

STUDENT BULLETIN BOARD JULY 2024

PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

About ten years ago, two weeks before Valentine's Day, a female customer, whom we will call Sue, stopped into the store to buy a bike for her husband. Because she had gone all out to get the very best bike she could for her husband, she needed to pay us in increments. So, she put a deposit on the bike until she could save up the remaining \$200 to pay it off. Wanting to surprise her husband on Valentine's Day, Sue asked Greg, a Zane's employee, if he could put the bike in the display window that evening after she had decorated the bike with some ribbon, balloons, and a sign she made that read, "Happy Valentine's Day, Bob." Greg, of course, said he was happy to help her pull off the surprise and that he would put the bike in the front window.

Sue planned to bring Bob by the store, along with a few co-workers who were in on the surprise, prior to their romantic dinner. She had been dropping hints along the way and couldn't wait to see the expression on Bob's face. Everything was in place, except that Greg had forgotten to put the bike in the display before heading out that day.

We arrived the next morning to an irate message from Sue. Realizing how serious a mistake we'd made, we knew we needed to go above and beyond the call to duty to turn this disaster into a positive experience for the local couple. We waved the remaining balance owed on the bike, tried to re-create a romantic evening at the best Italian restaurant in the area with no spending limit and we called up a gourmet coffee shop down the road to have an elaborate lunch delivered to Sue and her co-workers who had come out to see Bob's excited expression the night before.

Obviously more concerned with rectifying our mistake than the budget to do so, we spent about \$400 to correct our error and maintaining the integrity of our lifetime customer culture. Plus, considering that Sue and Bob could be worth \$25,000 to Zane's Cycles, it was well worth the investment, particularly because I don't think Sue expected as much as we gave her. We provided more than she thought was reasonable, and as a result, we turned a terrible mistake into a positive experience for Sue, Bob and all of Sue's co-workers.

The best part of the story, though, is that Greg—the employee who forgot to put the bike in the display—sent me an envelope in the mail with a \$400 check enclosed to reimburse us for the cost of rebuilding the customer relationship and a letter apologizing for jeopardizing a prospective lifetime customer. Of course, I never cashed Greg’s check. I have it framed with the letter above my desk as a reminder that although we lost a few hundred dollars that day, it was worth every cent in two culture-reinforcing ways. We managed to save our relationship with the customer, and we had the great thrill of witnessing our employees take our principles to heart. To me, that was priceless.

Source: Reinventing the Wheel: Creating Lifetime Customers by Chris Zane | ChangeThis

<https://www.mgmtstories.com/putting-your-money-where-your-mouth-is-in-customer-service/>

Subjects: Customer Related, Management, Organizational Behavior / HR

CONFUSING WHAT IS TRULY OURS AND WHAT OTHERS GRANT US

Almost one thousand years ago, in Moslem Spain, there lived a Jew named Rabbi Samuel the Prince. He was very wise, and rose to great power, becoming the Sultan’s treasurer. This aroused the jealousy of the other ministers, who planted rumors that Rabbi Samuel was embezzling money from the royal treasury.

The Sultan decided to put Rabbi Samuel to the test. One day, without warning, he called for Rabbi Samuel, and asked him to make a complete accounting of his personal wealth. Rabbi Samuel was taken aback, but he could not refuse the Sultan’s request. He sat at a table, asked for a quill and parchment, and began writing feverishly. After half an hour, he stopped, reviewed the list silently, and handed it to the Sultan.

The Sultan read the inventory carefully, and slammed it down angrily on the table. ‘Why, this is only a fraction of your wealth. I personally have given you far more than what you list here as your salary. This is a brazen lie! My advisors are correct – you have been dishonest with me in your monetary affairs. I shall personally confiscate everything you own. Guards, take this man away!’

‘Your Majesty’, responded Rabbi Samuel, ‘you asked me for an accounting of my wealth. As you can plainly see, my worldly possessions are not truly mine.

At any time, they could be taken from me by robbers, war or natural disaster. In fact, your Majesty has just taken them from me with a single command.'

'The only possession I truly own is that money which can never be taken from me – the money I have given to charity. You see, a Jew is commanded by the Torah to give one tenth of his income to those in need. The figure I gave you, your Majesty, was the total of all the moneys I have given to charity. That is my true wealth, for the benefit from that money remains mine forever, and can never be taken from me.'

The Sultan was impressed by this profound truth, and promoted Rabbi Samuel to even greater power in his kingdom."

Rabbi Samuel has hit upon a fundamental aspect of human nature – we are easily confused between what is truly ours and what others grant us. The same is true of corporations. Our stock price is soaring, but that is something that is granted by investors, and could be taken away from us tomorrow by those very same investors, based on factors that are entirely out of our control. What, then, is truly ours? It's our loyal, highly skilled employees, and the passion and innovation that they bring to their jobs. They are our true strategic assets, and they are what will keep us successful for years to come.

Source: An Introduction to Hasidic Management by Moshe Kranc

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Subjects: Ethics / Integrity, Miscellaneous

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