

# #76: Ideas & Inspirations

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## Words of wisdom

*Life is better when we treat others as we would be treated*

## Monday morning motivation

**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.

- Sep 1 Motivation
- Sep 8 Demotivation
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To listen go to our website [www.kiwihost.co.nz](http://www.kiwihost.co.nz) and click on: Monday Morning Motivations.



## Good service generates word of mouth amongst diverse cultural groups

*New Zealand's growing diversity is good for business. Different cultural groups can make for profitable, clearly defined market segments who – possibly for language reasons – often rely on word of mouth for where they do their business.*

Take the example of Shirley Nikoloff who works at a Christchurch garden centre which had only a token handful of Asian customers. Shirley understood that the names of some plants were difficult for Asian people to pronounce. She took the time to look at the plants with the customer and to work with them by making the effort to communicate.

Shirley also made an effort to learn her customer's name and how to pronounce it correctly. Once she did that, the number of Asian customers increased dramatically and they always asked for her by name!

If you want to generate word of mouth business within different cultural groups, take the time to break through the communication barrier with patience, friendliness and a demonstrated willingness to understand. For example, choose your language carefully by cutting out or explaining jargon and colloquialisms.

You can go still further by seeking to understand the level of service people expect. Singaporean Chinese, for example, like to have their own service assistant to offer advice, answer questions and make recommendations.

Begin by making a special effort to engage customers of different cultures. Find out where they are from, what their names are and how you can be of more help. In that way you will build up knowledge of the likes and dislikes of various groups and put yourself in a position to build several loyal customer segments.

## Editors Insight

*Most organisations today have some form of tunnel vision. They chase the same opportunities that everyone else is chasing and they miss the opportunities that others have already missed.*



This is the culture that stifles innovation and creates a sense of entrenchment as organisations continue to apply the same thinking to every new initiative .

So the challenge must be to actively search for opportunities which your competition don't or can't see. Its about breaking out of the "pack mentality" and approaching each new challenge from a new perspective.

For some the term "Best Practice" has been the catch cry of some concerned with performance improvement. However a growing number of CEO's are now rejecting this concept as it is appearing that the best in the class are not that great.

Instead successful managers in both large and small organisations are looking outside their own industries and acceptable standards, for new ways of thinking that can lead to ground breaking changes.

Innovation is about looking at familiar situations with fresh eyes as if you have never seen it before and with these fresh eyes to develop a new line of sight into the future.

This issue of I & I is dedicated to this thinking. We hope that the thoughts we share will encourage you to use new insights to look into your future.

## Ideas

### Tell us your story – Kiwis urged to have their say in 2nd Annual KiwiHost/JRA Perceptions of Customer Service Pulse



*Tell us your stories! Got a good news or bad news customer service experience to report? Tell us your story – the best three stories will win a \$20 petrol voucher.*

Ordinary Kiwis and business owners are being urged to have their say in the 2nd annual KiwiHost/JRA Perceptions of Customer Service Pulse by completing an online survey ([www.kiwhost.co.nz](http://www.kiwhost.co.nz)), starting from 1 September 2008 – the online facility will also allow people to tell their customer service stories.

KiwiHost – New Zealand's most established customer service quality and training standard – has once again teamed up with JRA (NZ) Ltd (stakeholder survey and analysis specialists, and founder of the popular Unlimited/JRA Best Places To Work survey) to conduct a nationwide, definitive 'pulse check' of Kiwi customer service.

Once again 'The Pulse' will cover three key areas of customer service:

- > Business to consumer – how business treats consumers;
- > Business to business – the state of customer service in the B2B marketplace; and
- > Youth – what perceptions do New Zealand's teenagers have of customer service and how are they treated as a group?

Senior Consultant at JRA (NZ) Ltd, Amy Shipley, said JRA is once again delighted to be working with KiwiHost in the joint venture survey.

"The unlimited/JRA Best Places To Work survey is important because the way people are treated at work is of national significance, but so is customer service – it's a topic that is close to everyone's heart and like your job, a major topic of discussion around the water cooler," says Amy.

*To participate in the brief survey, and be in to win one of twenty five \$20 petrol vouchers, please visit [www.kiwhost.co.nz](http://www.kiwhost.co.nz).*

### Placing yourself in the hot seat

*There are three conversations most companies would rather not have with their customers. Though uncomfortable, these are the most important dialogues you can initiate:*

#### ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Take a look around. How many corporates ask for raw, unfiltered product feedback? The answer: Not many. Why? Most companies want to play up their strengths and downplay their weaknesses. They don't have the nerve to face the criticism, or to do anything with it—and they're not sure how to respond. Feedback, good or bad, will only make your company stronger.

#### SAY POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Though we're programmed to think we should never acknowledge a competitor's strengths this is a mistake. Customers and prospects talk about your competition, and they will often be analysing you, and them, and not everything said will be negatives.

Companies that recognise that they're worthy competition ... become more relevant, trusted and creditable.

#### ADMIT YOU WERE WRONG

Attempts to spin, redirect or ignore criticism will be patently obvious.

When your company gets something wrong, you earn more credit with your customers by owning up.

These conversations are difficult to have but they are the same conversations your customers are having with your prospectus – so why the veil?



# Inspirations

## The psychology of urgency – make them want it NOW

*"I'll think it over and get back to you."  
"Give me a call next month."*

Tired of excuses? Looking for a more successful way to get others to take immediate action?

The first strategy for getting people to take immediate action is to present yourself or your product as "limited," "scarce," or "in demand."

Why? People want what they can't have. Repeatedly, psychologists have shown that human beings find more value in things that they have a hard time obtaining.

If you tell people that they can't have something they end up wanting it more! You may have experienced this in your own life. Have you ever found yourself interested in a home or a car and then discovered that someone else may be trying to buy it? As a result, the item becomes even more valuable to you. You are more motivated to get it.

Do you want it? You can't have it! This is an important point for sales and marketing purposes. Car salespeople are quick to let us know, "This is the last model of its kind available on the entire yard – after it goes, that's it." Newspaper and television ads constantly remind us that the "sale ends soon," "supplies are limited" and "time is running out."

Some retail stores create motivation by putting "sold" tags on merchandise that they have a hard time selling. When customers see the "sold" tag, they become more interested in buying the item.

Infomercials place a ticking clock at the end of the advertisements. They say, "Order in the next ten minutes and you will also receive a free set of knives."

Getting immediate results. When I first started speaking and consulting, it was hard for me to get business. I made the error of telling potential clients that I would be available whenever they were ready. Big mistake.

It wasn't until I became so busy that I had to start turning clients away that I was able to charge what I am worth. When they felt as if they couldn't have me, they wanted me more. When I was inaccessible, they became anxious and assigned more value to my service. This sense of urgency has had a huge impact on my business.

*Tired of excuses?  
Looking for more  
successful way to  
get others to take  
immediate action?*



## > 3 Steps

Here are three steps that you can use to create a sense of urgency in others:

### > SET A DEADLINE

People are natural procrastinators. Without a deadline – and the potential risk of losing something – people will wait until they collect more information, talk it over with their spouses, or save more money. By setting a deadline, you create an inner drive and help them to take action.

### > REMIND THEM THAT YOUR OFFER IS "LIMITED."

Always present your opportunity as being limited with regards to time or quantity. If someone asks you whether you have a certain product in stock, don't say, "Oh, yes, we have plenty of them." The better approach is to say, "Yes, we have limited stock and they go fast."

### > PLAY HARD TO GET

Remember, people want what they can't have. By sounding too available, you're diminishing your value. By sounding unavailable, you're greatly increasing your value. Never say, "Oh, yes, I'm available any day next week." Instead, use the more powerful and persuasive approach by saying, "Hmmm, I'm very busy next week, but I might be able to squeeze you in."

## Five steps to making a lasting impression on your customers

According to Roger Ailes, president of Fox News, you have seven seconds to make a good first impression. What's true for television, is true for marketing, sales and customer service.

Your customers are rapidly forming an impression of your business no matter what the role of the person is that they are dealing with. They are deciding very quickly if they will do business with you, but more importantly, whether they will do business with you again.

### THE QUESTION IS: HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE A CUSTOMER'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOU IS GOOD?

ACCORDING TO MARIANNE LAFRANCE, YALE UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR:

*"90 per cent of a first impression is based on appearance, posture, facial expressions, and tone of voice".*

*The best way to start making a lasting impression is to apply good listening skills. It's not for nothing that we grew up with the expression: "God gave us two ears but only one mouth because listening is twice as hard as speaking".*

The recent KiwiHost/JRA Perceptions of Customer Service Pulse survey identified three overwhelming key behaviours that customers expect of their service providers, and right at the top was: "Listen to me and understand what my needs are".

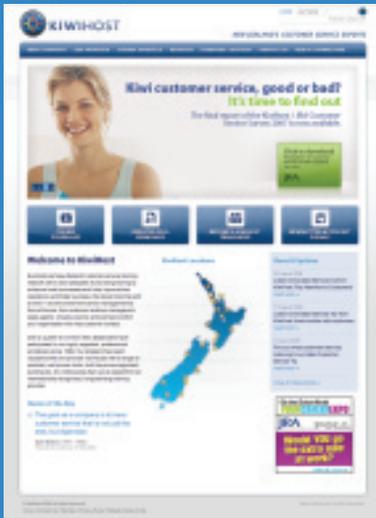
### FOUR STEPS TO BECOMING A BETTER LISTENER:

- > Act like a good listener. Posture and body language, should be attentive and engaging.
- > Give the speaker your undivided attention.
- > Take notes and repeat salient points back to the speaker;
- > Pay attention to nonverbal signals, including tone of voice, eye contact and gestures.

*Colin Kennedy is a marketing and media communications specialist and copywriter.*

## Product and Services

Check out our fantastic new website, it's interactive, easy to use and we have made it even easier for you to register now for one of our workshops. Check us out at [www.kiwihost.co.nz](http://www.kiwihost.co.nz)



### ENDORSED SERVICE PROVIDER

The KiwiHost Endorsed Service Provider recognises businesses that realise the importance of quality service and training. Businesses who qualify to become a KiwiHost Endorsed Service Provider deliver quality experiences for customers and enhance business performance.

To find out how to become a KiwiHost Endorsed Service Provider please contact your local KiwiHost representative on 0800 801 233.



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## So what's the fix – Find a mirror. Gaze closely, It's you.

You have the power to capture your customers loyalty by putting your face in front of theirs. Learn how to interpret your customer's emotional state before, during and after the transaction. It's not difficult.

First, assume your customers don't have all of the answers and are feeling vulnerable. Next, you can easily read their faces and interpret their tone of voice by becoming familiar with the top six facial expressions that telegraph your customer's "hidden" emotional state.

Besides looking them in the eyes, stop talking. Ask a few non-threatening questions and really listen to what your customers are telling you. Avoid the urge to show them how smart you are by jumping in with something to advance your agenda. It's not about you right now. Keep it all about them. Don't question your customer if they're misinformed. It makes them feel stupid.

Rather, take the position that you may have misheard – then carefully clarify again. Keep digging deeper with more questions until you are absolutely clear about their concerns.

## You got Grade-A customer service

In an entrepreneurial setting, there's a good possibility that no one has specific responsibility for managing customer service. In a post at her Conversation Agent blog, Valeria Maltoni says this is only one of the reasons your level of customer service might not make the grade. Here's a sampling of her advice for getting straight-As:

### DON'T DO ALL THE TALKING

Maltoni recalls her grandmother's saying: "We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. They are meant to be used proportionally." Listen to your customers; don't tell them what you think.

### ACT ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVE

Don't get defensive if customers criticise your product or service—instead, use the input to implement ongoing improvements.

### GIVE YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

According to Maltoni, a department with proper staffing and funding gives you the best return on investment. "Good service means you retain more customers," she explains. "Acquiring new customers costs more."

### EMPOWER THEM TO TAKE CONTROL

Make sure your frontline staff is ready and able to resolve complaints. Remember that they have some of the best intel in the company, so ask them lots of questions.

"It does you no good to spend millions in advertising when customers find you difficult to deal with," writes Maltoni. "A good experience is one of the best investments in your brand."



## Ways to make the competition irrelevant – Focus on the moment of truth

Focus on the moment of truth, the place or position that your products or services will be offered to the customer. In a retail environment this may be the end-cap, a wall display, shelf space or counter display. On the internet this may be an on-line store, e-bay or your personal website. It may be in a catalogue or a brochure. It could even be part of an email communication.

Occasionally the moment of truth may be in the form of a bid or proposal after several months of discussions with a potential client. The moment of truth is the moment that the customer has an option to make a purchase decision, to buy your products, invest in your services or to hire you. This is the moment that you need to put your good, better and best foot forward.

