

The Journal of the National Customer Service Association

Customer First

What They Want

Using teamwork and service
to win customers

Safelite's Three-Step Strategy toward Service

How they make it happen
again and again

A Simple Napkin

A story sure to warm the heart

Staying Attuned to Customer Needs

Satisfied customers
expand the business

Tom Feeney of
Safelite AutoGlass



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In this issue...

The first word...



Welcome to the Issue 1, 2013 Edition of *Customer First*, the **Official Journal of the National Customer Service Association**. We are once again very pleased to provide you with excellent customer service articles and information that has been developed exclusively for the National Customer Service Association.

I am particularly excited to share with you the stories of several businesses that have made a commitment to putting their customers first—always. Isn't that way it is supposed to be? When we take care of our customers, they take care of us. There isn't a better win-win in business.

In this issue we share a very heartwarming, "extra, extra mile" story of humanity at its finest. It is an excellent reminder that each and every one of us can make a difference in this world when we put the service of others first. Imagine how different life would be if we all adopted a "you first, then me" attitude. As Roger Staubach said, "There are no traffic jams along the extra mile."

I leave you with this challenge—find one new way to be of service today. It doesn't have to be something large—just something thoughtful. And remember, to the world, you may be just one person, but to one person, you may just be the world. Never underestimate what you may feel is a minor contribution to someone's day. Added up, they make for a wonderful day not only for the recipient but for all with whom he/she comes in contact! Excellent service is contagious!

Good luck and continue your commitment to Service Excellence. We are here for you.

Best wishes,

C. William Crutcher, President
National Customer Service Association

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Safelite's Three-Step Strategy toward Service

BY TOM FEENEY, PRESIDENT & CEO
SAFELITE AUTOGLASS®

Consider the last time you needed automotive repair or vehicle glass replacement... for the average driver, it's not a service needed frequently, but when it is, chances are that you dread it.

Will I be overcharged? Will the body shop sell me on something I don't need?

The fact is that the automotive repair industry has a pretty bad reputation. And consumers really know very little about their needs to make an informed decision.

Rather than viewing this as a challenge, senior leaders at Safelite AutoGlass®, the nation's largest provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement services, saw it as an opportunity to differentiate the brand based on a commitment to customer delight.

Here's how we made it happen....

Step #1: Change the Conversation

Safelite AutoGlass had long used the Customer Service Index (CSI) measurement, and results were strong—often around 98 percent approval ratings.

In 2005, senior leaders began to research a better, more insightful solution than the telephone system that had been in use. That year, "The Ultimate Question" by Fred Reichheld was published, introducing the "Net Promoter Score" (NPS) method, co-developed by Bain and Satmetrix.

This kicked off a revolution at Safelite.

The NPS methodology is based on the fundamental perspective that every company's customers can be divided into three categories: Promoters, Passives, and Detractors, by asking one simple question: "How likely is it that you would recommend Safelite AutoGlass to a friend or colleague?" Tracking these groups gives a clear measure of your company's performance through the customers' eyes.

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Customers respond on a 0-to-10 point rating scale and are categorized as follows:

- **Promoters** (score 9-10)
are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fueling growth.
- **Passives** (score 7-8)
are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.
- **Detractors** (score 0-6)
are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

To calculate your company's NPS, take the percentage of customers who are Promoters and subtract the percentage who are Detractors.

The idea of converting to NPS was intriguing to Safelite leaders for several reasons. First, the underpinnings of the ultimate question lie in referrals. Safelite's services cannot be sold to someone who does not have a specific need for vehicle glass repair or replacement, and the likelihood of a customer needing the service often is infrequent. Therefore, the business thrives on referrals.

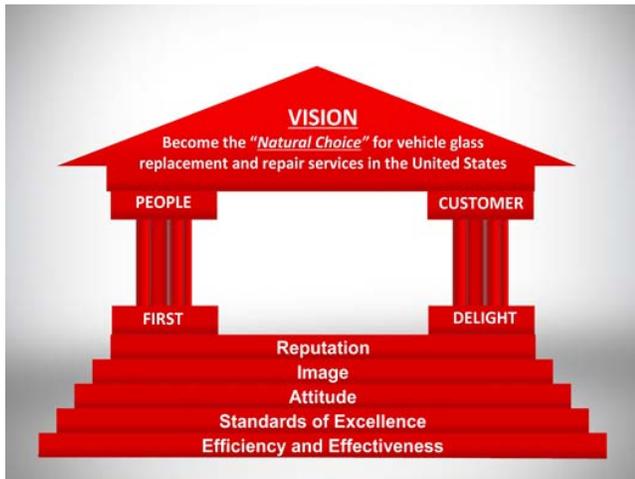
Second, switching to NPS allowed the company to start with a clean slate internally. The mentality had been that customer service was great... how could you really beat 98 percent CSI? Why bother changing?

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Safelite AutoGlass CEO & President Tom Feeny is proud of the Safelite image with their reputation for exceptional service.

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Safelite AutoGlass has a well-structured approach to achieving its vision of becoming the “Natural Choice” in their industry.

Finally, it allowed us to view customer service in a different light. Satisfaction was no longer acceptable. We had to delight customers in order to earn a “promoter.”

Safelite AutoGlass began testing NPS in 2006 and implemented it company-wide in 2007. Results were a shock to the company, which was used to the 98 percent CSI score. In 2007, NPS was in the mid-70s. While certainly not a terrible score, company leaders were concerned about the disparity. Embracing the Net Promoter Score would require a serious internal effort.

Step #2: Invest in Talent

That internal effort translated to the need for a cultural transformation... beginning from top management to each and every employee.

There are countless studies linking customer service with employee engagement. But, how do you achieve that engagement? For us, it was implementing an integrated people strategy, led by the human resources department.

To ensure Safelite’s employees are able to deliver on our goal of customer delight, we developed a list of six core competencies, which clearly defines the company we want to be and the behaviors that will get us there.

Safelite’s Core Competencies include:

- **Live Our Values:** Do what’s right.
- **Think People First:** Recognize that having great people is the ultimate competitive advantage.
- **Have Passion for Creating Customer Delight:** Deliver optimal experience internally and externally.
- **Understand the Business (And Your Role in It):** Learn and apply position expertise and industry knowledge.
- **Be Innovative:** Think differently for better business results.
- **Drive for Extraordinary Results:** Show personal desire, energy and focus to succeed against high standards.

From there, we invested in training for 1,000+ of Safelite’s leaders. Consider this: Organizations are shadows of their leaders. Employees take their behavioral cues from what they see from leaders. If leaders yell and scream, they’ll take that cue. If leaders don’t care, they won’t either. When standing in the afternoon sunlight, a leader’s shadow looms much taller – leaders must carefully manage the shadow they cast on their staff. Therefore, Safelite’s training focused on leadership styles.

Employees take their behavioral cues from what they see from leaders. . . if leaders don’t care, they won’t either

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Next, we rolled our philosophies out across the organization through our “People Pledge”:

- **You'll experience great leadership.** At Safelite, we strive for great leadership. You'll be treated with respect. You'll often be asked for your opinions and involved in decisions that affect your work. You'll understand the big picture and your role in it. You'll receive coaching and guidance to help you reach your full potential and you'll be recognized for your hard work in delivering extraordinary results.
- **We focus on you first.** Concentrating on our people is a key part of our business strategy. You'll have the tools, information, and resources to position you for success, along with support and opportunity for a rewarding and fulfilling career. At Safelite, we're powered by our people... you make the difference. When you succeed, we all succeed.
- **We hire top talent.** Having great people is what sets us apart from the rest. You'll work with smart people every day who will inspire you to be at your best. By bringing your ideas and applying your skills, you'll have endless opportunities to grow both personally and professionally.
- **You'll work in a caring culture.** We've got a strong set of values and a big heart... for our people, our customers, our environment, and the communities in which we live and work. We strive for a culture that will inspire you to achieve, not because you have to, but because you want to.



Investing in our people in this manner has helped us improve employee engagement, which is measured routinely throughout the year. As expected, NPS has increased in alignment with engagement.

Step #3: Realize Change is Constant

Safelite AutoGlass has achieved phenomenal results in customer service and employee engagement; yet the journey is not over. Even though we've reached NPS and engagement scores, we continue to strive to find ways to enhance the customer experience.

In 2011, Safelite AutoGlass showed its commitment to becoming more customer centric by creating a new position dedicated to this objective. Renee Cacchillo, vice president of service delivery, focuses on delivering Safelite's vision and business goals by driving performance in the areas of customer service and labor management, partnering closely with many

business units to establish Safelite as a world-class service organization.

Under her direction, we are making many new strides ahead. In late 2012, Safelite AutoGlass added the Customer Effort Score to the Service Recovery survey to better understand what it's like to be in the customer shoes. Are we easy to work with or not so easy? This new question sounds simple, but it helps us understand if future customer programs really add value and if they are appreciated by our customers.

We are also focused on learning more from the data customers provide to Safelite and are developing analytical models that tell us what makes a measurable difference in the customer's experience and what drives that result. Is quality priority #1? Speed of service? Friendliness? Reliability? The more we learn

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from the information the customer has already provided us, the better Safelite and the customer experience will be.

After reflecting on the last five years, it's clear that for our frontline staff to put customers first, we have to put our people first by combining our focus on employee engagement and leadership development with a new definition of (and support for) customer delight.

About the Author

In his 20-plus years with the company, Tom Feeney has been instrumental in establishing Safelite AutoGlass® as a national company and a well-known brand. Since joining Safelite® Group in 1988,

Feeney has held many positions within the organization and became president and CEO of Safelite® Group on July 1, 2008. He immediately introduced a new vision for Safelite supported by two core principles: People First and Customer Delight. His commitment to the company, its people and its customers had led to a 200 percent growth in profit since he became president. Tom blogs about customer service strategies at <http://blogsafelite.com>. ■



Excellence in Customer Service is the way of life at Safelite AutoGlass.

Customer Commitment

SAFELITE AUTOGLASS ENSURES IT PUTS THE CUSTOMER FIRST AND ALWAYS

The Five Bs of Customer Service

Among the training CSRs receive is an easy-to-remember system for remembering how to delight clients. We call it "The Five Bs":

1. Be Sure
2. Be Helpful
3. Be Sympathetic
4. Be Honest
5. Be Appreciative

The Five Ts of Customer Service

Among the training technicians receive is an easy-to-remember system for remembering how to delight clients. We call it "The Five Ts":

1. **Time:** Call customers in advance to notify them of arrival time.
2. **Touch:** Shake hands, make eye contact and engage the customer.
3. **Technical excellence:** Doing it right the first time, every time.
4. **Talk:** Tell the customer what we're going to do and do it.
5. **Thanks:** Show appreciation for choosing Safelite®.



Safelite's Customer Pledge

1. Your vehicle will receive a safe, high-quality installation by a certified technician.
2. We will fully protect your vehicle while performing the work.
3. Broken glass will be vacuumed from your vehicle.
4. We will clean your vehicle's exterior glass.
5. Our national warranty covers you no matter where you travel.

Recent Awards

Just a few of Safelite's recent awards for customer service include:

- 2010 American Business Award's Best Contact Center – Executive Services Department
- 2011 Stevie – Best Use of Technology for Customer Service
- 2011 ICMI Global Call Center of the Year Awards Runner-up
- 2011 1to1 Media Customer Service Champion
- 2011 & 2012 Best in Biz: Customer Friendly Company, Silver Medalist
- 2011 International Service Excellence Award
- 2012 Stevie Silver Award for Sales & Customer Service: Customer Service Leader of the Year
- 2012 American Business Award Bronze-Level Award: Customer Service Team of the Year
- 2012 Customer Experience Excellence Award

Service Builders

Managerial Skills for a Successful Service Team

Often, businesses make the mistake of thinking that if one of their employees is an excellent performer in a technical or functional role, that same person will be effective in a managerial role. In reality, the skills necessary to be a good supervisor, manager or leader differ greatly than those of an excellent functional or technical performer. These critical managerial skills include:

- **Planning:** For upper levels within an organization, this will take on a strategic—"Where are we going?"—focus. For other levels, it means planning at an operational level to ensure all tasks are completed effectively and efficiently.
- **Organizing:** This is "getting the right people on the bus" and in the right seats on the bus. It requires understanding and evaluating job needs and recruiting, hiring and training these individuals that will best satisfy those identified needs.
- **Initiating:** Having a good plan and having the right people are nothing if not called to action. Clarifying timelines when activities must be accomplished is critical for overall business success.
- **Monitoring/Controlling:** The manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring that outcomes meet the needs of customers and the organization. This entails setting performance standards and working to meet or exceed those standards.
- **Supporting:** Managers must support all employees in three capacities:
 - **Physically** – ensuring employees have the tools, space and resources to do the job.
 - **Intellectually** – providing training and education so employees know how to perform the job.
 - **Emotionally** – making deposits in employees "emotional bank accounts"—pats on the back and "attaboys" to cause employees to want to do the job
- **Feedback:** Communicating with employees—both positive outcomes as well as constructive opportunities for improvement—is critical to business success. It's the root of building relationships and creating bi-directional loyalty.

***Tomorrow
starts today!***



A Well-Oiled Approach to Customer Service

BY JERRY ADAMS AND NICK PAPPAS

“Value is the key” to a thriving and continually growing small business, according to Jerry Adams, Owner of Mid-State Transmission & Auto Repair. Valuing his customers, his employees, and the power of personal connections, Adams keeps Mid-State Transmission running in high gear.

The business opened in 1981 as a small operation providing transmission service in a gas station in downtown Bloomington, IL. For one year, Adams and his business partner were the only employees. In 1982, they hired two more employees, and in 1985, expanded again. Adams’ business partner left in 1991, and Adams has been the sole proprietor since then. Mid-State Transmission moved to its new location in 1999, now employs a team of 10, and offers a full range of auto repair and maintenance services.

A Culture of Communication

To Adams, good communication is essential to the culture of a successful small business. His employees communicate well between themselves and regularly help each other out. Weekly meetings are held on Friday to address the week’s events, discuss any problems that arose and how to handle them effectively. While Adams and the managers primarily deal with customer service, he trusts all his employees to handle customer problems when he’s not around.

Adams routinely connects with each employee to stay informed of how they feel they are being treated as employees, to learn about any problems they have, and their perception of the work environment in general. Opportunities for employee input range from Friday meetings, one-on-one time with Adams as

needed, to time allotted during performance reviews. Overall, Adams says, “We have a very open line of communication.”

Philosophy

Good customer service, according to Adams, depends on understanding exactly what the customer needs, and ensuring those needs are met. In his business, essential customer care includes fair estimates, quality parts, and constant communication with the client, both during the repair process and continued contact after the vehicle is returned. Any customer that spends over \$30 receives a survey for feedback on their experience. In addition, Adams stays connected to his customers through thank-you letters, monthly e-newsletters to subscribers, and yearly cards to check up on cars.

In implementing their philosophy of customer service, Mid-State Transmission goes the extra distance to determine and respond to what the customer needs.

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Owner Jerry Adams ensures that Mid-State’s focus is on Service.



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Land of the free because of the brave.

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If the customer needs their car for a particular reason, Mid-State Transmission takes it as their responsibility to have the car ready. And they leave no detail overlooked. Every item mentioned by the customer gets inspected and every small issue receives full attention.

To give employees incentives for good customer service, bonuses are awarded based on performance. And to Adams, performance is fundamentally linked to customer service. If an employee is getting positive performance reviews, they have been providing very good customer service overall.

Public Commitment to Excellent Customer Service

When you walk into Mid-State Transmission's office, a plaque prominently displayed on the wall presents the business's mission statement and the pledges to its customers:

It is our commitment at Mid-State Transmission to provide you, our valued customer, with personalized service that will exceed your expectations. This commitment is realized by offering quality automotive repair with the highest level of professionalism, integrity, and responsibility to each customer's needs.

We pledge to you the following:

- To provide you with a knowledgeable technician who you can trust to diagnose your problem and present you with all the options for repair.
- To use only quality parts and state of the art equipment.
- To use trained technicians to correct the problem or service your vehicle in a timely manner.
- To maintain communication with you during the repair process and continued contact after the vehicle is returned.
- Above all, to provide you with the best possible value in automotive repair.

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Mid-State strives for excellence in customer service—every time.

Challenges

One of the obstacles to excellent customer service for Mid-State Transmission is that often customers come in predisposed to tension, because they assume auto repair professionals are there to take advantage of them. Adams and his employees relieve the stress by assuring the customer that they are there *for* the customer, and their job is to help.

Another challenge arises when customers research the problem with their vehicle on the Internet, and then come in with the recommended solution as well the

cost of necessary parts. Frequently the real problem is quite different from what the customer found, and the repair parts are often inferior to the quality of parts used and ultimately guaranteed by Mid-State.

The Benefits of Excellent Customer Service

Staying attuned to their customers' needs and maintaining continued contact with customers has proved beneficial to Mid-State Transmission in many ways. Customer feedback helps guide improvements. Word of mouth by satisfied customers expands business. Thank-you letters received from customers are displayed in the shop with pride. And positive customer reviews are invaluable for marketing purposes in advertisements and on the company's website.

If growth is the mark of superior customer service, Adams and his crew get it right. From their modest beginnings as a two-man, single-service operation in a gas station to a full-service independent shop trusted by thousands, Mid-State Transmission has established itself as a master in the art of customer service. ■

Jerry Adams is Owner of Mid-State Transmission Normal, Illinois.

Nick Pappas is an NCSA Customer Service Team Member.



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Service Statistics

Creating Remarkable Performance

It is often said that “happy” employees provide optimal customer service. Most of us would say that is intuitive and doesn’t need to be proven through statistics. Questions arise, then, as to how to get and sustain each employee to the point of “happy”—given that that measurement is different for everyone. And whether “happy” is really enough to assure the provision of excellent customer service with every interaction.

A study was done by the *Harvard Business Review* which found that “thriving” is a better word for a successful employee because it suggests people are satisfied, productive and engaged in creating the company’s positive future as well as their own. Employees who fit the “thriving” description reflected the following per this study:

DEMONSTRATED BEHAVIORS	% OF IMPACT OVER “NON-THRIVING” SUBJECTS
Overall better performance	16%
Less burnout	125%
More committed to the organization	32%
More satisfied with their job	46%
Missed less work/fewer doctor visits	46%

The two components of “**thriving**” are:

- **Vitality:** a sense of being alive, passionate and excited.
- **Learning:** the growth that comes from gaining new knowledge and skills.

Either one, absent the other, will not result in thriving. Vitality alone will likely diminish without the opportunity to learn, and constant learning without direction and focus discourages passion and excitement. Leaders must facilitate empowerment and reward and recognize thriving behaviors while addressing any “non-thriving” behaviors are “coached” to higher levels or the people assisted in leaving the organization. These are not heroic nor expensive efforts—just great leadership that results in “thriving” employees serving extraordinarily satisfied customers.

Source: Harvard Business Review specific citation is as follows: 02/01/12, Vol. 90, No. 2, P. 92, Spreitzer, Gretchen and Porath, Christine.

Eggcellence in Customer Service

BY RYAN DUGGAN, EGGSPECTATION AND JOEY MURRAY NCSA WITH NIVI NAGIEL, NCSA

Nestled in the bustling but quiet suburb of Silver Spring, Maryland, Eggspectation is just a short twenty-minute drive from Downtown Washington, DC. We spoke with Ryan Duggan, General Manager of the Silver Spring restaurant, to learn how excellent customer service translates into an “eggstraordinary” dining experience.

Eggspectation is a franchise-owned restaurant that started in Canada, with locations in Montreal and Toronto. About ten years ago, Eggspectation expanded to the United States. Today, it has five restaurants in the Washington, DC area: two in Maryland, and three in Virginia.

Duggan has spent his entire professional life in the restaurant business having started at a young age waiting tables, he slowly worked his way up. The Manager who originally hired him at Eggspectation in Canada moved to the United States to oversee the startup in DC. Duggan followed and has now been with Eggspectation for nine years. For the last six of those, Duggan has served as General Manager of the Silver Spring restaurant.

The business culture at Eggspectation centers on teamwork, which, according to Duggan, is indispensable to success. Every year, each employee of the restaurant gets a “one-on-one” with Managers to voice opinions and suggestions and offer feedback. This type of teamwork-based culture built on trust and support is vital to the business, as it promotes the success of not only the restaurant, but of every individual in its employ as well.

Eggspectation’s business philosophy toward customer service is simple: welcome everybody, every day, with

Customer feedback is important for Eggspectation’s customer-centric approach.

a smile. A friendly welcome, coupled with a clean and inviting restaurant consistently striving for quality and teamwork, assures that the experience delivered to the customer is exceptional and likely to result in continued patronage.

In addition to the annual one-on-one, the leadership of each restaurant is in constant communication with its employees. The purpose is to bring everybody to the “same page,” ensuring that every server, every staff member, every chef, and every Manager is aware of what is going on in the restaurant; from daily specials, to new menu items, and interpersonal employee communications such as new policies and procedures.

Eggspectation rewards employees who excel in customer service with an Employee of the Month recognition program. Every month, one employee is honored as a “scrambler” and earns a prize. The prize includes either a gift card or a free lunch, as well as added opportunities, such as serving in a better section of the restaurant. As further incentive, each

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employee wears an egg pin, and with every instance of positive customer feedback, is awarded a silver star. After five silver stars, they receive a gold pin, worn as a proud sign of superior service.

As a result of the well-executed “teamwork” philosophy, backed by service with a smile and a strong employee recognition program, customers are not only guaranteed to enjoy their experience at Eggspec-

tation, but are most likely to revisit. The atmosphere that Duggan and his team have built is something you don’t get every day, and competing with about seventy different restaurants within a five-mile radius, you really have to be on your “A-game.” ■

Ryan Duggan is the General Manager of Eggspectation, Silver Spring, MD

Joey Murray is an NCSA Customer Service Team Member

Nivi Nagiel is an NCSA Editor

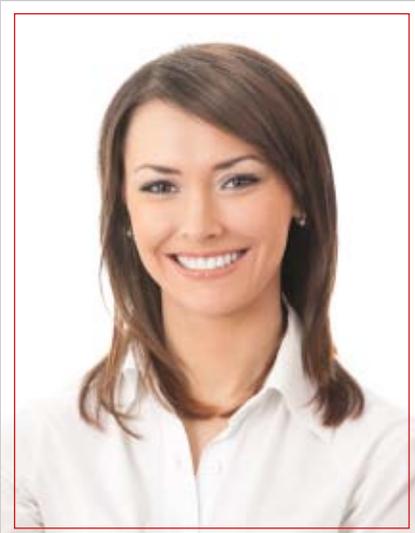


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- Show Interest—Nod Appropriately
- Smile Like You Truly Mean It!



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A Very Special Extra Mile: The Napkin

BY BILL CRUTCHER, NCSA

After going to our early morning workout at the gym one day this past mid-December, we stopped by Tom's Pancake House in Normal, IL for a bit of breakfast as well as to swap stories with some of the "regulars". As we parked our car, we noticed a man with his dog, on the other side of the fence, huddled by some shrubbery in an apparent effort to keep warm.

Once inside, I offhandedly shared with Nick Murukas, the owner, that there was what appeared to be a homeless man with his dog outside by the fence. Nick said, "OK", and that was the end of the conversation.

We went ahead and enjoyed our breakfast and visited a bit with our friends—a typical day for us. We paid our bill and departed.

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Tom's owner, Nick Murukas, is a real people person. He is a business owner that truly cares about his customers.



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Toward noon that day, we had to take our daughter to a local community college where she works at 1 p.m. Since Tom's was on the way, we decided to stop by for some lunch. As we parked and then went into the restaurant, I glanced over and noticed that the man and his dog were no longer by the fence. I really didn't think much more about it than that.

Once we were served our lunch, Nick came to our table and handed me a napkin. On the napkin was a thank you note written by the homeless man we had seen by the fence earlier that morning. He wrote:

"I was invited into this restaurant w/nothing in my pocket & little to my name, now I am leaving w/a full belly & a warm heart. Kindness is rare in this day & age, and I am gratefull to enjoy such an awesome meal on the house. The best part of this experience was the fact that my server treated me like any other guest. Thank you folks so much, and God Bless."

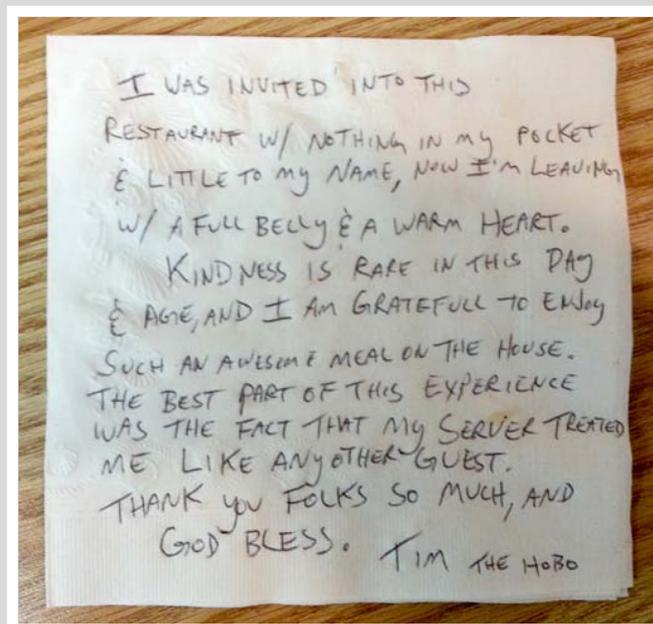
(signed) Tim the Hobo

An employee further shared that Nick cooked up some sausage patties for "Tim's" dog. Nick did not tell us he did this. He really didn't say much to us—beyond simply sharing the note.

To say the least, we were moved by Nick's act of kindness. However, if you get to know Nick, you would not be surprised. He is a restaurant owner that cares—not only about his customers—but his employees, family and yes, complete strangers. Nick doesn't talk service; he truly lives it every day. This is the commitment to service we wish for all businesses—one that comes from deep within us. Accolades go to Nick and his server for "walking the talk".

And, if you are ever in Normal, Illinois and want a good meal with some first-class service, go to Tom's Pancake House at the northwest corner of Main Street and Raab Road. And don't worry if you don't know anybody; you won't be a stranger for long. ■

Bill Crutcher is President of the National Customer Service Association.



"Hobo Tim's" napkin.

...the last word

*Without great employees
you can never have great customer service.*

~ Richard F. Gerson



It has been shown time and time again, that your employees—in the long run—will not treat customers better than they are treated. Yes, they may manipulate their behaviors for a while, but eventually—especially in the “heat of the moment”—they respond to their customers using the approach they feel they received from you, their Leaders. That may not be a pretty picture nor how you wish your organization represented. It starts with you—the Leaders.

When you treat your employees consistently with fairness and respect, they pass it on to your customers. That is how excellence in Customer Service is established and maintained. ■



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