

The YEBDC Small Business Information Column

by Sue Gingerich, Business Advisor

"Customer Service - Good Examples"

One of the businesses that I visited was a home appliance store. The clerk was right there to say hello, and to answer our questions. She was not pushy, but informative. We did not buy that day, as I was price comparison shopping. Several days later, I compared prices of the same product at Sears and the Bay. I am extremely happy to say that our regional business's prices were indeed lower and because of their good customer service, when I am ready to buy our deep freeze, I will be back to that business to make our purchase.

I also visited a greenhouse that day, and I was looking for quite a variety of plants to fill some hanging planters. The one type of plant I wanted was out of stock, but the extremely knowledgeable staff, helped me to find a very comparable one, to achieve the same effect that I wanted for my baskets. She actually stopped watering her plants to come three rows over and show me the correct ones. Another clerk at the same business also helped me to find the right wires to hang my baskets, and she did it with such joy and pleasure, I truly felt like a special customer.

I was also shopping for a pressure washer that day. I visited our favourite hardware store, who as usual, was happy to see us, greeted us smiling and showed us what they had in pressure washers. Unfortunately, they didn't have what I was looking for and I went elsewhere to buy. But I will still be back to visit them, for other items, as I am always greeted very personally, and with a big smile, every time I enter that store.

If you would like to improve your customer service, to be on par with these businesses, try some of the following tips. (Courtesy of Karen Leland and Keith Bailey, from their book; "Customer Service for Dummies".)

Negative phrases that should be avoided:

"I don't know." "No." "That's not my job." "You're right -- this stinks."
"That's not my fault." "You need to talk to my manager." "You want it by when?" "Calm down."
"I'm busy right now." "Call me back."

Try using positive phrases such as the following:

"I'll find out." "What I can do is..." "This is who can help you..."
"I understand your frustration." "Let's see what we can do about this."
"I can help you." "I'll try my best." "I'm sorry." "I'll be with you in just a moment." "I will call you back."

For my loyal readers, if you come across a business that is providing good customer service, clip this article and give it to them. And tell them to keep up the good work!

If you have a small business and have a question or problem that you think The YEBDC could help you with please call or write to: 1-800-556-0328 or 1-780-785-2900, e-mail: yebdc@yebdc.ab.ca, or mail to "The Yellowhead East Business Development Corporation", Box 249, Sangudo, Alberta, T0E 2A0

"Takin' Care of Business... Takin' Care of You!"