

Achieving Service Excellence

By Mitzi Taylor

Providing excellent customer service should be one of the easiest things to accomplish in the business world: find out what your customer needs, meet their needs and treat the customer like a partner not the enemy. Reality is - (if most organizations are being honest with themselves) it's much harder to walk the talk. We all have horror stories where the company forgot we were the customer ([we would love to hear your stories by the way! Email \[info@mynsbt.com\]\(mailto:info@mynsbt.com\) and we will award the best story with a Not So Basic Prize!](#))

Do not make customer service an event in your organization, make it a business philosophy! Listed below is a to-do list of what needs to be in place to lead and sustain service excellence.

- Know your purpose then spread the word. Everyone is in business to serve the customer - how are you different? Is it a part of your vision/mission statement? How many of your employees could tell you in their own words what is most important to the organization?
- Think of excellent customer service as not only a function of service behaviors, but of procedures and systems also.
- Finding and retaining quality people. Train your staff on how to find the right person – not so easy today when the web helps you answer every interview question! Also, train your managers on how to KEEP that person motivated towards your goals.
- Training and supporting employees. Employees want to be invested in. They are your #1 asset! Involve them in decisions and policy review. Recognize and reward them for service excellence. Hold up heroes!
- Knowing your customers comprehensively. Know your target market and understand what they are looking for from you. Update this knowledge regularly! Utilize a client database where you can jot notes down to remind you and others what was discussed last.
- Focus your units on organizational purpose. Line all of your departments, divisions, etc. with your vision/mission and ensure they get together regularly to fight off the silo effect.
- Creating easy-to-do-business-with delivery systems. Customers love for businesses to be easy to do business with. Are you? Review your policies and procedures for barriers. Look at your internal customers as well!
- Setting the tone and leading the way through personal example. Develop your leadership to shine service. Help them understand their role in taking your business to the next level of service.
- Identify the gaps and create an action plan!