



PETRA PEOPLE

HOW TO AVOID THE #1 MISTAKE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE



HOW TO AVOID THE #1 MISTAKE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

When I read these words, I found them catchy, maybe even a bit cute in their simplicity:

"It's not PROVE yourself; It's IMPROVE yourself."

A week later, I realized these seven words are the key to conquer any challenge within an organization, especially in relation to customer service.

The way I learned the value of these seven words could not have been more unexpected, as it happened while I was shopping for a home mortgage. Do you ever have a customer service experience that really stands out, and *not* for the right reasons? I recently made a call to an office and was greeted by a receptionist's, "How can I direct your call?" – no reference to the firm's name, or hers for that matter.

I asked if she could answer my questions about securing a mortgage for my new home, the equivalent of saying "I am the type of person your company pays *thousands* of dollars a day to market to," and received a prompt reply of, "one moment," followed by hold music. After a few more seconds, a gentleman picked up my call and in an extremely casual tone stated, "Hello?" My confusion in not knowing if I had been transferred to a mortgage broker or a college fraternity house resulted in a few seconds of silence.

After gathering myself, I politely inquired if I had reached the right organization, as well as the right person, to answer my questions related to making this company a small sum of money. He immediately perked up as he proudly informed me I had and immediately shared his memorized elevator pitch.

I explained my needs, asked if he could help me, and when he replied that he could, he offered to take my contact information and have someone call me back. Being that this was a weekday morning, I was surprised that there wasn't someone available to answer such a basic question as "do you provide financing for homes in Tennessee?"

As he asked for my information a second time, I calmly told him I was going to continue my search elsewhere. He inquisitively asked me why, appearing to be genuinely interested in both preventing me from ending the call and learning what had gone wrong. In that spirit, I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt that almost nobody else does by sharing a few golden nuggets of feedback from a motivated buyer.

I shared with him there are three reasons I was deciding to move on. I explained the first reason was the receptionist and began sharing how awkward it felt when she didn't mention the name of the firm. Before I could finish my explanation, he cut me off, began defending her, and appeared to be proving how she did nothing wrong.

I took his harsh words in stride and went on to my second point: the way he casually picked up my call with a simple "Hello?" As I was half way through the second sentence of this explanation, he promptly interrupted me and proclaimed, "Let me give you a fourth reason," to which he hung up.

While I'm sure many of you find this individual's actions unprofessional, I caution you that we all do the same thing, albeit to varying degrees, on a daily basis. Everyone is providing us with feedback numerous times throughout each day – our employees, our children, our vendors, or our clients – and it's up to us to determine what we do with it. Will we defend ourselves as we focus on proving how great we already are? Or will we correctly treat the feedback we receive as the gift that it is, ultimately improving who we are so we're better next time. Remember, the choice is yours: Will you choose to prove yourself or improve yourself?

This article originally appeared in SmallBiz Daily.

THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

Ryan Markel is an entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra Coach. Visit his blog at www.petracoach.com for more business and leadership insight.

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342 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 203, Franklin, TN 37067 | 615.601.0542
www.petracoach.com | www.facebook.com/petracoach

