

Superior Customer Service...

I know we are all just about finished with the busiest retail time of the year. But the following are good reminders for all of us on how to deliver superior customer service!

SMILE. We know that should be a given any season, but with more customers, and more demanding customers, it can be very easy to lose your smile. Keep smiling! It will help your mood and help ease the mood of that cranky lady. (And don't forget, customers CAN hear your smile over the phone!)

CHECK THE BODY LANGUAGE. You're tired. You're stressed. Customers will detect negative body language. Keep proper posture. Maintain eye contact. Slow and clear speech. Moderate to low tone of voice. Purposeful gestures with your hands and arms.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE CUSTOMER. You've just helped the 167th person before your morning break. Acknowledge the 168th that just approached you. Instead of a curt 'yes,' treat them like the first customer of the morning. "Hi. Thanks for shopping Flip Flop Cabana." You have a long line. You need to go to the back to get help or and order. Look up, catch the eyes of the people in line and say, "I'll be right back. Thanks for your patience."

KNOW YOUR ALLOWANCES. What can you offer an unhappy customer to appease them without a manager's approval? Free appetizer. Free room upgrade. 10% off. If you have to get a manager's approval for the littlest things, that may upset a customer further. Besides, everyone is stretched this time of year. Know from your manager in advance what you can do or offer a customer. Offer it with confidence and the customer will feel confident about how they were treated.

Customer Service Is An Attitude, Not A Department!

GO THE EXTRA MILE. Similar to above, what is one extra add-on your store can offer this time of year? Free shipping is common but does the customer still have to take it to the post office? Take it for them. Free gift wrapping. Don't have the right size in your store, but the store across town does? YOU go get it instead of asking the customer to make the trip.

PREPARE A MENTAL "SUIT OF ARMOR." Know that all customers won't be nice. Some will be downright difficult. You may even experience customer abuse. Know this in advance and be prepared to still treat the customer with politeness and respect.

KNOW WHERE THERE IS A SAFE PLACE. Maybe you reach your limit. Maybe a customer pushes you to the brink. You need a Calgon moment! Where is that? Talk with your coworkers about "the sign" for "I need 5 minutes," give "the sign" and go to that place. Everyone knows if someone is in that place, to just leave them alone and let them relax a minute.