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Email Jane with your best and worst customer service experiences and feel free to email for advice.

Customer Service – A Fairytale



Once upon a time, a new restaurant was about to open in a beautiful tropical location where the locals swam with crocodiles and Ukelele Festivals were high on the agenda.

The owners were experienced and the location good. They were feeling particularly pleased with themselves and their new venture. One day, a magical fairy happened to be flying by and stopped when she saw them. "Hello, I am the Fairy of First Impressions," she says. "I see you are opening a new restaurant. Do you have great staff and do they know how to treat your customers like royalty?"

"I beg your pardon?" was the reply, to which the fairy responds, "well, you have to make every customer interaction sensational. Do you have a customer service code that everyone in your team is going to be committed to delivering? Is your customer service going to be branded or generic?"

"You only get one chance to make an impression. If you mess it up, you may not get your customers back again," she warns seriously. "You really can not afford to have that happen."

"Oh please," they scoff, "we are experienced. We have a good location and what is more, we know lots of people. Tout your customer service mumbo jumbo somewhere else."

Some time later, the restaurant opened with a whimper, rather than a bang. On a jaunt around town, the fairy decided to transform herself into a paying customer. She invited a friend from Fantasy Land to go along for the ride.

They sat at a table and waited, and waited. There was a chalk board with specials but no apparent menus. The owner was there,

leaning over the back of a chair, talking to a well known business owner but they could not seem to get his eye.

Finally, they set off a flare and a bored looking wait person sauntered over. "Hello, are there menus or do we choose from what is on the board?" she asked sweetly. The wait person rolled her eyes and went to get the menus, plonked them on the table and then disappeared.

They studied the menu and made their choices and then waited. Again, the First Impressions Fairy then attempted to catch the eye of the owner who was still leaning over the chair, still talking to the well known business owner. "Yoooo hooooo," she says, waving her plump hand. "Yes?" he asks, looking quite put out.

"May we order please?" He gestured to the back of the restaurant and the sulky wait person came back. Orders were given and the food eventually arrived. Standard was fair but nothing to write back to the Fairy Kingdom about.

The moral to this story? The restaurant went broke. Do not open a restaurant or any business until you know how to make your customers feel special. People do not just want food, they want the whole deal from excellent food and service to where possible, the ambience. Hire staff who actually like dealing with people and train them to drop everything and look after customers. Without them, you will not have a business.

Let them know what they can and can not do when customers complain and help them to turn a negative experience into a positive one for every customer.

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