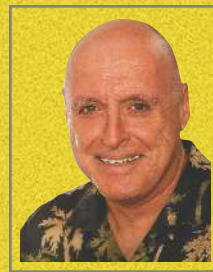


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1148 Communication and Customer Service

In recent days I have encountered a dizzying assortment of poorly managed customer issues. Some are here in Guam, and others online from companies on the mainland. I'm Jerry Roberts and today is a day to vent, and I encourage you to join in if these things are happening to you. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Good customer service isn't hard to deliver, but it does require some fundamental things. One of those is that you pay attention to details. I've had a bunch of things happen recently that tell me folks were taking their eye off the ball.

I had a small issue with a computer and called Apple's tech support line. A young lady answered and after I explained my issue, her response indicated she didn't have a clue what I was talking about. She put me on hold for several minutes three times, as she tried to get answers.

I asked her to elevate me to a senior technical advisor. Nope, there was nobody available. It was just me and her. The end result? I still have the problem.

Recently, I bought a couple of used books, one on eBay and one from Amazon. Neither order was shipped and when I asked why not, both service reps weren't sure. One wasn't even sure they ever had the book in stock, though it was listed on the site. Both were refunded, but it was several weeks to come to a conclusion.

Back home, we decided to make a small change to our communication setup. We went to the telecom company and got it done, yet it was clear the person who processed the order was new and a bit uncertain with the process. When the order was completed, all that was needed was a simple install. We were promised that would happen the next day.

We waited. It didn't happen the next day. On

the following day, we learned that the order never got into the right hands. A communication problem. The upside is we like the guy who has installed at our place before, so seeing him again was a bonus. He's smart and works fast, so that was a good thing.

Back to the Internet, I tried to make an order on target.com, for an item I often have trouble getting locally. Target was also out, but offers an email service to notify you when it's back in stock. That's a valuable feature, and I entered my email to be notified.

Voila, the next day I got the notification email and the item was again available. Oh, happy day! I scrambled to the Target site, refreshed the page and, and, and, the item was again out of stock. How could that? I just got the email, minutes go.

However, good news, I could again sign up to be notified when the item was back. I did. The same day, I got the notification. It was in stock and available. I went to the site, ready to make the order. What do you think I saw? Yes, it was again out of stock.

I went to the Target chat and asked the service rep how this worked. Obviously, something in the computer system triggered those emails, yet the items were out both times. I was given a non-answer answer, letting me know they had no idea how it worked. "Keep trying," they wrote, adding a happy emoji. Naturally, the happy emoji reenergized my spirits, and I put my email down again, to be notified.

Obviously enjoying the punishment, I had this scenario repeated again before I gave up. It's a communication issue, but between the inventory system, the service department, or what? Anyway, that was Friday.

On Sunday, my wife, son, and I went out for a lunch.
(Con't.)

It's a nice, family-style restaurant. We've been there before, and the service is generally good.

We sat down at a table, and waited for the server to take our orders. Servers passed by our table several times, but didn't stop. After waiting about 15 minutes, a server did come to the table, apologizing for the wait. She said nobody had told her that our party belonged to her. A communications lapse.

We actually ended up with two servers working our table, they did a nice job, and the meal was very good.

What's the point? In every situation, there was a communication breakdown of some kind. It wasn't that people weren't well-intentioned and trying, it was an issue with their system, or somebody missed a step in the process.

As I said at the beginning, good customer service isn't hard, but you have to focus on the details.

How is your organization on details, and communication? What do you need to do to make things better?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

