

DTD Episode 75 Show Notes

Each Customer has a Unique Relationship

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I recently had a little snafu with my schedule and showed up for my son's Dr. appointment 30 minutes late. Bummer! The earlier time would have been much nicer, actually.

How did it happen? It was a combination of things.

First, I somehow added the appointment incorrectly in my calendar. I was actually about 10 minutes early for the time I had documented.

Second, the Doctor's automated appointment reminder system malfunctioned. My phone showed a missed call from the office but there was no message. That message would have brought the error to light in time to make an adjustment in our arrival time. All would have been well.

Okay, so I own my error but did the Office Manager own their error? No.

As a matter of fact, she was a bit ticked at me when we arrived.

Now, I get it. It's always frustrating when a client, customer or patient is late or misses an appointment altogether. It can throw off your day.

However.....do I think I deserved the greeting I received? No!

And not for the reason you think.....even if they hadn't also made an error, I believe we still should have arrived to a friendly greeting.

Here's why.

We've been going to that office for years! Lately we've been there every 4 to 6 weeks. They know us. And we know them.

We have NEVER missed an appointment and have never been late. In fact, we are almost always 10 or 15 minutes early. It's a small office so they know this.

We should have a little trust bucket filled to the brim with them. They know that we are respectful of their time and honor our commitments with them.

Think about your personal relationships. Over time, don't you get to know people? There's the friend you know you can count on in a pinch, there's the one you know shows up late no matter what but who has so many other redeeming qualities you love them anyway. How about the friend who will listen to your problems and offer sound advice?

Isn't each relationship unique? Don't you love a relationship where you are known? Where there is a positive history that offers you the chance to receive the benefit of the doubt when make a small mistake?

Food for thought for the day. Are there interactions in your business where you are forgetting to treat your customers individually?

Get to know your customers. If you have a client who is always on time who suddenly arrives a bit late show concern not disdain. They have a history of respecting your time. Something has probably gone awry.



Acknowledge that customer who comes in every day around the same time to pick up a sandwich or a newspaper. They should be filling up a loyalty bucket with you.

I used to bank with a company that never acknowledged me as a known customer. A colleague who was also a business owner used to laugh about it with me. Between she and her office manager they were in there at least 3 times a week and yet the tellers never knew their names or greeted them any differently than they would a complete stranger. It wasn't a very busy branch. No one was looking for preferential treatment. We just wondered what it would take to be treated as a repeat customer? How could we establish a warm teller/customer relationship? What could we do to feel known?

The answer for both of us in this instance was to switch banks. And we did!

If you've watched the Today Show over the past 10 years or more you have probably seen Linny. He gained notoriety simply by standing in the crowd outside the studio. They called him the Today Show Super fan. Over time he became known by Today Show staff members and viewers. All he did was show up on time everyday and smile. They began to talk to him during outdoor segments. He was really just a Today Show fan but generated a relationship through his loyalty. They treated him in a special way as a result. When he passed away in 2013 it was a big deal. There was a relationship, he was known.

Let the experiences you have with your customers generate a relationship based on that history. Have they been a good, loyal customer or a high maintenance one? Get to know a bit about them. At a minimum notice and acknowledge their patterns, tell them it's nice to see them again or thank you for coming in again.

Acknowledge and appreciate those who respect your business and remain loyal over time. Loyalty means longevity! You want your business to succeed.

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