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## The Greatest Thing About Your Business Is Your Customer!

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

Let's face it...customers are the reason you have a business. Your customers should bring you and your team your greatest joys, your greatest opportunities and your greatest learning experiences. Every business has some philosophy about their customers and has at one time or another given "lip" service to the importance of customer service. However, for most businesses, the theory of customer service and the dedication to "customer as king" rarely gets translated into delivering outstanding service each and every time. In this article you will get some new ideas for loving your customer and reaping the rewards of real customer focused service.

**Address Problem Customers With Your Team:** Do your employees complain about their customers? Negative feelings about customers can quickly infect even the most positive employees. Be proactive about customer service and set up a specific meeting each week to discuss problem accounts. Hiding negative feelings behind words such as "the customer is always right," won't solve problems and won't create a customer focused environment. By letting your team know you understand and support the challenges they face, they will be more likely to offer solutions rather than complaints.

*Tip From The Business Lab:* Create customer focused meetings each week and ask each team member to bring their challenges with them. Role play with your team to work through these issues and help them find the language and resources they need to satisfy the customer and quickly solve any problem. You may even consider creating an internal customer focused newsletter and communicate the problems faced and the solutions developed. Consistently and openly communicating to your team that you are serious about customer service will set the proper tone and give everyone a focused direction.

**Empower Your Team To Really Satisfy The Customer:** Encourage your team to curb dissatisfied customers by teaching them to always ask, "what can we do to make it right?" Then, give them enough power to make the decision on the spot. Occasionally they will receive an unfair solution from a customer, but please keep in mind, these will be the exception, not the rule. Outline for your team the boundaries they can work within—e.g., give them a monetary figure to work with such as \$1,000 per unhappy customer. Give your team the power and authority to create satisfied customers

for life...As customer satisfaction is the key to business profitability.

*Tip From The Business Lab:* Create new job titles that reflect your customer service focus. Instead of calling your sales team: account executives, sales consultants or sales representatives, change their title to Customer Satisfaction Evangelist. Instead of customer service representatives, elevate them to V.P. Of After The Sale Experience.

**Positively Outrageous Service:** In his best selling book, *Positively Outrageous Service* (1-800-635-7524), T. Scott Gross shares some of the most fun and memorable service ideas ever presented. In all the fun however, there is an important lesson about the competitive aspect of service. To differentiate your service in the marketplace, find ways to make your service unexpected, out of proportion and/or include an invitation to play. It may be as basic as subscribing to caller-ID and recognizing your customers more personally over the phone. Or, it may be as involved as purchasing them an airline ticket to visit your facility and then giving them the undivided attention of your team of experts to help them grow their business.

*Tip From The Business Lab:* During your customer focused meetings, plan your positively outrageous service ideas for the next six months. Ask your team what outrageous service they would like to provide their customers and design some fun, and memorable, service ideas.

More Information? If you'd like to learn more about providing positively outrageous service, please join us on February 9, 1999 as The Business Lab and OPCO Printing present best selling author, T. Scott Gross. If you would like to attend this morning seminar, please send an E-mail to [ideas@thebusinesslab.com](mailto:ideas@thebusinesslab.com) or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-517-0998.

**Author's Note:** Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, Texas at 281-517-0998 or by e-Mail at [kathy@thebusinesslab.com](mailto:kathy@thebusinesslab.com)