

## What Makes An Excellent Company?

I would like to explain to you about some excellent companies and some that are not, and why. Keep in mind the important concept of the value of your customer.

I've found that the hospitality industry is severely lacking in customer service.

One of the most poorly managed, insensitive, uncaring industries that I've found is the hotel/motel industry. They claim that customer service is number one, yet they rate between poor and awful in terms of valuing the customer. Most hotel executives and employees think business is based on the quality of their buildings or the luxurious rooms or the bottom line of their financial statements. They seem to have forgotten that business is customers and customer service.

At a hotel in Vancouver, they give gold lapel pins to the guests who are involved in setting up and running meetings. All staff are instructed that anyone wearing a gold pin is to be treated as a very important client with special needs. Any problem or requirement is to be dealt with promptly and efficiently. The reason all hotels don't copy this style of looking after their customers is that they don't really understand the business that they are in.

I'd like to share with you a couple of good examples of excellent companies.

A prime example is Federal Express. My company uses Federal Express almost daily to deliver time-sensitive materials and to pick up documents. In my experience Federal Express never misses. After using a competitor and the lack of service received, we went back to Federal Express. They really do deliver absolutely, positively overnight.

The driver who regularly comes into our office often relays information about the company such as new products, services or expansions that they are experiencing, showing the priority this company places on it's customer relationships. Federal Express sends new information, literature, brochures etc. to customers frequently. Their employees are friendly, courteous, helpful; they sell Federal Express. This kind of service does not happen by accident.

Another company that impresses with its quality and customer service is Omaha Steaks. What an incredible company this is! Omaha Steaks sells food by mail order. While their products are expensive, the product quality warrants the price. However, the steps beyond product quality are what make this company a superior performer.

We call Omaha often during the year and send different assortments of their products to our valued clients as thank you gifts. Last year shortly before Christmas we received in the mail from Omaha a list of all the people we had sent gifts to during the year, and what we had sent them, when we sent it and what we had spent. If we wanted to send the same gifts again to the same person it was as easy as checking off a box and returning the form.

A company should ask themselves, "How can we market our products or services and at the same time provide a meaningful service to the customer?" and come up with a marketing strategy. True service for their customer that is a real key marketing idea.

