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TEN Things You Can Do **TODAY** To Improve Customer Service In Your Business!



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This free report provides ten simple, yet powerful tips and techniques to significantly improve your customer service. As you review the report, envision your team using the ten tips consistently to engage your customers. Also, take note of any questions or comments you may have. You can either send us an email at info@bwenterprise.net or we can schedule a complimentary phone appointment to discuss your team's unique service concerns.

We recommend that you follow this sequence:

- First, begin by reviewing the ten tips in their entirety.
- Second, complete the self-assessment and action plan
- Third, prioritize which tips you and your team will work on first, then second, and so on.

To continued success!

Dr. Bryan K. Williams, D.M.
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Learn more about B.Williams Enterprise by visiting:

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1: Make a list of ways to anticipate customer needs: There are always opportunities to WOW someone.

To WOW your customer means to exceed their expectations and truly surprise & delight them. Your goal is to be attentive and create a memorable experience everyday for your customers.

On a recent trip to Portland, Oregon I visited my client's corporate office for three consecutive days of meetings. Before day 1, the office's administrative assistant emailed me directions to the office from my hotel, along with a link to Google Maps. On day 2 it was raining...a lot. So at the end of that day's meetings, I went to the bathroom and when I returned to the meeting room to get my briefcase, there was an umbrella next to it. The administrative assistant anticipated my needs. In fact, I didn't even think of using an umbrella until she left it for me. She provided me with something I didn't even know I wanted! On day 3, still more rain in Portland, so she brought in a tray of coffee, tea, and hot chocolate to the meeting room. If I was asked about the service experience, do you think that I was WOW'd? You better believe it.

2: Identify customer preferences, act on them, and share them with your team.

Service superstars know that it is not enough for only them to know preferences, they want everyone on their team to know. Whether it's a preferred name or a food/beverage choice, acting on preferences helps to personalize the service experience.

During a recent taxi ride, I asked the driver to put the air conditioning to 72 degrees (Fahrenheit) and turn the radio to 95.5 FM, which is a popular radio station in the DC Metro area. The next time I scheduled for that driver to pick me up, guess what the air conditioning was set to? You guessed it...72 degrees. And guess what radio station was already programmed? You guessed it...95.5 FM. Also on that trip, the driver noticed that I had a bottle of water with me as I left home. Guess what was in the backseat of the car the next time I rode with that driver? You guessed it...a bottle of water.



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3: Treat your team the way you want them to treat their customers

You must involve your staff in matters that directly and indirectly affect them. Involvement equals more engagement. Solicitation of ideas equals more engagement. Linking personal goals to department and company goals equals more engagement. Regular two-way communication equals more engagement. People like to be involved in the planning of the work that affects them. They crave it; even if they don't verbalize it all the time. So tap into their expertise and they will appreciate you and the organization for it. The end result will be an army of engaged employees whose sole mission is to engage all of your customers all the time.

Here are six suggestions that you can use immediately:

- Involve them in your annual strategic planning meetings.
- Solicit their ideas for best practices.
- Get their insight on common pitfalls to avoid.
- Ensure that each employee's goals are linked to departmental and company goals.
- Show progress on department and company goals
- Foster a culture of effective communication flow and two-way communication.

4: For customer problem resolution, use the 100% principle every time

Whenever you receive a complaint or a request, here is a recommended sequence to follow:

- Say you will own the complaint / request.
- Get the customer's contact information (email and phone # should suffice).
- Get the customer's preferred mode of contact (email, text, phone call).
- Begin the process of fixing the issue. Ensure that the resolution matches the complaint / request.
- If you need to pass the issue to another person / department to handle, then do so. (But remember, that YOU still own it!).
- Proactively inform the customer on the status every 24 hours using the customer's preferred mode of contact.
- When you've received confirmation that the issue has been resolved, then contact the customer to inform them.
- Follow-up to ensure that the customer is, in fact, happy with the resolution.



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5: Identify touchpoints

A touchpoint is any moment of interaction between two parties. If I pass you in the hallway, that's a touchpoint; when you answer the phone, that's a touchpoint; when you open the door for someone, that's a touchpoint. If you think about it, there are literally hundreds of touchpoints in a typical workday. Now here's the interesting part; every touchpoint has either a deposit or a withdrawal. If I'm an employee at Company X, and I pass two customers in the hallway without acknowledging them, that's a withdrawal. If I give eye contact and smile, that's a deposit. Better yet, if I give eye contact, smile, stop, give a greeting, and offer assistance, then that's an even bigger deposit. This same concept works for every touchpoint, every time.

So how do you identify your touchpoints? The fastest way is to sit in your office and brainstorm by yourself. Unfortunately, you would be missing a tremendous opportunity to involve your staff in matters that directly affect them. If the goal of identifying touchpoints is to engage your customers, then you must first engage those that serve your customers. While you're at it, get your team's input on deposits and withdrawals for each touchpoint as well. Trust me, they will respect you for asking them AND you would have just made a big deposit to your staff! If you haven't guessed by now, deposits equal more engagement and withdrawals equal less engagement.

6: Make deposits at each touchpoint

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 three 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.



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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.

7: Be eager to serve

Being eager to serve your customer is more about perception than anything else. When the customer walks into your business, is the staff just mulling around or do they appear to be ready to serve? The same applies for service provided over the phone. Does the phone ring 10 times before it gets answered or is there a standard for it to be answered within three rings? This principle is about being prompt in every sense of the word. The customer should not have to wait...ever. If they do, it is your responsibility to apologize for the delay. At the very least, when waiting is inevitable, be sure to acknowledge those customers who are waiting even if it's not their turn. A simple gesture like a smile or eye contact should suffice. The acknowledgement sends the message that "I see you, and look forward to serving you as soon as possible". Simply put, you and your staff's actions should state, "I am at your service".

1. With input from your team and customers, develop standards that clearly articulates your expectations on "being eager to serve". For example:
 - a. We will answer the phone within three rings and a smile
 - b. If someone is within 4 feet (1.2 meters), we will proactively approach the customer and offer assistance
 - c. Reply to emails by the end of the business day
 - d. Greet others with a smile, whether in a person or on the phone
 - e. Give all customers 100% of your time and focus when serving them.
2. Develop a metric for every standard. For example:
 - a. We will answer the phone...(metric: question on customer survey)
 - b. If someone is within 4 feet...(metric: random weekly observations per employee)
3. Regularly audit the standard to ensure that it is happening as planned. Remember, inspect what you expect and give your team feedback.



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4. Ask a randomly selected group of loyal customers to inspect the standard and give you feedback. Of course, you should relay that feedback to your team as soon as possible.

8: Leave a lasting impression

Offering a gracious goodbye is an extremely important principle, yet it can be very easy to bypass. Some service providers feel that after they have given the customer what they paid for, then service is done. Not so. Everything has a beginning and an end. Service is no exception. The purpose of the gracious goodbye is to thank the customer for their patronage. The customer did not have to patronize your business. Every customer should be reassured that their decision to spend their money with you was greatly appreciated. In fact, one best practice is to inquire if there is anything else you can do for your customer. And this is after you have provided the customer with what they came to purchase in the first place; no matter how small the request. After serving my coffee, ask “is there anything else I can do for you?” or some variation of it. The point is that your customers should feel like your job’s main purpose is to not just meet, but exceed their expectations.

- Always give an appreciative and sincere “thank you” to all customers before they leave.
- Find out if there is anything more the customer needs or wants...even after the transaction is completed.
- Always express that you are looking forward to their next visit.

9: Create an inclusive atmosphere

Creating an inclusive atmosphere means involving all parties. In this case, being inclusive is about the service provider creating a relationship that transcends the static nature of a one-way experience in favor of a dynamic two-way experience. It is the difference between taking my food order and inquiring about my favorite types of food so the server can suggest the right dishes. It is the difference between selling me a house, and getting to know me and my preferences so you can find the “right” house. It is the difference between the nurse doing basic rounds to check my vitals, and engaging me in light conversation because he/she genuinely cares about my well-being.



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To be inclusive means to involve the customer in the service they are receiving. The customer is more than just the recipient of the service, they can be an important part of how the service is delivered. Challenge yourself and your team to find out your customers' preferences, then act on them, and share them. It does little good to find out that Mr. Smith likes to be called Mr. S if only one employee knows it. To Mr. Smith, every employee is not only representing the business, but they ARE the business. As such, every employee should not only know what it takes to specifically make Mr. Smith happy, but they should also act on those preferences consistently.

10. Revisit the purpose of service excellence everyday

What is the difference between the doorman opening the hotel's door and the doorman providing a welcoming experience? Or what is the difference between the housekeeper changing the bed sheets and the housekeeper ensuring that the guest has a clean, comfortable bed to sleep in? Some people may say they are actually the same thing, but others would say that one drives the other. One is the function and the other is the purpose. It is one of the simplest, yet most powerful ways to explain service excellence and how to deliver exceptional service at the same time. Understanding the purpose affects "how" the function is performed. The purpose brings deeper meaning to the function. The person delivering the service is not just robotically serving but understands how he/she is contributing to the company's overall purpose.

It can become easy to get caught up in the daily tasks of your job and forget the overall purpose. Service ultimately is about improving someone else's life through your actions and/or words. Whether it's opening a door for someone, escorting rather than pointing or volunteering for a task, the purpose is the same. Beginning with yourself, think of the purpose of your job. Sum it up in one sentence. For me, I wouldn't say that my job is to train and consult. No, those are only functions in my job. The purpose of my job is to help others serve their customers better. By focusing on that purpose everyday, it makes a big difference in how I perform my functions.



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Self-Assessment

Ten Things To Improve Customer Service TODAY!	Yes	No
1. I consistently look for opportunities to WOW my customers		
2. I consistently identify customer preferences, act on them, and share them with my team.		
3. I consistently treat my team the way I want them to treat their customers.		
4. I use the 100% principle and follow through with complaints and requests until I know the customer is satisfied with the resolution.		
5. I know all of the key touchpoints that my customers experience.		
6. I consistently look for opportunities to make deposits at each touchpoint.		
7. I consistently demonstrate, through my actions and tone of voice, that I am eager to serve.		
8. I consistently strive to leave a lasting impression with my customers at each touchpoint.		
9. I consistently create an inclusive atmosphere for my customers by involving them, learning their preferences, and building strong relationships with them.		
10. I regularly focus on the overall purpose of my job and the role I play in providing an exceptional service experience for my customers.		



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Use this worksheet to prioritize your **strengths** related to the ten tips from this report. Then develop stretch goals and actions accordingly.

Strength #	Importance High, Medium, Low	Stretch Goal	What Action is Planned?	By When?	Who is Responsible?

Use this worksheet to prioritize your **opportunities for improvement** related to the ten tips from this report. Then develop stretch goals and actions accordingly.

Improvement Area #	Importance High, Medium, Low	Stretch Goal	What Action is Planned?	By When?	Who is Responsible?



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B.Williams Enterprise, LLC is a customer service consulting and training company that focuses on service excellence. The goal is to assist organizations, in various industries, to enhance their service to world-class levels.

What is Service Excellence?

Service excellence is a term used to describe the delivery of service beyond what normally would be expected by your customers. It is about creating a memorable service experience rather than simply fulfilling customer requests. Every service experience is comprised of several service touchpoints, and our passion at B.Williams Enterprise is to assist organizations to enhance each of them.

Areas of Expertise

Service Excellence Consulting

B.Williams Enterprise will work with you to assess your organization's unique service concerns, then help you develop a customized strategy to address them. Whether those concerns are related to selection, orientation, organizational alignment or service standards development, we are at your service to assist in creating a culture of service excellence.

Service Excellence Training

B. Williams Enterprise offers a dynamic learning experience for any level of your organization. We offer training for senior leaders, middle managers, & front-line experience creators (your line staff). The service excellence courses are designed to not only inform but to help translate intangible concepts into relevant behaviors as well.

Organizational Excellence Coaching

B. Williams Enterprise has expertise in using the Baldrige framework to assist companies improve. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is considered the world's most widely accepted set of standards for effectively running any organization...regardless of industry. Learn more about the Criteria for Performance Excellence by visiting: www.baldrige.nist.gov

Contact Us

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