



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

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The Three Ingredients of Engaging Service: *Humility, Reverence, & Professionalism*

On a recent family trip to Bali, we had the privilege of flying on Korean Air. Virtually every touchpoint was memorable. Everything from the reservations process, to the actual flights, was world-class, and I was able to glean some key learning points to share with you. I am a firm believer that whenever you learn something, you should share it so that others may also benefit. The important thing is that any organization, in any industry, can take away something from this article to immediately apply.

On the flights, I got the sense that nothing was more important to the staff than being attentive to our needs. There was a potent blend of humility, reverence and professionalism all at the same time. To be honest, I had never experienced that type of service before. The staff could not have been more confident...their shoes could not have

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been any shinier...and their smiles could not have been any brighter. While some people believe that service is something that you do, I believe that service is something that you are. You have to BE service. The Korean Air flight attendants *were* service.

Flight delay

Typically, when a flight is delayed, the captain makes a general announcement over the plane's speaker system. On our return trip to the U.S. we had to catch a connecting flight in Seoul, South Korea. After we were on the plane, each flight attendant went to their section of the plane and informed their passengers about a 1-hour flight delay. Now I don't mean a general announcement to their respective section. I mean that the flight attendant went row by row, looked the passengers in their eyes and empathetically informed them about the flight delay. Then after 30-minutes, the attendants went back around to give an update. When the flight was finally ready to depart, they went to their respective sections again and gave the *good news*.

Personalize

Flight attendants usually have a report that shows where passengers are seated, along with their names. Despite having this information, most attendants don't leverage this important data. At Korean Air, the attendants not only knew my name, but they welcomed my wife, our daughter and me by our names. Think of how many times you might know your customers' names and not use it to your advantage to create an inclusive and attentive experience.

Presentation

There are times when I have patronized a business and got the sense that the staff was not really engaged. To those types of employees, serving others is a temporary or part-time job until they find a “real” job. On Korean Air, I had no such feeling. Everyone had a sense of pride and honor as they went about their work. This professionalism was very apparent in how they presented everything. Let’s start with the baby stroller.

On Korean Air, before you board the flight, one of the employees proactively greets you and offers stroller assistance. They explain the stroller check-in process and claim procedure. After you fold the stroller, the staff puts it in an elegant and transparent bag, then presents you with a claim check. When you get off the plane, a staff member proactively directs and/or escorts you to a waiting area (exclusively for parents waiting for their strollers). An employee brings you the stroller and wishes you an enjoyable day.

Service, in its purest sense, is about knowing that you have added value to someone else, regardless of the circumstance. The key phrase is “someone else”. To do so effectively, you must have a sense of humility because you understand that service is not about the giver, it is about the recipient. With humility in mind, the next logical step is to show reverence for whomever you are serving. It is almost impossible to show reverence if you’re not humble. The staff at Korean Air found joy in showing reverence to their passengers while being humble, yet confident enough to flawlessly deliver world-class service.

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As I flew on Korean Air, I could not help but daydream of how great it would be if all businesses had a similar mindset and approach regarding customer service. To sum up my Korean Air experience, I will use three words: humility, reverence, and professionalism. My challenge to you is to design your customer service experience with those three words in mind and you will build your own legion of loyal customers.

Engaging Service: 22 Ways to Become a Service Superstar

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