



Simon Says...

Anticipatory Customer Service is Priceless!

By Simon T. Bailey

In my opinion, customer service these days is just okay. In this hyper busy, do-more-with-less environment, good customer service is a happy surprise and brilliant customer service is a magical moment.

I recently stayed at the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, Colorado. As you know, I travel extensively and stay in more hotels than I can remember. However, I was blown away with the fabulous service experience I had at the Broadmoor. Upon arrival at this exquisite old world historically rich hotel treasure I was greeted by a smiling door man who welcomed me and asked me how I was doing. Just imagine the surprise on my face after witnessing a simple smile. And there's more...the bellman greeted me and said, "Hello, please allow me to take your bags inside." By then I was reaching for my wallet to tip these guys. My goodness, I thought, it's 7:30 p.m. and the sun is going down, meanwhile these guys are happy about serving their guests. WOW...what a concept.

Upon arriving at the front desk I was greeted by Maura who said, "Welcome to the Broadmoor, and how are you today?" Needless to say I was stunned that she took the time to ask me how I was doing instead of the random canned question, "Sir, may I have your last name and credit card?" Don't worry, I am not high maintenance, but as a person who started his professional career working in hotels some twenty years ago I understand the difference between anticipatory service vs. reactive, "take it or leave it" service. But wait, there's more...

After being in my guest room for less than five minutes, there was a knock on the door and it was Joey the bellman with my luggage. I quickly sensed that there was something different about this young man. He looked to be in his early 20s and he had that sparkle in his eye. You know, the one that most young people have when they first start working in a new job. He showed me the room service menu and said, "As you can see it's limited, however, you can order anything from any of the five restaurants on property and have it delivered directly to your room at no additional fee." He asked me if I wanted to know the history of the hotel which dates back to the early 1900s. He then asked me if I needed my shirts pressed or shoes shined. It gets better...he invited me over to the bay window to look at what appeared to be a mountain. He said, "Straight ahead is Pike's Peak Mountain one of the most historic mountains in North America."

Page two: Anticipatory Customer Service is Priceless!

Maybe now you are saying...Simon I experience that level of service all the time. Perhaps you do. However, my Broadmoor experience will forever be etched in my mind because of one person who took the time to anticipate my needs as a guest. Joey did such a good job in reselling me on The Broadmoor that I found myself giving him an extra tip for demonstrating so much zip, passion, and knowledge in his eight-minute presentation. I asked him why he knew so much about the hotel. He replied, "Mr. Bailey I've been coming to this hotel since the age of 10, and it is my duty and pleasure to know what makes these 3,000 acres come alive to you."

My wonderful service experience went on – the next morning I was greeted by a live person on the other end of the phone when I received my 3:00 a.m. wake up call. WOW...what a nice touch. Now, for those of you in the service business, wouldn't you like your organization to receive such a glowing recommendation from a happy customer? I invite you to consider the following brilliant steps to unleashing anticipatory service moments.

1. Hire for attitude and train for success. However, remember that training doesn't always fix what the human resources department doesn't see.
2. Take a look at those who come in closest contact with your customers ...if they don't have that sparkle in their eye...coach them up or coach them out.
3. Teach all employees the historical facts about your company and encourage them to share that with customers. It connects them to the brand and creates interest in the customer.
4. Invite your staff to walk a mile in your customers' shoes. In other words, see through the lens of the customer the impact that their job will have in the entire experience.
5. Positive customer service stories should be shared with staff every single day. Eventually they will get the message that providing a brilliant experience is a good thing.

Simon T. Bailey is an internationally known speaker, author and a leading authority in helping individuals and organizations release their brilliance. He is founder of the Imagination Institute, an organization dedicated to building the world's most valuable resource – its people. A former leader in the Walt Disney organization, Simon has more than 15 years of experience engaging leaders and employees at all organizational levels. His clients include Fortune 500 companies, national associations, government agencies and educational institutions. Simon is the author of two books, *Simon Says Dream...Live a Passionate Life* and *Release Your Brilliance*.