

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 348 Let's Not Miss the Point on Customer Service

When it comes to customer service, almost everybody says they want to meet and even exceed expectations. I'm Jerry Roberts and while there's nothing wrong with that, today let's talk about something that's even more important. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Are you're saying to yourself, "Jerry, what on Earth could possibly be more important than meeting and exceeding the expectations of our customers?"

If so, I get it. Meeting expectations means the customer should come back again, right? If we exceed their expectations, they'll be back for sure and it's likely they'll tell others about us as well. Isn't that what we're after? Trust me, I think it's wonderful when service is so good that people spread the word.

In our course CSI:Guam (CSI stands for Customer Service Initiative), we have a segment that highlights the experiences of customers who encounter extraordinary effort on the part of individuals and teams, which results in a moment that is never forgotten — and usually goes viral on social media.

Companies like Apple, Trader Joe's, Ritz Carlton, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, Nordstrom, and others, all are featured for having employees go way out of their way to do something special for a customer. I love to hear those kind of stories, and I'm sure you feel the same.

The companies, for their part, like to highlight these feel-good events, and well they should. It presents them in the best possible light, and the words of praise are coming from the best possible source — the customers themselves.

So much customer service training focuses on trying to delight patrons of the business, to do something special. While I think it's fine if you

can do that, in my opinion it misses the mark on what we all should be thinking about — and that is doing the basics extremely well.

When there is an issue it's important that somebody take ownership of it and act in the interests of the customer. I'm not referring to making decisions on who gets a refund or credit or some kind. What I mean by acting in their interests is to make sure their call doesn't fall through the cracks. I want to make sure they don't get stuck in voicemail jail or the person they need to talk with actually responds to them. The number one thing in the mind of most customers is that we show respect for their time.

They want things to run smoothly, that we don't make them jump through unnecessary hoops. Customers genuinely appreciate when we fix things after getting it wrong. They do. That said, most who are surveyed say if service reps paid more attention and service systems weren't so confusing, a lot of problems could be avoided altogether. This gets us back to the basics.

Everybody loves a fabulous service story and I'll always feature a few in my customer service training because they are inspiring.

Better yet, I'll continue to help organizations get out of their own way, and to become the kind of service operation that customers love, because they get the simple things right.

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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