



KIWIHOST

NEW ZEALAND'S CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERTS

#81: Ideas & Inspirations

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Words of wisdom


"The single most important thing to remember about any enterprise is that there are no results inside its walls. The result of a business is a satisfied customer."

R Drucker

Service Tips

IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS offers a weekly customer service success idea, delivered by Pod Cast. Each Monday we will help you start your week with a 90 second dynamic message that will inspire you to focus on one aspect of your customer service. It will get your mind stimulated to look for ways to implement real customer service improvements.

Sept 21	Generosity
Sept 28	How excited are you
Oct 5	Let the customer win
Oct 12	Spend your time wisely
Oct 19	Create your credo

To listen go to our website
 www.kiwihost.co.nz and
click on: Service Tips.

Maintaining service excellence on the frontline

Winning a Supreme Award for Business Excellence (HBS Hastings City Business Awards) is an achievement in itself, but when a facility like The Hastings Health Centre has a patient roll of 20,000 people – not to mention the pressure cooker environment that comes from working with people who are ill or facing life-changing news – the achievement is that much more remarkable.

There are few challenges greater than delivering core customer service or best business practice in the face of some patients who may be clouded by medication or exhibiting stress induced aggression; in pain or difficult to handle, demanding second opinions in the face of bad news, not getting the appointment time they wanted or just agitated from trying to find parking.

Then there's dealing with external customers like ACC, DHB's and suppliers... In all it's a complex environment confronted with a range of issues coming at frontline staff who have to multi-task and produce quick turnaround times.

The Hastings Health Centre General Manager Hayley Anderson says there's no great secret to excelling in this intense environment.

"Everybody seems to enjoy their job here. When you enjoy your job you bring a whole different attitude to dealing with customer issues – and our frontline staff have also participated in

the KiwiHost New Zealand customer service training," says Hayley

Working with Suzy Alexander of KiwiHost, The Hastings Health Centre consulted patients, staff and the community on areas for improvement and these mostly centred on telephone techniques and face-to-face communications.

"The positive feedback we got from staff; the changes we noticed in their behaviours and the changes they noticed in each other were significant to say the least – so much so that we are about to talk to KiwiHost about the next package we believe could be of value. Some of our doctors are also open to the idea of doing KiwiHost customer service training as they believe it's important for them to know what training their staff have completed.

"It was a good quality, organisation-wide initiative. We were asked for and provided feedback, staff received certifications. KiwiHost delivered superb customer service," says Hayley.

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If customer service is your strong point, don't say it

If you Google a definition for 'customer service' you will come up with examples like: 'Customer service is an organisation's ability to supply their customers' wants and needs,' and: 'The ability to supply your customers' wants and needs, whether they are new or existing customers'.

KiwiHost New Zealand Managing Director, Jared Brixton, says both definitions are missing an essential value, and that's 'satisfaction'.

"A better definition would be: 'Customer service is an organisation's ability to satisfy their customers' wants and needs'.

"It's amazing how many companies claim to deliver 'great customer service'. In fact the problem is so bad that the customer service claim has lost much of its power. Any company claiming to be 'up there' when it comes to customer service is now a prime candidate for a Tui billboard," says Jared.

Companies with a genuine customer service culture – those that apply practise, training and systems – should perhaps consider re-positioning or modifying their 'great customer service' claim to differentiate themselves from the 'wannabes' out there.

"Great customer service is still great customer service, but you will need to communicate it differently for it to be recognised as such. By this I mean you communicate customer service values rather than just making the 'customer service' claim.

"For example, if you owned a cafe you would want to say: 'A warm and inviting place to relax and chat' – not 'we deliver great service'.

"Of course, make sure that it really is a warm and inviting place where people can relax," says Jared.



COVER STORY CONTINUED...

In winning the Supreme Award for Business Excellence, The Hastings Health Centre had to prove outstanding performance across business planning and marketing, customer focus, personnel, business performance and impact on the environment, in addition to its responsiveness to today's economic climate and involvement in the community.

Established in 2002 by a group of five Hastings General Practitioners (Drs Michael Hewitt, Paddy Twigg, Colin Dykes, Colin Jones and John Sheardown), two local Physiotherapists (Mark Nicol and Andrew Scott) and a Pharmacist (Paul Messerschmidt), The Hastings Health Centre shared a vision that personalised family health care would be the backbone of the centre's philosophy.

The plan was to create a Health Care Centre of excellence – an integrated, multidisciplinary health service, based on General Practice, located in a purpose-built centre in Hastings.

The emphasis was always to be on innovation, quality of practice and service, using research to

remain at the forefront of medical practice.

The Hastings Health Centre is not your average General Practice. Chairman, Michael Hewitt attributes the escalating success to the staff and to the simple flat management structure.

"All staff have exceptional communication skills and flexibility," he says.

John Roil, one of the head judges in the HBS Hastings City Business Awards commented: "This business has the WOW factor. Initially set up as a local business their model could be easily used by other areas and is recognised nationally as an exemplar for modern medical practice. Their emphasis is on providing health services rather than creating bureaucracy."

Of all the winners the judges noted that the overriding factors were a refusal to acknowledge the recession, regular meetings on budget, bucking national trends, and inspirational teams who were passionate about their customers.

Customer Service is both active, passive and about customer choices

I get to travel a fair amount and I notice the key elements of service are presented in many different ways by many different business service people. I can't help it, it's what I do! Naturally every business, organisation and person has a different approach to service which is a result of the service culture of the organisation; what I have noticed is that each service interaction is unique because it is a unique mix of active service and passive strategies used and choices the customer is given.

Recently I had a great experience at a hotel where the active and the passive service strategies provided a great experience, where they got the balance of active and passive just right.

Let me define a couple of things – a great experience to me is when the service interaction meets within my broad range of expectations, not necessarily stand out service. For example being a seasoned traveller I know that you get what you pay for at hotels, I expect friendly and efficient service backed by effective systems, tidy clean rooms commensurate with the cost.

What is an active service strategy? Well it's those upfront more visible aspects of service such as greetings, service standards, how they talk to customers, how they listen to and act on customers' requests, and how customers are generally treated.

Whereas passive strategies are the little things that are present but are often not given any thought for example; our presentation, our

opening hours and information provided. Now this is where they got it right.

In my room I came across some of the best passive service strategies I have seen in a long time, not just the usual corporate conversation messages, customer feedback forms, worn and tattered room compendiums and endless notices on the walls that drill us on company policy. Rather a carefully crafted set of information cards that were easy to read, and importantly well placed exactly where I would expect to see them, that informed me on every aspect of my stay and gave me more choices and more control. For example how did I want my room serviced and cleaned, climate control – not just how to use it but seasonal weather information and the benefits of not using it and opening a window instead, how I wanted my bedding done, e.g. for fresh bedding leave the card this way up, the benefits of water conservation and so on.

There were numerous well placed information cards that spoke to me and gave me choices and allowed me to feel in control and that's what I expect as a customer. In my view the hotel got it right with a good balance of active and passive service strategies. Think about your business and how you might design and include better passive service strategies that go beyond the normal tired information / promotion leaflets. Provide information that outlines customer choices – service is all about choices, customers will love you for it.

Simon Nikoloff – KiwiHost Director

National Training Courses

KEY SERVICE SKILLS

A dynamic fresh new course from KiwiHost that will keep customers loyal when you empower your staff with core customer service techniques and a "Can Do" attitude from KiwiHost. The KiwiHost course is the essential first step to inspiring a passion for customers in every corner of your business. Participants will learn to communicate effectively, understand the customers importance, understand why first impressions count, listen actively and handle complaints. The workshop provides staff of any business or organisation with grounding in the concepts of professional customer service

Key Service Skills

	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Auckland	17		11
Waikato	16	20	17
Bay of Plenty	30		5
Taranaki		13	
Central	23		
Napier & Hastings	23	14	18
Gisborne		22	
Wellington		7	
Canterbury		20	30
Otago		22	
Southland	16	14	18

Learning Outcomes

This workshop will enable the participant to

- > Communicate effectively.
- > Understand that the customer is the lifeblood of the company.
- > Avoid assumptions and change customer perceptions for the better.
- > Give the customer a quality experience and demonstrate how that benefits everybody.
- > Meet, greet and remember names and faces.
- > Listen actively and ask open questions.
- > Handle complaining customers and solve service related problems.
- > Recognise who the customer is, both internally and externally.

Duration 1 day



ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

A challenging workshop, which will motivate participants with customer service experience to expand their skills in dealing with a wide range of customer interactions, by developing an understanding of what the customer wants and expects. The workshop also includes training on how to add value to transactions and how to build a customer ladder of loyalty making sure that the customer returns.

Advanced Customer Service

	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Northland		16	
Auckland	24	20	18
Waikato	22	27	24
Bay of Plenty	17	22	
Taranaki		15	
Central			12
Napier & Hastings			17
Wellington		14	11
Nelson	24	15	5
Canterbury		22	
Otago		14	
Southland	15	13	17

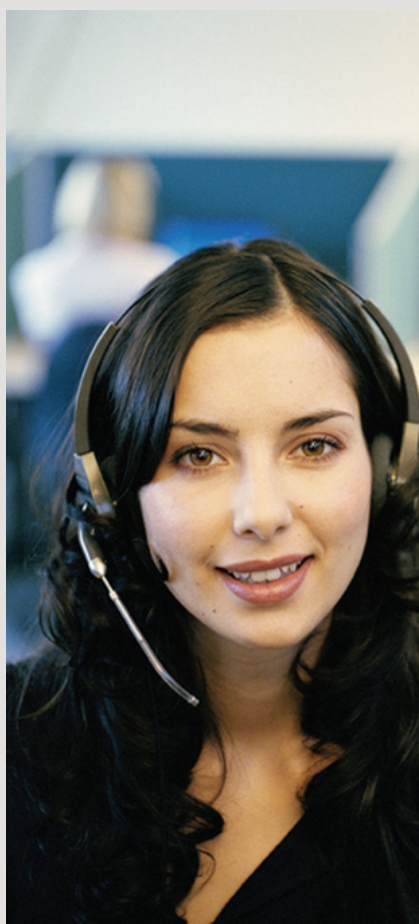
Learning Outcomes

This workshop will enable the participant to

- > Help them to understand 'how and why' their role is important.
- > Empower them with techniques to turn all good and bad customer service scenarios into gold.
- > Give them strategies to turn problem, angry and difficult customers into happy ones.
- > Enable each person to complete a self- analysis of their service attitude and skills, to build empathy.
- > Identify the four levels of customer expectation.
- > Show them how to achieve great first impressions.

Duration 1 day





PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

The drive for greater productivity, systemisation of businesses, cost cutting and environmental changes such as traffic snarl ups have only increased the importance of the telephone as a business tool – more and more business is being done over the phone; but few businesses have equipped their staff to cope with the demands, pressures and opportunities that the telephone offers. Professional Telephone Skills has been substantially updated and improved to equip business for a telecommunication driven world, and to develop participant's understanding of the telephone as a customer service tool.

Professional Telephone Skills

	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Auckland	23		19
Waikato	23	21	18
Bay of Plenty	10	15	26
Taranaki		14	
Central		22	
Napier & Hastings	30		19
Wellington		21	18
Nelson		14	11
Canterbury		21	
Otago		7	11
Southland	17	15	19

Learning Outcomes

This workshop will enable the participant to

- > Understand that the telephone is a vital element toward achieving professional customer service.
- > Have meaningful and pleasant interaction with the caller and offer excellent service and help.
- > Be positively aware of the need for clarity, good pronunciation, language, tone and attitude.
- > Be able to gain rapport with callers and develop positive communication links.
- > Be able to listen, use open questions and clarify the caller's needs.
- > Questioning techniques; effective listening
- > Correctly identify the caller
- > Being able to say 'no' and keeping the caller happy.

Duration 1 day

SERVICE SELLS

How your staff connect with people; how they relate to customers and the communication skills they use will directly impact your sales. Providing customer service helps a customer, prospective customer or guest to make a wise buying decision. This workshop provides the techniques to effectively carry out this process.

Service Sells

	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Northland		13, 27	
Auckland		14	
Taranaki	10		
Gisborne		21	
Wellington	17		19

Learning Outcomes

This workshop will enable the participant to

- > Understand the importance of gaining knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes.
- > Use meet, greet and farewell techniques that will enhance the customer's visit and encourage return visits.
- > Use active listening and open questioning to ascertain customer needs.
- > Identify stated and unstated needs and match product or service benefits to those needs.
- > Uncover additional opportunities such as 'add-on' and other related items.
- > Ask for a commitment and close the sale

Duration half day



KIWIHOST

NEW ZEALAND'S CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERTS

NEW ZEALAND'S CUSTOMER
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PHONE 0800 801 233
WWW.KIWIHOST.CO.NZ

How human is your business?



The personality of your business – provided it is the personality your customers expect of your organisation – may well be the holy grail of this difficult business discipline.

KiwiHost New Zealand director, Simon Nikoloff, says the personality of a business is often based on the values of the person who started it.

For example, Richard Branson's 'Virgin' brand is much like him – quirky, funky, adventurous, unconventional, a bit hard nosed, humorous...

These may be values that customers like, but more importantly they should be values that customers expect.

For example, when going to a criminal lawyer few people would expect warm lighting, soft voices and gentle smiles. They want somebody who is hard headed, abrasive, tenacious and blunt because, well, 'he's a Rottweiler, but he's my Rottweiler'.

Believe it or not, that lawyer is delivering the service customers expect and want.

"Getting the processes of customer service right is essential, but it is not the most important aspect of customer service. Systems related deliverables may be, for example, a motel which specifies that guests have warm towels,

complementary fruit, a hot cup of tea or coffee and the newspaper all ready when they arrive."

All these are important, but having those 'systems' delivered by a hard headed, abrasive and blunt waiter would destroy any good will engendered by the warmed up towels.

"Ask your customers what personality they expect from your business. For example, I struggle with McCafe because McDonalds, to me, is speed and efficiency. It's the service I expect from them."

"Whereas, my expectations from a cafe is people who are knowledgeable and passionate about coffee; where the staff are friendly and take the time to comment on the weather or take the trouble to discuss the merits of various side-dishes."

"We're now talking about the essence of service – how you relate to your customer. In the hotel scenario we might expect service from somebody who is warm, friendly, polite, discreet, who can anticipate."

"My advice is to hire somebody who exhibits the personality traits that your customers tell you they want. When you do that, you close the link between systems and personality – that's what a customer service culture is all about," says Simon.

Success Stories - Social Media

When a photograph of a Dell laptop exploding into flames caught the attention of both web based and traditional media, a massive recall and free battery replacement campaign was followed up by the development of a new social media website by Dell itself.

This site, www.ideastorm.com, allowed the international community of Dell users and customers to provide feedback and product development suggestions direct to the company. Ideastorm has been an enormous success, with over 84,700 comments posted so far but, more importantly, it has reaffirmed Dell's good reputation, which could have been sullied by the flaming battery incident.

Along the same lines, US motorcycle lock specialist Kryptonite was caught out by a video doing the rounds on sites such as YouTube. It showed a person opening one of their high security locks using only a bic pen.

The company made public admission of the issue and offered free replacements to every customer who had that type of lock. It then made further efforts to communicate with its market by delving into the very same social media that had helped damage its brand. "On social media sites, Kryptonite told its customers about steps it had taken to fix the issue and, by doing that, it built goodwill," says Matt Overington, Head of Digital at Hill and Knowlton.

Once it came to realise what a valuable forum this was, it decided to jump in with both feet and launch its own blogging site.

The power of social media has finally been recognised by the corporate. It's important that an organisation never confuses social media with advertising. It's about taking the time to engage the public.

The face of social media will continue to change, but at this point in time, it is proving to be a powerful force in brand-building, in social communication and in the development of goodwill towards organisations whose people are part of online communities.

Chris Seedy
Voyager Magazine, August Issue

Sign Up and Win

SIGN UP TO THE ELECTRONIC KIWIHOST IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS NEWSLETTER and go into the draw to win your choice of any one of the Effective Series Workbooks. These self-paced self-learning workbooks foster development and improve staff performance.

To sign up visit www.kiwihost.co.nz

Winners will be announced in the next hard copy of ideas & inspiration.

Congratulations to last issues winner Hayley Sullivan, Marsh New Zealand.



The Effective Series

The Effective Series is a range of self-paced, self learning workbooks designed to enable the reader to learn a subject in their own time around the demands of work and home. After 20 years in publication, KiwiHost has obtained the rights to market and sell the range of workbooks throughout New Zealand. The workbooks have continued to be highly successful, achieving export awards, by being continually developed over time to keep pace with changing demands and technology. Collectively the range of workbooks have sold in excess of 100,000 copies throughout New Zealand, Australia, Canada, England, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates.

Available workbooks

*Effective Business Negotiation
Effective Business Writing
Effective Business Communication
Effective Reports and Proposals
Effective Customer Service*

*To order your copies today email
admin@kiwihost.co.nz or contact
your local KiwiHost representative
on 0800 801 233.*

New Programmes from KiwiHost

KiwiHost are pleased to announce 3 brand new programmes to be released from October 1st 2009.

Please contact your local KiwiHost representative to see if these workshops are running in your area or for more information!

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Difficult people present everything from a nuisance, an embarrassment to a challenge or possibly a real threat to any individual and any business.

Key Subject Areas

- Who owns the problem and who does what about it
- The provocation continuum – behaviours that provoke both parties and defining trigger behaviours
- Games people play and habitual responses
- Defusing difficult situations – principles for action
- The 'fix it' plan – seven steps and other tools.

1 day \$ 475 + GST.

TELEPHONE SELLING SKILLS

The skills of Telephone Selling are specialised, and excellence in these skills provides a strong and valuable basis for business success and individual opportunity.

Key Subject Areas

- In depth understanding and utilization of the vital practical tools, clarity of purpose and focus in telephone selling
- The three "R's" rights, responsibilities and respect
- The skills of work effectiveness, assertiveness and dealing with pressure – self assessments and resources

- All important Communication – your voice, scripts and messages; listening blocks and ten laws of communication
- The biggest waste of time and the power of good questions
- Negotiation – managing the missing bit
- Closing, closure, follow-up, logging and reporting – to ensure continuous improvement and success.

1 day \$ 475 + GST.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Is time management; an illusion, an elusive ideal or a learnable skill?

In a time where the reality is the need "to do more with less" what are the secrets of the effective, productive management of time.

Key Subject Areas

- Do you keep time or does time keep you?
- Clarity of purpose, planning and the added dynamic of persistence
- Procrastination; problem or personality
- Goals, plans, frogs and the workspace
- Derailed by urgent vs important, email slavery, delegation – haven't got time, meetings and the management dilemma.

1 day \$ 475 + GST.

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