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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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Volume 67, Number 4, 2008

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MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

Volume 67, Number 4, 2008

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On The Cover

In an effort to help members Promote the Community Value of their Municipal Liquor Operations, MMBA, in partnership with Coors Brewing, is coordinating the First Annual Municipal Liquor Food Drive.

This effort is patterned after a successful program developed by Stacy Wine and Liquor manager Brian Hachey.

The food drive runs October 1 – October 31, 2008.

Each participating MMBA member is collecting dry food and can goods for donation to their local food shelf of choice.

The individual facility (not city) with the highest weight donated will earn a \$2,000 donation to their local food shelf from Coors and MMBA. In addition, MMBA will contribute another \$1000 to a facility's food shelf, other than the overall winner, participating in the food drive through a random drawing. For a list of participating MMBA members, see page 10.

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MMBA President's Message



Gary Buysse
President

Greetings from Rogers:

Unless you have been in a coma, buried in a cave or held captive without access to the media you know we are currently in the midst of an election cycle. It's been said that this is one of the most important elections in many years. Don't forget to vote!

Many of you will be electing new Mayors and City Council members. One of the most important jobs we have as department heads is to educate our newly elected officials about what we do, why we do it and what benefits we provide to our cities. Control, community value, revenue generation and job creation are just a few relevant topics of discussion. MMBA will have materials available to assist you in elected official orientation. Contact Paul for more information!

One of the topics our 2008 Regional Meetings is "Don't be another Shorewood!" Making money is never enough! We need to be community leaders and our stores need to be community assets! We all need to continually prepare for "that inevitable moment" when someone in our community questions the validity of our enterprise fund!

Sales in our off-premise stores are increasing; on-premise stores are struggling to a certain extent.

Elected officials: MMBA has an Outreach program that can assist you in maximizing your liquor department profit picture. Call Paul for more details.

Chris Morton is no longer with Future Brands. He had accepted a position with Pernod-Ricard. Good luck, Chris!

Joe Hartman, Monticello Liquor Operations Manager and former MMBA Officer and Director, lost his battle with cancer October 2, 2008. Joe was a true friend of the industry and will be missed!

Cherie Strohl, Baudette Municipal Assistant Manager was fatally injured

in a motorcycle accident on August 26, 2008. Our condolences to her biological and professional families!

Support those who support you!

If you're not doing it, start! If you're already doing it, do it more often! If you're doing it more often, do it better! Promoting your liquor department and becoming a community asset that is!

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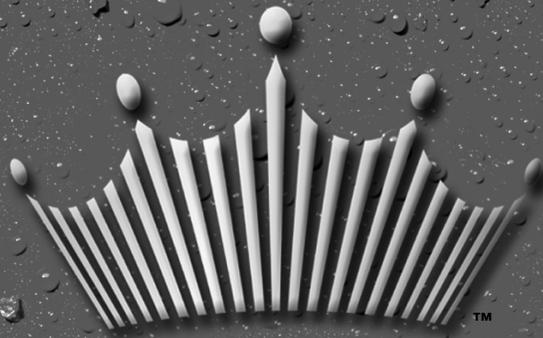
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TEST YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE IQ

1. Finish this sentence, “the customer is _____.”
 - a. Always wrong
 - b. Always right
 - c. Always the customer
 - d. Always impatient
2. It costs a retailer _____ to attract a new customer than to retain an existing customer?
 - a. Five times as much
 - b. Twice as much
 - c. Ten times as much
 - d. Twenty times as much
3. For every complaint received, the average retailer has _____ other customers with service issues.
 - a. 6
 - b. 26
 - c. 106
 - d. 1,000
4. About _____ percent of your customers make purchases based on price only?
 - a. About ten
 - b. About thirty
 - c. About fifty
 - d. Seventy-nine point three
5. The average retailer never hears from _____ percent of its unhappy customers?
 - a. 13 percent
 - b. 96 percent
 - c. 110 percent
 - d. One percent
6. Of customers who issue a complaint, 54 – 70% will do business again with the retailer if their complaint was resolved. This figures goes up to whopping _____ percent if their complaint was resolved quickly?
 - a. 75%
 - b. 80%
 - c. 95%
 - d. 99.9%
7. The average customer who believes that they have been mis treated will share their experience with _____.
 - a. Ten other people
 - b. Twenty other people
 - c. Their dog
 - d. Your boss
8. Which type of service is more likely to anger a customer?
 - a. Poor service
 - b. Good service
 - c. Indifferent service
 - d. No service
9. Why is a sign on the front of your door that reads “no shirts, no shoes, no service” bad for business?
 - a. Because you forgot to add no pants
 - b. It reflects a negative connotation as you enter the store
 - c. The words “no” should be upper case to display authority
 - d. It blocks the “no guns allowed” sign
10. Customers who complain:
 - a. Are genetically predisposed to be a sourpuss
 - b. Have had unhappy childhoods
 - c. Are doing you a service by informing you
 - d. Want money from you
11. It is estimated that the average customer is willing to spend up to _____ percent more for the same item, in order to get better customer service.
 - a. Nine
 - b. Ten
 - c. Twelve
 - d. One hundred

12. Bonus Question worth ten points:

Name five things that you have done in the past year to improve your customer’s shopping experience:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

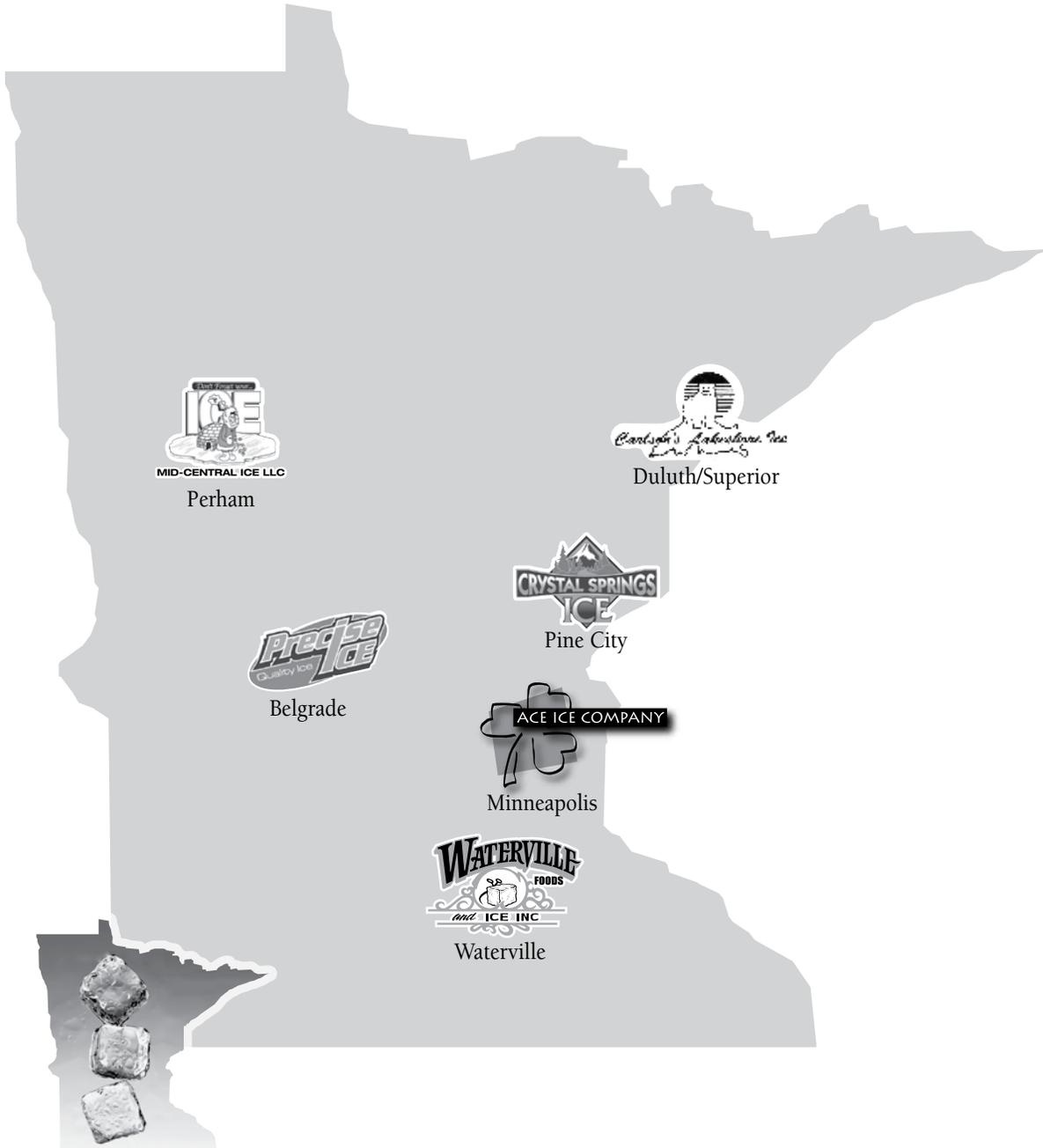
Answers on page 8

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you do what
is important
to your
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CUSTOMER SERVICE IQ TEST ANSWERS

- 1= C The old saying used to be that the customer is always right. It has transitioned into; The customer may not always be right, however they are always the customer and they should be treated with respect at all times.
- 2= A It costs a retailer five times as much to attract a new customer. Investing and keeping the customers you already have is the most cost effective strategy you can have in increasing profitability.
- 3= B Twenty six is the correct answer, and six of these complaints are serious and legitimate in nature. Take them all seriously!
- 4= B Price is important but is not the primary determining factor. A pleasing shopping experience and good customer service is more important to a customer than pricing.
- 5 = B 96% of all unhappy customers will never be heard from. So for every one complaint you hear, there are another 24 complaints that you haven't heard about.
- 6 = C You will be able to retain 95% of your customers who submit a complaint, if you resolve their concerns promptly. In this circumstance, time is of the essence!
- 7 = A The average customer who has a problem with an organization will share a bad experience with at least ten other people. Make sure you aren't the topic of conversation at the party!
- 8 = C Indifference is the worst emotion you can convey to a customer. No service is better than acting like you don't care at all. If you want to provide self service, go run a gas station, not a liquor store!
- 9 = B Placing the word "NO" in any signage in your entryway is communicating negative connotations to the customer. "No solicitation, no shirt, no shoes, no service" should never be placed at the entrance.
- 10 = C Customers who complain are providing you a service and are giving you feedback. Take their concerns constructively and your business will continue to prosper.
- 11 = A Customers will drive for superior customer service and are even willing to pay up to nine percent more just to feel welcome and comfortable with the service they are being provided.
- 12 = If you wrote down five things congratulations, you are a customer service king! If you couldn't provide 5 ways in which you have improved your customer service in the past year, you better get out of the business.

Try to Say One, Some, or All of These Everyday

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ Yes! | ✓ I Like It! | ✓ I Appreciate Your Effort! |
| ✓ I Can! | ✓ Sounds Good! | ✓ I Know You Can Do It! |
| ✓ You Can! | ✓ I Agree! | ✓ Good For You! |
| ✓ That's Great! | ✓ Great Job! | ✓ I Never Would Have Thought of That! |
| ✓ Let's Try It! | ✓ I'm Glad You Thought of That! | ✓ I'm Happy for You! |



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Underwood
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Wells
Williams
Wilmont
Worthington

Winners will be announced in a future issue



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Cracking the Code of Restaurant Wine Pricing

Source: Wall Street Journal

By JULIET CHUNG

August 15, 2008; Page W1

Why does the same Cabernet cost \$1,500 at San Francisco's Jardinière and \$5,435 at Las Vegas's Prime Steakhouse? Juliet Chung on how to deconstruct a wine list -- and the best way to find good values.

At Legal Sea Foods in Washington, a bottle of 1999 Dom Pérignon Champagne costs \$155. At McCormick & Schmick's, less than half a mile away, the same bottle goes for \$250. At Carnevino in Las Vegas, it's \$450, and at Per Se in New York, it's \$595.

Never mind trying to understand oil prices; for complexity, inscrutability and sheer customer frustration, it's hard to match restaurant wine pricing.

Even within a single chain, the numbers can vary widely. While a diner at Ruth's Chris Steak House in Dallas can get a bottle of 2005 Duckhorn Merlot for \$96, that same bottle costs \$160 at Ruth's Chris in Pittsburgh.

The fragmented, opaque nature of the wine business muddies the waters. Restaurants often pay different amounts for the same wine, depending on when they buy it, how much they buy and who sells it. There's also more wine available than ever before, as winemaking around the globe matures and regions like Argentina, Chile and South Africa bring more wines to the table. And because wine prices, particularly at the high end, have risen dramatically in the past decade with new demand from Asian countries, the range in price tags has widened.

To crack the pricing code, The Wall Street Journal interviewed nearly three dozen sommeliers, beverage directors, alcohol distributors and academics.

These wine experts helped assemble a strategy for finding the best restaurant deals -- or at least not falling for the worst ones.

The findings: Sometimes, more-expensive wines are the better deals. Wines from regions like Argentina and Spain are likely to be marked up less than ones from Napa or Bordeaux. And if you're looking for value, don't order wine by the glass.

THE FORMULA

The first step to finding better deals on wine is understanding the formula behind most restaurant wine pricing. The standard restaurant markup is about three times the wholesale cost, or about twice the retail price. In most restaurants, the markup decreases as the wholesale price of the bottle increases: An inexpensive bottle might be priced three to four times its wholesale cost, while a pricey wine may be marked up only 1.5 times. This so-called progressive markup helps sell more expensive wines.

In most cases, the fancier the restaurant, the higher the markup. A top-tier chef, a team of sommeliers, a large wine cellar and expensive stemware are all built into the wine price. Because pricier restaurants typically have fewer tables and less turnover, they need to make profits on fewer bottles sold.

Still, restaurants' pricing strategies vary widely. At Las Vegas's Caesars Palace, home to Restaurant Guy Savoy and Mesa Grill, wines that cost less than \$100 wholesale are marked up more than those that cost over \$100 to "get them to a certain level" in line with the rest of the restaurant's pricing, says Stuart Roy, who buys and prices wine for the casino's restaurants. On bottles more than \$100, the house uses a standard 2.8-times markup.

Bern's Steak House in Tampa triples

the wholesale price for all its wines, adjusting upward every few years for appreciation, but says its wines are still moderately priced because the restaurant secured most of them at relatively low wholesale prices. The 51-year-old steakhouse bought 90% of its wines upon release, says senior sommelier Eric Renaud, rather than at more expensive auctions or estate sales, as a younger restaurant might have done.

David Lombardo, wine and beverage director for New York's Landmarc restaurants, says he aims to keep wine prices lower than those of many New York restaurants by limiting pricey flourishes. "We don't have \$20 forks," Mr. Lombardo says. "Our glassware is not Spiegelau or Riedel."

Conversely, the luxurious ambience of Carnevino -- along with factors like relatively high wholesale costs in Las Vegas -- is a big part of the reason a bottle of 1999 Dom Pérignon costs so much more there than at Legal Sea Foods and McCormick & Schmick's, says Carnevino beverage director Henry Davar. Per Se says that its price reflects its top level of wine service, and includes a built-in gratuity.

Legal Sea Foods is able to keep prices lower on some wines with broad name recognition, such as the Dom Pérignon, because the restaurant chain serves so many bottles. With seven million to eight million customers a year, says Sandy Block, Legal Sea Foods' beverage vice president, he can partially make up on volume what he loses on an individual bottle sale. (McCormick & Schmick's declined to comment on its Dom Pérignon price).

Location makes a big difference, as well. Conrad Reddick, the head sommelier for Charlie Trotter's eateries in Chicago and Las Vegas, says he tends to pay less for wine in Chicago because there are fewer high-end restaurants there. In Las

Vegas, on the other hand, “There’s plenty of other people out there: Daniel Boulud, Laurent Tourondel, and Wolfgang and Mario and Emeril and all those guys,” he says.

The varying wine laws and tax codes from state to state can affect restaurant prices. That’s largely the reason the 2005 Duckhorn Merlot costs \$64 more at the Ruth’s Chris in Pittsburgh than it does at the one in Dallas, says Scott Offenbach, an owner of the Pittsburgh Ruth’s Chris. In Pennsylvania, the state acts as the wholesaler for wine, and it tends to charge restaurants close to retail prices. So even though the Pittsburgh price is less than three times wholesale, it’s far higher than the Dallas price.

FINDING VALUE

How is the value-conscious diner to cope? First, visit the wine store. Wayne Chaplin, president and chief operating officer of Southern Wine & Spirits, the nation’s largest distributor of alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, suggests that diners gain familiarity with the retail prices of a few brands they like drinking so they can compare those dollar figures to the ones on a restaurant’s wine list. Joshua Wesson, co-founder of Best Cellars at A&P, says Champagne can be a good benchmark, since it is carried in most restaurants.

This type of research has gotten more difficult in recent years, however. As wine Web sites began posting retail prices, some restaurants yanked their wine lists from the Web or turned to stocking more obscure labels. Many restaurants will email or fax their wine lists upon request. But others, such as Restaurant Guy Savoy at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, won’t, they say, in part for competitive reasons. In Las Vegas, the Bellagio sends an undercover team of sommeliers to its competitors once a year to make sure its “wine pricing is fair,” says Robert Bigelow, the Bellagio’s former wine director.

It is possible to do some surreptitious research even at the restaurant table. Derek Benham, the owner of several

California wineries, including Mark West and Avalon, suggests using an iPhone or BlackBerry to pull up a Web site like wine-searcher.com when studying a wine list. Industry insiders routinely use that site to find retail prices. “It’s a two-second transaction that doesn’t spoil your dinner or your date,” he says.

For the less-technologically inclined, there’s a simpler rule of thumb: Go for lesser-known regions and varietals. Sommeliers suggest thinking of Grüner Veltliner as an inexpensive alternative to Chardonnay. They also say Pinot Noir from Australia, Malbec from Argentina and Sauvignon Blanc from South Africa, which have gained ground in the wine market in recent years, are still good values. Fred Franzia, chief executive of the Bronco Wine Co., which makes the low-cost wine Charles Shaw (aka Two-Buck Chuck), says that when he looks over a list to find the best wine at the lowest price, “It’s never the Cab or the Chardonnay.”

One thing to look out for: wine by the glass. It accounts for roughly three out of every four wine purchases in restaurants, bars and clubs, according to California wine advocacy group the Wine Institute. But it also carries some of the biggest markups.

Typically, the first glass of wine sold pays for the cost of the bottle to the restaurant. “Ninety-nine out of 100 times, the wine-by-the-glass program is going to be priced the most aggressively,” says Joshua Nadel, incoming wine director at the Plaza Hotel’s Oak Room. Mr. Nadel notes that restaurants assume more risk when selling wines by the glass. If the wine in an opened bottle doesn’t sell in a few days, for example, best practice is to pour out the spoiled wine -- but whether that happens or not is a matter of conjecture. For diners looking to maximize the value per ounce, ordering a pricier bottle may be a better choice than ordering wine by the glass.

Oddly enough, an expensive liquor list can signal bargains on wine. Some of the highest markups in restaurants are found on beer and liquor -- 500% or more -- and revenue from those markups can help subsidize a wine program. With wine, diners are more aware of the markup “because they get the wine and nothing else,” says Marnie Old, director of wine studies for the French Culinary Institute. “But when you get vodka and club soda, people kind of lose track of that. Most people don’t know how big a pour of vodka they’re getting.”

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to share
in some decisions
will make it easier
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the decisions
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to let them share***



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New Alcohol and Gambling Tip-Line Launched

ST. PAUL — The Department of Public Safety Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division activated a new complaint tip-line for reporting alcohol and gambling violations. Minnesota citizens can call 866-345-1204 to report suspected violations in their community.

Alcohol and gambling violations might include underage sale of alcohol, after-hour sale of alcohol, selling alcohol without a license, illegal manufacture of alcohol, buying alcohol from illegal sources, selling alcohol to

another retailer for resale, sports betting and illegal gambling.

“This tip-line will provide our agency with the information it needs to follow up on questionable activities,” said John Willems, director of the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division. “The more information you submit, the more we can do to stop the problem.”

Citizens submitting a report should include the business address, suspect names, suspect descriptions, and types of activity.

Willems reminds users that this tip-line should not be used to report drunk driving or matters related to problem drinking or gambling.

Calls to the tip-line can remain anonymous. If callers want to be called back, they can leave their name, telephone number or e-mail address. Someone from the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division will return a call within two business days.

How to Conduct Basic Market Research

- **Observe and listen to customers as they shop in your store.**
- **Get to know your customers, and find out why they come to you.**
- **Pay attention. Listen closely. Customers will tell you what they need from you.**

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Being “ON” For Your Customers

By MMBA Conference Presenter
Tom Shay

After speaking at a recent tradeshow, this writer flew Southwest Airlines from Las Vegas to Tampa with a stopover in Nashville. The flight from Las Vegas to Nashville was the type of flight I enjoyed and had come to expect from Southwest: flight attendants and crew members engaging in conversations with passengers, telling jokes, tossing bags of peanuts, singing, and generally engaging the passengers.

They were quite proud of their additional efforts. At the end of the flight, this announcement was made, “Thanks for flying our airline. If you had a good time, this was Southwest flight 157. If you did not have a good time, this was Delta flight 1.”

In Nashville, all but five passengers got off. Oddly enough, the five of us all sat in the same area. We had a discussion among us about our flights as the Nashville-to-Tampa flight was quite different from the first one. On the second flight, the pilot—the same as on the first—was “matter of fact” with his comments in the one time he spoke to the passengers on the second flight. The flight attendants, while also the same crew as the first flight, gave the usual type of service experienced on airplanes. They served the customary drinks and snacks, but something was missing.

Passengers were not given the individual attention that we had in the first flight. The flight attendants did not give passengers a sincere look in the eye or smile at them. The fun was gone, and now the Southwest flight attendants were performing their jobs in the same manner as flight attendants on other airlines.

The response by the Southwest flight attendant, while lengthy and filled with a combination of explanations, could be summarized by the last sentence she gave. “Hey, we can’t always be on.”

Of course, anyone can have an off day: a headache, a cold, a problem at home with the kids, or dealing with personal finances. Almost everyone has an occasion where he or she has gone to work with a less-than-ideal personal situation.

However, when it comes to interacting with customers, co-workers, management, or even the delivery person from UPS, being “on” is not an option. If you are truly a professional at what you do (sales, installation, service, office support, warehouse or delivery personnel), your job requires you to be “on” when you perform your duties.

This writer remembers from his days of store ownership when a radio announcer was emceeding a contest at our business. The announcer, after performing part of his duties, began to complain about the microphone, the speakers, the acoustics of the building, and the lack of time to warm up his voice. His remark was, “I am a professional. I have to have things just so when I work.”

Tiring of a complainer, my response was, “Gee. I thought being a professional meant you could do your job in any circumstances.” I remember that was the last of our discussion for the day.

On the other hand, how many times have you worked with someone who always has a smile on his or her face? You know—the person who always has a kind word for co-workers and at least two kind words for each customer. These are the staff members whom customers ask for by name.

The pleasant disposition is not something that can be taught. More simply, it is something that can be pointed out to a new staff person observing a co-worker who is enjoying his or her work or interaction with the customer.

Imagine the scenario as you and the new staff person observe and discuss the techniques and skills shown. After several of these efforts, you should

expect the new staff person would be able to handle his or her duties.

Of course, there are some people who just are not suited to work in situations where they interact with customers.

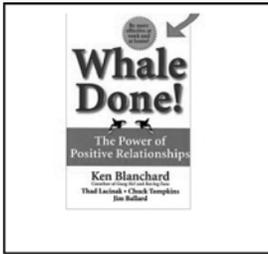
This writer remembers speaking to a group in South Carolina last year about this issue. Visiting with one of the attendees some six months later, she said that as I spoke she knew exactly the person in her business about whom I was talking.

While her business rarely had a customer complaint, she said she was surprised if the complaint was about anyone other than this one staff member. She went on to say that she had a restless night thinking about the situation; and that when she went to work the next day, the first thing she did was to terminate that employee. Hearing that story, I gasped and asked what happened next. Her response was, “That was the best thing I ever did for my business. And I felt a lot better afterward.”

Not recommending this as a cure-all for any business, there are two other points that need to be made. The first is that the person who is not “on” is indirectly working to cause all of his or her co-workers to not be “on.” It is like algae in a pool. It spreads, and it spreads rapidly. Like the algae, it does not just go away on its own; it has to be dealt with.

The second point is that a management person who is “on” can do more to get the rest of the staff in the “on” position than the lowest ranking staff person can do to get his or her “on” position to filter up through the business.

Undoubtedly, you know the advantages of you and your staff being “on.” The disadvantages of not being “on”? Most likely your customers will tell others about their experience—much like this writer told others of his experience with a Southwest Airlines staff that decided not to be “on.”



Books for Our Business

Have you ever gotten stuck in that rut of always finding the faults of your employees and forgetting the pat on the backs. As one of my managers says, “1 ‘aw crap’ can wipe out 10 ‘atta boy’s””. If you know what I am talking about, check out this next book in our “Book for Our Business” series.

What do your people at work and your spouse and kids at home have in common with a five-ton killer whale? Probably a whole lot more than you think, according to top business consultant and mega-bestselling author Ken Blanchard and his coauthors from SeaWorld. In this moving and inspirational new book, Blanchard explains that both whales and people perform better when positives are accentuated. He shows how using the techniques of animal trainers -- specifically those responsible for the killer whales of SeaWorld -- can supercharge your effectiveness at work and at home.

When gruff business manager and family man Wes Kingsley visited SeaWorld, he marveled at the ability of the trainers to get these huge killer whales, among the most feared predators in the ocean, to perform amazing acrobatic leaps and dives. Later, talking to the chief trainer, he

learned their techniques of building trust, accentuating the positive, and redirecting negative behavior -- all of which make these extraordinary performances possible.

Kingsley took a hard look at his own often accusatory management style and recognized how some of his shortcomings as a manager, spouse, and father actually diminish trust and damage relationships. He began to see the difference between “GOTcha” (catching people doing things wrong) and “Whale Done!” (catching people doing things right).

In Whale Done!, Ken Blanchard shows how to make “accentuating the positive and redirecting the negative” the best tools to increase productivity, instead of creating situations that demoralize people. These techniques are remarkably easy to master and can be applied equally well at home, allowing readers to become better parents and more committed spouses in their happier and more successful personal lives.

Read and enjoy it, and please let me know what you think of the book selections.

tagnes@ci.brooklyn-center.mn.us
Tom Agnes
BC Liquors

Motivate Your Team

One of the most important tasks as a leader is to motivate your employees. Motivation occurs when people feel good about their jobs.

Motivation encourages people to strive to achieve more and do better. If accomplishments go unnoticed, the drive to achieve wanes.

People want to hear a word of encouragement. People want someone to notice when they perform well. People want to know their efforts matter.

That goes for everyone. It is human nature to want to be noticed and recognized.

The best form of motivation is recognition, and you can only give recognition when you know what is going on.

Positive words of encouragement should be a large part of your vocabulary

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