



*We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.*®

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## World-Class Service 102: Be memorable...regardless of your job title

No matter what the job title is, everyone has the power to create memorable experiences for their customers. Regardless of the setting or the industry, service excellence begins and ends with at least one person having the desire to not just serve, but to literally improve the life of someone else. While for some, “improve someone’s life” may sound like over-reaching, think of the days when nothing seems to be going right. Then all of a sudden you go to a grocery store, gas station, or a restaurant and one employee gives a smile, positive eye contact, and treats you like absolute royalty. That one employee just made a profound and memorable impact on you whether you realize it or not.

Recently, I visited a Whole Foods grocery store to see what dinner options they had. I knew from past experiences that Whole Foods has buffet stations within the store with various types of cuisine. However, that was my first time visiting that particular location so I was unsure how the food stations were laid out in the store. Before I could ask for help, I noticed one employee who was stocking shelves. She stopped what she was doing, walked over to me and asked if I needed assistance. When I asked about the food station locations, she told me that she would be happy to give me a tour. I began to think that I had mistakenly walked into the Ritz-Carlton! After giving me a masterful tour and articulately explaining the various food stations. She asked if there was anything further I needed help with. I then asked if they carried a certain brand of drinks, and she said that she was unsure, but could find out the answer asap. She quickly found a colleague to inquire, then came back and happily confirmed that they did. She then escorted me to the beverage section where the drinks were. Now, I don’t know about you, but that was the first time in my life that a shelf-stocker provided service to me in such an engaging, self-less and informative manner. That employee worked like she owned it!

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She was the exact opposite of a **BM**. A “BM” is a name I came up with to describe those who do the **bare minimum** in their job. **BM’s** do just enough to not get written up, suspended, or fired. **BM’s** have no interest in exceeding expectations. Barely meeting expectations is suffice. It was clear that the Whole Foods employee saw her job as much more than “just a shelf stocker”. She understood that her main purpose is to make each customer feel valued and to help them find what they are looking for...plus more. She embraced the fact that, in her role, she potentially has the most **touchpoints** with the customers who are shopping.

Her actions reminded me of a famous quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which reads, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He

should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well”.

The job doesn't define the person, the person defines the job. At one point in my career, I was the employee dining room (cafeteria) manager for a luxury hotel. While the hotel was luxury, there was nothing **luxury** about the cafeteria. Up to that point a large chunk of my career had been spent working in fine-dining restaurants, so my professional and personal goal was to help transform the cafeteria into a place that all the hotel's employees would be happy and proud to visit. My team and I treated the cafeteria like a restaurant. In addition to the core duties of maintaining a clean environment and serving nutritious foods, we opened doors for our “guests”, helped them carry trays to their tables, and hand-delivered the monthly menu to the hotel departments. In short, we did not allow the common perception of “cafeteria staff” to hinder our passion to provide memorable service to whomever we were fortunate to serve each day.

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It is always refreshing to see service superstars with passion, pride and professionalism. If they had a declaration, it would read:

- I am passionate about serving others.
- I follow up with guest complaints until they are 100% satisfied with the resolution.
- I do not blame other departments for service errors.
- I consistently look for ways to go above and beyond to delight my customers.
- I take initiative and ownership to create memorable experiences for my customers.
- I am consistently warm and receptive.
- I am not only an ambassador of my company, but of my industry.
- I can make my customers feel special by being attentive and eager to serve.
- I help my teammates get better.
- I always search for ways to improve my service.
- I am engaging.
- I work like I own it!

For everyone who loves to provide engaging service, regardless of the job title, knowing that you made a difference in someone else's life is reward enough. So today, make a commitment that every role you are in will be done with excellence, and more importantly, that someone else's life will be better because of how you work like you own it.

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