

EINSTEIN ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

$E^2=MC^2$

**Formula for Business Success:
Exceed Expectations = Managing
Customers with Care**



by Craig Harrison

You don't have to be Einstein to realize that, relatively speaking, you must manage your customer expectations for optimal success.

Your customers are expecting. Is there a pregnant pause between their requests and your responses?

When we dial 9-1-1 we have certain expectations: that a skilled operator will answer our call quickly, speak our language, understand our emergency and dispense help expeditiously.

Similarly when we frequent a drive-through fast food restaurant we also have expectations: that we will receive our meal quickly, that it will be affordable, and we needn't leave our car to gather our food.

In both cases, when expectations are met we're satisfied. When expectations are exceeded ours is a happy meal. And when expectations aren't met, the sour taste of dissatisfaction leaves us wanting. While it's not always a life-or-death proposition, expectations matter.

A Dose of Vitamin E: Feeding Your Customers' Expectations

What about your customers? What expectations do they have about doing business with you? That you will be efficient? Get them the best price? Stand by your products and services? Anticipate their needs? The key to high satisfaction ratings comes not in meeting, but in exceeding your customers' expectations. How well you manage expectations

spells the difference between leading the field and fielding leftovers.

Sales

You have ample opportunities to exceed expectations in sales:

- When customers want something you can deliver it ahead of schedule.
- You can deliver products and services at less cost than they expect.
- Intelligent cross-sells and up-sells anticipate current and future needs and serve customers accordingly.
- And you can always deliver lagniappe — "a little something extra" always delights.

Service

In service situations you can exceed expectations by:

- Anticipating needs and proactively delivering service without being asked.
- Enveloping your customers in service, whether in person, by phone, mail or email.
- Referring business to your clients; providing them references and endorsements to grow their businesses as they're helping you grow yours.
- Striving to be their best partner, preferred vendor or favorite salesperson for the attentiveness, listening and anticipatory nature of your support.

Professionalism

As professionals you can exceed expectations by:

- Being accessible through multiple communication channels.
- Returning calls and e-mails expeditiously (before expected).
- Exhibiting a touch of class in your communications, sales and service calls: For example, writing clients handwritten thank you notes.
- Recognizing your customers' birthdays and milestones in meaningful ways.

Exceeding Expectations – Your E-Ticket to Success

Jet Blue isn't the only company to create a Bill of Rights for its customers. Create your own code of conduct to exceed client expectations when it comes to speed, quality, communication, fairness, recourse and responsiveness. Whether you delight, wow or woo your customers you'll be amazed at the business you will attract through combating the Vitamin-E deficiency of low expectations in the marketplace. ■

San Francisco Bay Area-based Professional speaker Craig Harrison founded Expressions of Excellence™ to provide sales and service solutions through speaking. For information on keynotes, training, coaching, curriculum for licensing and more, call (888) 450-0664 or visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com or E-mail excellence@craigspeaks.com for inquiries.

