

The Service Slump

Now and then, Malaysian corporations are preaching about their undying devotion to the network they serve. They claim time and time again that they strive to create the ultimate customer experience.

But what exactly amounts to this ultimate customer experience we hear so much about? The recent Malaysia Service Excellence Conference 2007 projected that “the way you treat your customer is the only way you can differentiate yourself”. Perhaps that is true, especially in today’s utterly competitive environment where different organizations are offering similar products and/or services in their own “unique” ways.

And yet nothing has changed. The customer experience here is still non-existent, especially when it arrives at face-to-face communications and telephone conversations. Whenever I seek the assistance of a particular customer service personnel at the bank I patronize, she gives me the same facial expression every time – a crude one. The only natural thought is that I am not worthy of her time.

Many have also shared their views on the telephone service standards of a particular national airline – foreigners included. This airline, a Malaysian identity, demonstrates time and again that the standards of our telephone officers are below the expectations of the industry; especially when tourists seek for assistance to locate their misplaced luggage.

It is appalling to see our service professionals becoming more and more ignorant when extending care to customers. Whatever happened to the “customer is always right” mantra? Does that not exist anymore? It is time for organizations to employ some customer contact training and development. It is time for some change.

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Simple Tips to Service Success:

- Smile at all times

More often than not, service professionals take this element for granted. Realize that a smile creates the first impression; therefore it is crucial to have one on at all times of service.

- Acquire the knowledge you need

It is most frustrating when a service professional does not know anything about the product or service they represent. Undergoing product training is important to ensure that questions and queries can be answered.

- Be helpful

A customer usually remembers when an extension of help is given to them. Therefore whenever you see a customer in need, opening the door or helping them with their bags is enough to demonstrate your attentiveness.

- Anticipate customers' needs

Connecting with the customer is very important to help you determine how you can be of assistance to them. Once you have identified their needs, act accordingly with adequate efficiency.

- Maintain eye contact

Eye contact is a prominent way of telling the customer that you are listening. Maintaining that eye contact while replying is also equally important because it displays both your knowledge and sincerity.