



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

Written by: Bryan K. Williams, D.M.

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### **The Next Level in Service Excellence: Give. Share. Teach.**

No matter how you look at it, serving is about giving. In fact, giving, sharing, helping and teaching all go hand-in-hand. When I wrote The Double-Platinum Rule, my intent was to highlight the importance of going beyond merely meeting expectations. I wanted to emphasize the importance of looking for opportunities to exceed customer expectations. In fact, The Double-Platinum Rule is *treat others the way they don't even know they want to be treated*. I believe, however, that there is a much bigger opportunity to capture the hearts and minds of our customers that transcends “exceeding expectations”. The bigger opportunity that I’m referring to has to do with giving, sharing and teaching something to your customers. Share your subject matter expertise without expecting anything in return. By doing so, you can add immeasurable value to your team, your profession, and your customer’s loyalty to the organization. Simply put - Give. Share. Teach.

*Share your subject matter expertise without anything in return.*

### **Bow Ties**

Recently, I visited the lovely MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa in Sonoma, CA. While there, I noticed that the food & beverage director always wore impeccable bow ties. Since I have always wanted to learn how to tie one, I asked him if he would mind teaching me before I left. However, since my schedule was so full during my hotel stay, I never had the time to meet with him. On the day of my checkout, a bellman brought a bag to my room, which contained...(you guessed it)...a new (and dapper) bow tie! There were also *step by step instructions* (with illustrations) on how to properly tie a bow tie. He also called me a few days later to see if I had any questions about tying the perfect bow tie. *Give. Share. Teach.*

### **Winery**

During another trip to Sonoma, I had the opportunity to visit a few wineries for wine tastings. One of the wineries was called Artesa Vineyards & Winery and was located in the Carneros region between Sonoma and Napa Valley. The wine tasting consisted of four different wines. There was Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. Up until that point, I had heard of Cabernet Franc, but didn’t know much else about that particular grape. When I inquired with the wine server, he explained that Cabernet Franc is one of the parents of the more famous Cabernet Sauvignon. In fact, he continued, “long ago, Cabernet Franc fell in love with Sauvignon Blanc and the offspring was Cabernet Sauvignon”. He also gave me a printed document with additional information about the Cabernet Franc and its history. *Give. Share. Teach.*

## Allergies

Since moving to the Washington DC metro area in 2004, I have been experiencing allergy-related symptoms during the springtime (allergy season). So each year, I would make the pilgrimage to my pulmonologist, who would listen to my lungs, hear me cough, check my throat, and eventually, prescribe allergy medications that would help me get better. This year, however, my wife (who also happens to be the VP of Medical Affairs for our household) suggested that I use a pro-active approach. Rather than passively wait for my allergy symptoms to reach an unbearable level, she recommended that I see the doctor before allergy season began, get the medications, and begin taking them daily to keep the symptoms at bay. So that is exactly what I did. I went to the doctor's office, explained my strategy (or rather my wife's strategy), and something interesting happened. He said, "I agree. One of the best ways to avoid suffering any allergy infections is to preemptively take the medications daily during allergy season." At that moment, I tried to maintain my composure, because I wanted to blurt out, "Then why didn't you tell me this years ago!!!" *Give. Share. Teach.*

It is never enough to comply with requests. Some people approach customer service like this: Take a request, comply with the request, repeat. Take a request, comply with the request, repeat. Kiosks can do the same thing. Don't be a kiosk.

The true power in the human element of service excellence is how you make someone feel. As a result of being served by you, people should literally feel better about themselves. In fact, they should feel engaged, inspired and renewed!

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So don't just comply...anticipate needs. And don't just anticipate needs...teach something. Add value to your customers' lives by giving and teaching something that they didn't realize they were missing. When you are able to do that consistently, then service becomes much more than a chore, or something that "you don't mind doing". It becomes a privilege and an honor. Knowing that you have made a positive difference in the life of someone else is truly what service is all about. Give. Share. Teach.

### Supplement:

Here are some action steps that you can use to implement the "Give.Share.Teach." service method.

1. First, understand and appreciate that you are a subject matter expert in *some aspect* of your role, company, and/or industry.
2. Identify at least one or two things that you can share with your customers (that they may not already know).
3. Brainstorm with your team about their subject matter expertise.
4. Select a few things that your team can give, share, and teach.
5. Prepare learning "take-aways" that you can give to your customers (i.e., a handout, website, book recommendations, etc)
6. Always ask your customers if there is additional information that they would like to know. This last step can be a great way to identify new things to Give. Share. Teach.

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