



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

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Make each touchpoint memorable: Cha-Ching!

A few years ago, I wrote an article entitled *Engage every customer, one touchpoint at a time*. The basic message was that the entire customer experience is comprised of several touchpoints. A touchpoint is any interaction between a customer and your business. For each touchpoint, you could either make a deposit or a withdrawal. More deposits equals more customer engagement, and more withdrawals equals less engagement. Pretty simple right? I even have a client whose employees give a cheer whenever someone makes a deposit...: “Cha-Ching!” I couldn’t stop smiling after I heard that one.

I would like to revisit the touchpoints idea, because delivering a memorable service experience truly comes down to the deposits that individual employees make. Service superstars are deeply committed to not only making deposits, but they are always looking for ways to make each touchpoint memorable. Allow me to give you four recent examples.

Example 1: Just recently, I checked into a hotel in Oklahoma, and as I approached the elevator a bellman was just coming out of the same elevator. When he saw me, he immediately turned around and held the door open for me. He then wished me a pleasant stay.

Example 2: In a hospital in Texas, one nurse, in particular, always asks her inpatients if they are expecting any visitors that day. If visitors are expected, the nurse takes it upon herself to get additional chairs and water before the visitors arrive. She even asks for their names beforehand so she can properly address them.

Example 3: After speaking at a convention, one of the organizers asked what time my flight was. After I told him, he offered to personally drive me to the airport instead of having me take a taxi. He wanted to make sure that I received a gracious goodbye as opposed to taking a cab back to the airport.

Example 4: At a breakfast omelette station, the chef took my order and proceeded to make my omelette. After preparing it, he actually walked from behind his station and brought the plate to my table. He also thanked me for the opportunity to be of service. For those of you who are thinking of the productivity time he lost, the process of walking me to the table, was less than one minute, and it created a memorable experience for me.

Example 5: I was returning a rental car back to the airport, and I was very late for my flight. The rental car attendant said the obligatory, “good afternoon, how are you today?”

When I replied that I was late, she said, I'll be happy to drive you over to your gate...jump in the passenger seat!" Wow. I definitely did not expect that.

Those examples merely illustrate that enhancing each touchpoint does not have to be expensive...or cost any money for that matter. All it requires is a team of employees who *work like they own it*...and consistently does so. Pay attention to the word "consistency"...I will come back to it in a minute.

I am confident that everyone reading this has heard the term, "world-class" before. Businesses make promises to provide world-class service to their customers. Restaurants boast of having world-class chefs, and even hospitals proclaim to have a world-class medical team. What does it really mean? A quick look in the dictionary and an online search say that world-class means, "to be ranked or considered among the world's best". Makes sense, but how do you get there? How do you become considered among the world's best, regardless of your job or industry? Before I answer that question, allow me to share a recent service experience with you. I called a company and the phone rang five times before the operator answered, "How can I provide world-class service today?" Interesting. My curiosity was peaked, so I was eagerly anticipating the world-class experience. What followed was anything but world class. The operator cut me off mid-sentence at least 3 times and then transferred me without saying she would do so. That's not world-class, is it?

Even if that particular operator provided excellent, memorable and outstanding service, that would NOT be world-class. World-class is primarily about one word...*consistency*. Being excellent is not enough...you have to be consistently excellent. Being memorable is not enough...you have to be consistently memorable. Being engaging is not enough...you have to be *consistently* engaging.

World-class means that you are "on" everyday, regardless of your personal or professional circumstances. Being a service professional means that you do what you are supposed to do, when you are supposed to do it, whether you feel like it or not. You have probably noticed that this world-class thing requires lots of hard work...you're right! It is not easy, otherwise EVERYBODY would be world-class. It requires consistent effort, and that effort is what separates good from great and great from world-class.

So make a commitment today to engage your team in a discussion about touchpoints. Identify all the key touchpoints in your department, then brainstorm ways to enhance each touchpoint. Make each touchpoint memorable! Put the touchpoints and their enhancements on a bulletin board, then focus on one touchpoint per week (per day is even better). As I always say, serving others is a privilege and your customers deserve the very best that you and your team have to offer. Before long, you will hear your team (and cash registers) go Cha-Ching!

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