

A great read from Nancy Friedman, the Telephone Doctor:

It never fails. When my audiences are asked to name one characteristic they'd like to see in an employee, overwhelmingly it's always OWNERSHIP; to take responsibility.

Certainly there are other traits they'd like to see in others, but without fail OWNERSHIP wins.

When we talk about "what does ownership mean to you" there are several answers.

To make it easy, we've taken the word OWNERSHIP and labeled a thought to each letter. Hope you enjoy!

O

Operate as though it's your business. Take responsibility. There's no, "It's not my job" in ownership. There's only, "I will help you."

W

Walk in the customers shoes. That's the best way to be sure you understand what's going on and to help. Pretend it's you calling in and needing the assistance. What if this happened to you?

N

Never say "NO." That's right; even when you're not able to help or even when the situation is hopeless (and let's hope it never gets to that). The word NO is offensive, abrupt, unfriendly, overused and tired. There are a dozen positive alternatives we can use to let the customer down gently. To offer a few: "I wish we could" or "Let me double check on that" or "I'm going to take some time and see if we can work this out." Bottom line, offering NO at the top of your conversation is useless.

E

Empowerment is strength. Having employees empowered to assist by themselves is a strong motivation to do well. The worst they can do is make one mistake. Normally easily corrected and move forward. Empower your folks!

R

Resolution. Sticking with the issue until it is solved. No matter how many phone calls, how many times we re-check something; it's not over till it's fixed. Resolved! The mentality needs to be: "Your issues are our issues."

S

Sending confirmation of the resolution. This is so important. If something gets fixed or resolved and the customer isn't made aware of it, they can still be upset. The other day we were to have been issued a credit from an airline. We never heard from them. After a third call from my husband to the airline, we were told, "Oh, that credit was on your bill a few months ago." But no one bothered to let us know it was coming or that it had been done. Send confirmation or call! Then close the issue.

H

Happiness is key. Happy people love to help. That's a fact. And your customers love to be helped by happy people. That's another fact. They can even make the bitter better. (Say that three times!) Walk into your job HAPPY.

I

Integrity. This is non-negotiable. Having integrity is a huge part of ownership. Do what is right ALL the time. And remember, having the right to do it doesn't always 'make it right.' Integrity!

P

Personal commitment. Each and every person helping a customer needs to make their own personal commitment that they will take ownership. No more, "It's not my job." No more, "I wasn't here when it happened." No more, "I don't know anything about it."

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