

CUSTOMERS | LISTENING | PROFESSIONAL
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NO, You Can't Be a Customer Today!

Before I explain, let's try and grasp this whole CUSTOMER concept...it's NOT ABOUT YOU!

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"Sorry, but NO, you can't be a CUSTOMER today."

How many times has this happened to YOU? You've got money in hand and "they" won't take it.

Before I explain, let's try and grasp this whole CUSTOMER concept...it's NOT ABOUT YOU!

It's not about your THING or your PRODUCT or your OPPORTUNITY, it's about ATTRACTING, SERVING, IMPRESSING, or CREATING not just a NEED for your products, goods and services—But a WANT or DESIRE that say's *"I like this and I like getting it from you."*

It's about cool messages or compelling offers (see DOLLAR SHAVE CLUB).

Sometimes it's just LISTENING to what the prospective customer says they want. And giving it to them!

The terrible treatment that prospective customers receive routinely in today's marketplace makes it easier than ever to acquire customers if you and I will just PAY ATTENTION.

Don't think about customers according to *your* NEEDS; think about how you can connect with theirs.

Here's one of my customer lessons from a column I wrote almost 10 years ago, but it still applies today:

This is a Tale of Two Cities...and your customers.

Actually, only 1 city and how it affects customers in several places – Even where you live.

It's a matter of policy, and principle, and being true to your school, or just giving the customer what they're asking for today.

Which group are you in?

The city is New Orleans.
Cajun, bayou, gumbo, hot, spicy, N'awlins!
I do enjoy a trip there from time to time.

A few weeks ago my wife and I went to dinner at a restaurant in my city, Charlotte.

To a place we'll call King Creole (not the restaurant's real name).
King Creole is committed to serving genuine Cajun dishes.
And apparently to the extreme, even if it means disappointing the paying guests.

After ordering something hot enough to suck the breath right out of my lungs and give me that acupuncture feeling around my mouth and lower face, I asked for iced tea with my meal. Not just any iced tea, but "sweet" tea, a genuine southern specialty.

"We don't serve sweet tea." I was told by Brandon (not his real name), *"just unsweet."*

As my eyebrows began to simmer from the shrimp and secret spices, I thought for just a second and then asked Brandon how long he'd worked here.

"Almost 5 years," was his answer.

"Is there a day that goes by when you're not asked for sweet tea?"

"Well, we get asked about it A LOT," Brandon replied.

I'll just bet. Watch this...

"If so many customers ask for it, why don't you serve it?" I continue the quiz.

“Best answer I can give is they don’t serve ‘sweet’ tea in New Orleans.”

Hmmmm.

True, but I’m not in New Orleans, I’m in Charlotte.

Where people drink sweet tea every day of the year. Brandon just shrugged.

By now I’m somewhere between disappointed and *cajun-hot* at this ‘letter of the law’ delivered by my New Orleans wanna-be. So I had water (Lots of water).

I leave puzzled and disappointed, over something as simple as sugar in tea.

Then, last week, I’m off to dinner again in Port Orleans: The resort ‘Orleans of Walt Disney World. My wife and I take the riverboat cruise to Downtown Disney and back to Port Orleans just for the ride then decide to have a real sit-down meal at ***Boatwrights*** (yep, I’m using their real name cause they’re about to do something uncommon).

It’s Cajun cuisine and southern country cooking all rolled into one. Shrimp creole, red beans & rice, and skillet cornbread and more. Real N’awlins flavor, real Disney service.

Tired of a day of soft drinks and water, I pose the “sweet tea” question, reminding myself of the fact that I’m no longer in Charlotte or even the south... at least the part that’s known for sugaring their tea.

“Absolutely!” was Katie’s reply to the question I had mentally already answered in the negative. *“What... you have sweet tea here?”* I asked almost shocked by my server’s response. *“Sure do,”* she said. *“Would you like some, it’s ice cold.”*

But I didn’t answer. I still had another question.

“How is it that with a genuine Cajun menu and here in the middle of Florida, you serve sweet tea?”

“Because our customers ask for it.”

“What’s the best reason for you or your business to do something you’re not doing now?”

Because your customers are asking for it!”

How sweet it is!

Good answer Katie.

What’s the best reason for you or your business to do something you’re not doing now?

Because your customers are asking for it! Because if you’re really listening, you already know what they want.

How do you win in this marketplace? In this NOW Economy?

Pay attention!

If the customer’s asking for it, why not give it to them if you possibly can, Instead of showing them a map, or quoting your policy, or protecting the sanctity of a far-away city; all the while disappointing the customer.

When in Rome – give the Romans what they ask for if you can.

That’s the Disney difference.

Listening and serving and delivering what makes the guest feel good/feel better, while spending money at your restaurant, store, city, or resort.

I may not expect to get sweet tea in New Orleans (even if I still WANT it). But I also don’t expect to be denied in other places because they don’t do it like I want it somewhere else, especially when I’m here.

What kind of questions are your prospective buyers asking? Are you listening?

What do prospective buyers want that might make them your next customer?

Where are you, when it comes to sweetening the deal for your customers?

Pay attention and they will tell you how to win them over.

How sweet it is; happy customers who talk about how you did it!
And tell everyone they know.

Now go find your sugar.
And more HAPPY CUSTOMERS will surely follow.

*To Your UNCOMMON SUCCESS,
Michael*



In 2009 **Michael York** was named “*International Business Coach of the Year*” by Prime-Time Business Institute and E-Z Coaching Worldwide™

Michael wrote the book on *Becoming Uncommon* (www.Amazon.com).

He has been called “Mr. Mastermind” for his ability to bring together individuals and ideas that radically change personal and business PROFITS. He is a business-owner and marketing consultant who has addressed over 1000 audiences on Major League Marketing and Top Performance in Life and Work. His most recent work revolves around the study of wealth, selling, and “rich strategies” for life in a constantly changing marketplace.

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