

What are Your Customer Service STANDARDS?

By Keith Lee – Customer Services Expert

I'm a huge fan of Disney. This month I want to share with you Disney's Guest Service Guidelines from the book ***Be Our Guest***. The Disney Guidelines are in green. My comments are in black.

As you read the guidelines and my comments, remember that Disney calls:
Customers --> Guests
Employees --> Cast Members
In the park --> On Stage

Service Guidelines at Walt Disney World summarize the behaviors that ensure that cast members know how to act courteously and respect the individuality of each guest. The training addresses topics such as how to make a good first impression and offer a warm welcome. It explores the effects of posture, gestures, and facial expressions on the guest experience. And it explains how tone of voice and the use of humor can contribute, or detract, from service delivery.

The Guidelines are summarized in seven sentences and serve a variety of purposes. First, they define behavior in terms of guests. They create a common baseline for interaction with guests and demonstrate the elements of performance that perpetuate courtesy, Disney-style.

Second, the guidelines communicate employee responsibilities. They make the company's expectations for service delivery clear to new cast members and they provide a basis for accountability. Fulfilling the performance guidelines is a condition of employment at Walt Disney World.

Walt Disney World Guidelines for Guest Service

Make Eye Contact and Smile!

- Start and end every Guest contact and communication with direct eye contact and a sincere smile.

There is nothing more important to exceptional customer service than a sincere smile and I will remind your team about this often. Direct eye contact and a sincere smile ensure that no one ever gives indifferent customer service.

I've been a customer service fanatic 35 years, but I still got something new out of this. It may not seem big, but symbolically it is big. I am going to add it to my training, and you should reinforce it also. This guideline says, "Start and END every Guest contact and communication with direct eye contact and a sincere smile. I've discussed

starting every customer contact with direct eye contact and a smile, but I have not reminded my students to END every contact with direct eye contact and a sincere smile. That's huge. It reinforces giving exceptional customer service to the very end.

Greet and Welcome Each and Every Guest

- Extend the appropriate greeting to every Guest with whom you come into contact, like:
“Good morning/afternoon/evening!”
“Welcome!”/Have a good day.”
“May I help you?”
- Make Guests feel welcome by providing a special differentiated greeting in each area.

There certainly is nothing unique about the first bullet point here, except that it is not taken for granted at Disney, it is trained for. The biggest mistake business owner make is they don't have specific customer service training, and this ensures “ordinary” customer service and in today's environment ordinary customer service is poor customer service.

All Disney Cast Members are performing. They all have a “role in the show”. As such, when greeting someone they are trained to greet them in character. Can you use this idea in your business? Hint... yes you can. Make sure they understand that they are also performing a “role in the show,” – the role of always providing exceptional customer service.

Seek Out Guest Contact

- It is the responsibility of every Cast Member to seek out Guests who need help or assistance.
Listen to Guests' needs
Answer questions
Offer assistance (For example: Taking family photographs)

This is huge. Don't just help guests but **seek out Guests** who need help or assistance. I'm a big believer that it's the little things that make a difference in providing Make-You-Happy Customer Service, and it's the little things in your training that make a difference. Don't just train your team to help customers but seek out to help customers

Provide Immediate Service Recovery

- It is the responsibility of all Cast Members to attempt, to the best of their abilities, to immediately resolve a Guest service failure before it becomes a Guest service problem
- Always find the answer for the Guest and/or find another Cast Member who can help the Guest.

Disney understands what I call the acid test of customer service, “In the huge majority of cases, the first team member presented with a customer problem should be able to solve it.”

We teach the L.E.A.R. method

L - Listen and don't interrupt

E - Empathize with something like, “I'm really glad you told me so I can help you.

A - Ask. What can I do to make you happy? Most often you don't need to actually ask the question. It's more the attitude.

R - Resolve. Unless it's NUTS do it.

For a complete discussion of L.E.A.R. see secret #43 in The Happy Customer Handbook. You can get the book for free at www.TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com.

Display Appropriate Body Language at All Times

• It is the responsibility of every Cast Members to display approachable body language when on stage.

Attentive appearance

Good posture

Appropriate facial expression

Communication experts tell us that somewhere around 50% of person-to-person communication is based on body language. Another 40% is based on the tone and intonation, and only 10% of communication is based on what is actually said – the words! Make sure that every single person on your team understands that:

In saying the right words, you've done only 10% of the job.

This idea goes a long way to ensure that your team never treats a customer with indifference.

What is indifferent customer service?

Here is what INDIFFERENCE looks like:

- A teenaged worker that doesn't acknowledge the customer exists, even during the payment or check out process (they're too busy talking to their co-workers)
- The middle-aged worker that feels their work is below them, so they take it out on the customer
- The man who groans answers to customers' questions
- The woman who says, “Uh huh.” in response to a customer that thanks them first
- The employee that doesn't connect with the customer
- The employee that doesn't make eye contact with the customer
- The employee that doesn't even smile
- The employee that gives off the attitude that customers are an interruption to their day

See secret #38 and 42 in The Happy Customer Handbook for more on this subject. Again, you can get the book for free at www.TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com.

Preserve the “Magical” Guest Experience

- Always focus on the positive, rather than the rules and regulations.
- Talking about personal or job-related problems in front of our Guest is unacceptable.

I love this. But then again, I love all of this. In Make-You-Happy Management we don't have rules and regulations. We have Make-You-Happy Job Requirements and every Job Requirement can be changed on the spot if it doesn't take care of the customer.

The bottom of every Job Requirement has this statement:

“This Make-You-Happy Job Requirement is designed to ensure we meet or exceed our internal and external customer expectations. Perform exactly like the requirement unless you find it does not meet or exceed those expectations. If you find it no longer meets or exceeds expectations, take care of the customer. Then, you are responsible for helping to change it to what we and our customers need.”

I don't like using the words, “rules” or “regulations.” Rules and regulations can't be changed. We have Make-You-Happy Job Requirements and they can be changed.

Another even worse word is “Policy”. No one likes hearing, “It's our policy.”

In our businesses we only have two policies, that can't be changed:

1. Do what you can to take care of clients.
2. Do nothing illegal or unethical (If you don't know if it's unethical or not, it probably is.)

Thank Each and Every Guest

- Extend every Guest a sincere thank-you at the conclusion of every transaction.
- Extend every Guest a thank-you or similar expression or appreciation as he/she leaves your area.

Most businesses don't think they need to remind team members to extend a sincere thank-you at the conclusion of every transaction, and that is why you and I often do business somewhere and don't get a thank-you. That's why I will continue to remind your team members to extend every customer a sincere thank-you at the conclusion of every transaction.

But Disney doesn't stop there, they add, extend every Guest a thank-you or similar expression or appreciation as he/she leaves your area.

Should you have Guidelines for Customer Service in your business? We do all kinds of things in our businesses to ensure that we deliver Make-You-Happy Customer

Service and now we're going to add 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 cards with our Client Service Guidelines and I'm going to model it after Disney's. Look at page two in the Team Member Newsletter this month to see what I mean.



Thousands of businesses around the world use Keith's customer service secrets as the foundation of their exceptional customer service. Keith is the author of two acclaimed customer service books, ***Out-Nordstrom Nordstrom, Creating the World's Best Customer Service*** and his newest book, ***The Happy Customer Handbook, 59 Secrets to Creating Happy Customers Who Come Back Time and Time Again and Enthusiastically Tell Others About You.*** To get a FREE copy of The Happy Customer Handbook go to <http://TheHappyCustomerHandbook.com>.