



# ideas & inspirations

FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

From KIWIHOST

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## ideas

### TURNING ANGER INTO SUPPORT

One of the most difficult interactions for many frontline staff is dealing with a customer who is angry and shouting. Customers are often loud and angry because they feel they have to display their emotion to be taken seriously.

The best way to deal with this type of situation is to take the caller seriously. You can achieve this by what you say and how you say it. More specifically, you need to respond to the customer with equal energy - not equal loudness or equal anger. You want to convey that you understand that the customer has a problem and that you are there to help.

For example, a good response to an angry customer would be: "Well, that's unacceptable! I would feel the same way if I were in your shoes. We must fix this. Please tell me what happened?"

The correct words used in the right manner can quickly change an angry customer into a cooperative and positive supporter of your business.

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### WORDS OF WISDOM

*Throughout the centuries there were men who took first steps, down new roads, armed with nothing but their own vision.*

*Ayn Rand/John*

## inspirations

### MAKING SUSTAINABILITY A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

My search for new and exciting customer experiences recently took me to the Banrock Station Winery in South Australia. They have developed a third dimension to their business by restoring a wetland reserve and making it a part of the winery visitor's experience. They have created a link between conservation and their product, which strengthens the consumer relationship with their brand.

Once you have visited the winery you can set off along the self-guided walking trails that feature story centres, information huts and bird hides where you can watch black swans, pelicans, egrets etc. It's a bird lovers paradise.

The 240 hectares of vineyard that sits among 1450 hectares of natural bushland on the banks of the Murray River is a vital link between the surrounding native vegetation and wetlands. The special care Banrock Station takes of the property results in exceptional wines, which have received outstanding acceptance by the market.

The total Banrock Station experience is focused on sustainability and conservation values. The eco-friendly buildings are designed to blend with the landscape. All waste is recycled and the building uses solar energy. The design incorporates rammed earth walls and renewable materials in a way that increases the energy efficiency.

The concept of linking a brand by differentiating, not the product but the environment in which it is produced, is a very clever way of creating a unique product positioning statement.

As a business generally starts to accept the relevance of sustainability in the mind of the consumer, opportunities such as illustrated by Banrock Station need to be explored.

The next level of business activity will be creating experiences that have relevance in the mind of the consumers to issues of sustainability.

## BIG PICTURE, LITTLE PICTURE

You frequently hear people on the front line make negative comments about decisions made from the top. "How could they be so stupid?" "This is crazy!" They see the impact that decisions have on their jobs, and sometimes it just doesn't make sense to them. Often what is seen as resistance to change or a negative attitude is really a lack of understanding of the 'bigger picture.'

Over the years, we have worked with many senior executives struggling to understand why their change strategies and initiatives aren't working. They develop a strategy and action plan that looks great on paper, but fails in its application. Often this is the result of a failure to consider the 'little picture.'

Why is this? It's not that people are stupid, or lack vision. It's simply a matter of perspective. Our views of the world are based on our personal points of view and experiences. Someone living in Pakuranga may be hard-pressed to comprehend life in a long house in Sarawak - just as the long house occupant would have no frame of reference for understanding life in Pakuranga, Auckland.

Therefore it is unrealistic to expect a CEO to have a grasp of the daily workload of each of their company's employees. Without an understanding of all the factors a CEO must take into account when making decisions, would it be fair to expect front line staff to grasp the rationale of a CEO's decision? It is for these reasons that clear and free-flowing information throughout an organisation is so important to its success.

On a more personal level, being able to see the Big Picture is critical to anyone's success. It helps put things into perspective - which becomes the structure that helps us achieve our goals. The Big Picture gives us a better understanding of the implications of our actions, and allows us to look beyond the 'what is' to the 'what could be.' Being able to see the Little Picture, however, is equally important. Because the Big Picture is only truly understood when we have a grasp of all the little pictures that constitute it.

To see both the Big and Little pictures you need an open mind, and a willingness to constantly question your own views and opinions. You have to postpone placing value judgments on actions until you have investigated, asked questions, and listened to the answers. You next have to assume that staff have, from their point of view, sound reasons for the things they do, and then make an effort to understand those reasons.

Great people are often referred to as 'visionaries.' Failures are often called 'dreamers.' The difference between the two? Visionaries understand enough of the big and little pictures to actually make the dreams come true.

### BUSINESS BOOSTER IDEAS – WHAT MAKES GREAT PEOPLE?

*The difference between great people and everyone else is that great people create their lives actively, while everyone else is created by their lives, passively waiting to see where life takes them next. The difference between the two is the difference between living fully and just existing.*

*Michael E. Gerber*

## monday morning motivations

ideas & inspirations is now introducing a weekly customer service success idea. This will be delivered by Pod Cast. Each Monday we will help you start your week with a 90 seconds 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.

May Pod Casts:

- 7<sup>th</sup> May: Going the Extra Mile
- 14<sup>th</sup> May: The Power of Word of Mouth
- 21<sup>st</sup> May: Manage Their Expectations
- 28<sup>th</sup> May: Listen, Listen, Listen

To listen, go to our website [www.kiwihost.co.nz](http://www.kiwihost.co.nz) and click on: Monday Morning Motivations.

## THE VALUE OF MOTIVATION

Motivation is about doing what is of value to us. When it has value we are more inclined to want to do it. When we lose sight of the “why” of doing something, we are less motivated to go out of our way and we are more inclined to do whatever feels good at the moment.

So what motivates us to take good care of customers, even if it means a little more hard work and attention today? The health of our business. When we attend to customer needs, listen carefully so we know what they want in the future, and make a special effort to have them feel good about each and every experience with us, we build up “emotional bank accounts” with them and they are more likely to come back.

They are also more likely to bring friends. That’s very valuable to a business. The higher the value, the higher the motivation. When we get referrals, more dollars drop to the bottom line.

In the transparent world we live in today, making sure that the customer has only good things to say about us is an investment in our own future. When the company does well, it’s more likely that there will be more money for expansion, staff wages and benefits. When the company does well, people feel good and it’s a nicer place to work. Loyalty isn’t just about longevity; it’s about robust good health.

So when you are feeling a little tired, and you don’t really want to go out of your way, when you’d rather talk than listen, and when you insist on being right, even at the expense of the customer relationship: Stop - just for a moment and think. Will your behavior today give you the result you want tomorrow? Are your actions today in alignment with what you really want for the future? Are you on track with what is the best for all concerned? Check with yourself and remember the “why” of business. You’re in business “because” of the customers, not in spite of them.

Make the right choice. The higher the value, the higher the motivation. What are good customer relationships worth?

## THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

As I listen to conversations between professionals, business owners and customers, I continue to detect a lack of real understanding of the customer experience concept.

We need to appreciate that the experience a customer has with an organisation’s product or service is as important to the value of that product, service, or brand, as well as the relationship between the product or service and the organisation that provides it.

The experience is more than the features of the product or service. It extends from the moment the customer perceives a need, through to the purchase and use of the product or service, until it is disposed of or replaced.

The experience is the sum total of all the time spent by the customer with the product or service. It is the senses through which it is experienced, the emotional, conceptual, and physical triggers it creates. It is the sum of the memories and any identity or other social contexts experienced by the buyer, user, participant, or audience during the life of the product or service.

At the deepest level, products and services can evoke meaning within customers, which can create satisfying experiences as well as deep connections and relationships to an offering or the organisation who provides it.

So customer experience is what business is all about. Nothing more and nothing less. It’s about connections, emotions and feelings.

Every business needs to consider these issues in depth. They need to clearly understand and manage the breadth and depth of both the rational and emotional connections they create with each and every customer.

# special

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## HOT BUTTONS

We all find ourselves with the need to influence somebody. We need to motivate an employee; build a better relationship with a co-worker; sell an idea to the boss; make a new friend - the list goes on. We sometimes forget how much influence we have over the actions and attitudes of the people around us. All it takes is the skill to push the right buttons in the right people at the right time.

Hot buttons are things that positively alter someone's behaviour and create a positive change in their attitude and performance. Two common Hot Buttons are:

### Talking about ourselves

Most of us, when given a chance, enjoy the opportunity to talk about ourselves - our children, our pets and our achievements. Encourage others to talk about themselves. Ask open questions and actively listen to their answers.

### Praise

We know how positively most people respond to praise. Flattery, when it's not 'over the top', is a very powerful way to influence someone's attitude. Try this experiment: Every day, choose a staff member or fellow worker and comment positively on something they have achieved. Make sure that the compliment is genuine. Then sit back and watch how both their mood and behaviour change.

There are as many different hot buttons as there are people. The better you understand them, the better relationships you'll be able to create. Discover what someone's hot buttons are by observing them. Look for things they are passionate about - the things that make them laugh and the things that fire them up.

While you're at it, think about your own hot buttons. You never know when one might come in handy for a little self-motivation.

## THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT PHRASES

Words that sound like music to your customers' ears. As customer service professionals, the bulk of our work involves speaking with customers. That means choosing our words carefully. After all, the right words can calm and reassure while the wrong words can frustrate and inflame.

Here are 55 top words, grouped into the 10 most important phrases.

- The 10 most important words: *I apologise for our mistake. Let me put it right.*
- The 9 most important words: *Thank you for your business. Please call us again.*
- The 8 most important words: *I'm not sure, but I will find out.*
- The 7 most important words: *What else can I do for you?*
- The 6 most important words: *What is most convenient for you?*
- The 5 most important words: *How may I serve you?*
- The 4 most important words: *How did we do?*
- The 3 most important words: *Glad you called.*
- The 2 most important words: *Thank you.*
- The 1 most important word: *YES!*

## BUSINESS BOOSTER IDEAS – BE LIKE WALT—INSPIRE PEOPLE THEN LET THEM GET ON WITH IT

*"Walt challenged and inspired you by talking to you. He wouldn't give you detailed instructions about what he wanted you to do. Instead, he would simply point you in the direction he wanted you to go, then leave the rest up to you. He would get you started on the creative process and inspire you with confidence. As a result, you would go far beyond what you thought you were capable of doing."*

*Band leader Tutti Camarata, whom Disney recruited to set up Disneyland Records*

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