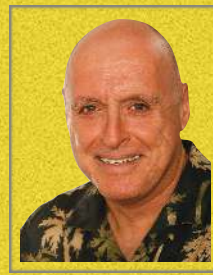


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



320 Owning Customer Service on Mother's Day

When a little mixup made it look like a Mother's Day lunch might be derailed, I was thinking of trying someplace else. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll tell the story of how that Mother's Day meal turned out just fine because a real pro stepped up, next, on The Extra Point.

This past Sunday, Mother's Day, like a lot of island families we wanted to go out and have a nice lunch to celebrate. Our daughter and her family like Capricciosa and since that was the suggestion I made the call to ask if we'd need to make a reservation. "No sir," said the voice on the other end of the call. "It's first come, first served."

When we arrived we were seated outside in the open-air section as the restaurant was full, except for two large tables. It was rainy and I thought it could get uncomfortable, so I asked about those two tables inside. I was told both were reserved. "Excuse me," I said, "I was told you didn't take reservations. First come, first served — right?" The cashier appeared a bit nervous and began to repeat herself. Seeing no resolution I asked how long the wait would be, and she said "Probably 45 minutes." I told her I didn't think we could wait that long and started to walk away. Then I turned back.

Behind the cashier was a server, who was listening to the conversation. I told the cashier, "I don't get it. No reservations but those two tables are reserved. When are those parties going to get here?" The server then stepped forward and told me that they were there and those tables represented members of their parties who hadn't arrived yet. Okay, that explained it. No problem. The cashier had just left out that one small piece of information.

I told the family we'd likely have to wait the 45 minutes to be served and we all agreed to stay. A few minutes later, however, that server came to the table, apologizing for any confusion,

and said he'd be happy to take our order.

His name is Russky and while we weren't upset by any means, he took it upon himself to make sure our visit enjoyable. He was able to answer our menu questions, got the order in, took care of our beverages, and all went well from there. It took a little longer than usual for the food to come out, but we understood. The restaurant was jammed, the kitchen slammed with orders, and yet it was fine.

Russky was polite and attentive. He came back to the table a couple of times to let us know the food was coming shortly. After the main course he brought us a special dessert, thanking us for our patience.

Russky is a pro. He helped the cashier out, communicating to me the issue with the reserved tables. He came to us quickly, giving us a chance to order before we might think of leaving. He did a nice job as the server, and then gave us that dessert as thanks for staying. He turned a potential negative into a strong positive. He made us feel well taken care of. That's the way you do it in the customer service business.

When I went to pay the bill I told the manager that Russky did a great job for us. He smiled and replied that Russky has been working there a long time and is one of their best. I have no doubt about that. Russky gets it. He made a decision to take ownership of the situation and he delivered...for us and for Capricciosa.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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