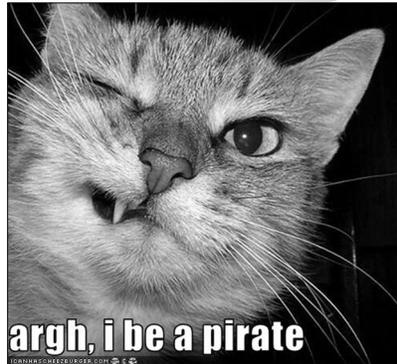


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Resilience Strategy #2: For Daily Mental Strength, Wake Up and Say, “ARG!”

- **A**nticipate
- **R**ecollect
- **G**ratITUDE

(Eric Barker, *Seven Things The World's
Happiest People Do Every Day*, 2014)



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Self-Assessment

**Customer Service
Self-Assessment...
for External
and Internal
Customers!**



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**Exceptional
Customer Service:**
*Create an Impressive
Reputation for Your
Organization*

**What is one point
that will stick with
you from this
session?**



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Closing Wisdom...



*A lesson from Craig Pugsley and the
100 cars entering Custer State Park!*

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