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**Wednesday
Morning**

Fax

from

**The
Castle
Press**

5 ways to make your customers feel good about themselves— and about doing more business with you

1. Treat your customers like Very Important People—which they are!

Customers feel delighted when they perceive that suppliers value them as unique individuals whose problems deserve serious consideration and effective remedial action.

2. Make your customers feel that they are in control

The Walt Disney Company, for instance, arranges things in Disneyland, Disney World, and its other theme parks so that “visitors never seem to feel lost,” Schneider and Bowen say.

“Well-designed signage is ever-present,” they continue, and knowledgeable employees cheerfully provide directions.

As a result, visiting “Parents never appear ignorant in the eyes of their children”—or fear they will lose face with their youngsters.

3. Show respect for your customer’s intelligence

To companies that enjoy high levels of customer loyalty, there is no such thing as a dumb question. On the other hand, companies whose contact people condescend to customers, or demean them for asking questions, can expect to lose them to the competition.

4. Maximize customer choice

The more choice the better, Schneider and Bowen say. Choice “is a secret weapon in efforts to enhance esteem.”

Abundant choice, they observe, builds the individual’s sense of self-worth. It’s the reason people love

“Expectations refer to getting what one anticipates as a consumer, while needs focus on obtaining what one seeks from life as a person.”

—Benjamin Schneider and David Bowen, in the January 2000 Managing Customer Service report*

to shop in supermarkets, department stores, and Home Depots.

5. Recover effectively from mistakes

Businesses create loyalty when they “quickly acknowledge the worthiness of the customer’s perspective” and establish rapport by soliciting details about a problem, Schneider and Bowen advise.

Examples of loyalty-fostering phraseology are:

- “I understand what you are upset about.”
- “Please tell me exactly what happened.”
- “I will follow up on this issue and get back to you within one hour, because I know how important this is to you.”

“To focus on needs is to concentrate on relationships...that lead to customer retention and profitability,” Schneider and Bowen write.

To discuss this fax, please phone George Kinney toll-free at 1-800-794-0858.

*You can obtain a reprint (#4113) of their article from the Sloan Management Review for \$15. Phone (617) 253-7170, fax (617) 258-258-9739, or e-mail to HYPERLINK “mailto:smr@mit.edu” smr@mit.edu.

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