

STUFF



IS IT JUST ME OR ARE WE WITNESSING THE DEMISE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE? IS IT WILTING AND DYING BEFORE OUR EYES OR IS IT ALREADY DEAD AND BURIED? SERIOUSLY, I CAN'T SEEM TO GET ANY. I CAN'T GET DRIVE-THROUGH McDONALDS' TO GET MY ORDER RIGHT, I CAN'T GET SERVICE FOLKS TO LOOK ME IN THE EYE, I CAN'T GET A THANK YOU, I CAN'T GET A RESOLUTION TO A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT, I SELDOM EXPERIENCE GOOD MANNERS, I DON'T SEE 'SERVICE WITH A SMILE', (REMEMBER THAT OLD SAYING?) AND I DON'T PERCEIVE I'M BEING LISTENED TO. COURTESY, SENSE & GRIND WERE ONCE WORDS PRECEDED BY "COMMON." MAYBE IT'D BE MORE APPROPRIATE IF WE PRECEDED THEM WITH "RARE." NOW THAT I'VE VENTED, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN WORK OUT WHY THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE!



It's no coincidence that I chose an iPhone as the shape of the tombstone image above. These devices and their associated technologies have committed genocide on social skills that are the essence of quality customer service. Because quality customer service requires quality human interaction. Quality human interaction is easier if both sides are willing to treat the other side as a priority. If mobile devices are the syringes, the anti-social media (disrespect intended) are the pushers and the content is the drug. They addict users to self-indulgence and conflict. This addiction diminishes empathy and maximises the 'comparing mind'. Check out Simon Sinek's attitude to the effect that Facebook for example, has on the comparing mind. Ironically, it's on YouTube. Once upon a time, you had to venture out to compare your life to someone else's. Now, like the image of the guy in bed, you can wake up to your friends' status and if it's better than yours, your day isn't going to start well. Even the definition of 'friend' is loose now. How many of the 500 friends you have on Facebook will visit you in the old folk's home I wonder? And how about MSM?



The MSM will always champion what rates. Understanding your market is essential to us and them. I get it – that's what my newsletters are about. What we are experiencing now though is a catch-22. Customer service is about old school values, and our KPI's rely on courtesy, respect, dignity, pride, gentility, hospitality, transparency, integrity and consistency. You know – those 'soft skills' we preach about? How much of that is apparent in reality TV for example? These shows' ratings rise in synch as levels of conflict, tantrums and promiscuity do. Why do we suspend a footballer for throwing a punch when a UFC cage resembles the floor of an abattoir? Why do we worship self-indulgent ego maniacs? And we then employ the fans and expect them to understand the ingredients for quality service when they've grown up on, or been conditioned to, a diet of filth masquerading as entertainment. Now add to that, the current issues facing the world and the way they're reported on. It revolves around fear and isolation. Notwithstanding the veracity of pandemics, climate issues and the rest, the effect that the reporting style has had is the opposite of what we need as heralds of service standards; and it's completely opposed to the notions of loyalty that we need to maximise long-term customer AND staff retention. The last few years have educated consumers to not require the tactile experience of buying nor the personal touch we associate with sales professionals. Attention spans and tempers have never been shorter and expectations have never been greater. This includes the expectations of our brands. Bottom line? The times we live in are at odds with itself. My plan is to understand that. My hope is that my understanding will prevent my judgement. My advice is that you do the same.

