

Reprinted from the *Democrat & Chronicle*

Consistency In Business Is Key To Success

December 2, 2007 - Have you ever heard the phrase "consistency is king"?

Whether you are an athlete playing to win, a musician delighting audiences or an employee serving customers, it doesn't matter if you're great sometimes. What matters is how really good you are all of the time.

The companies that consistently meet customer expectations win more, lose less and are the most profitable.

So it's no surprise that the employees who are able to deliver service that is consistently good — with some flashes of brilliance and virtually no disasters — are the people who are the most valuable to a company.

Being consistently good, or better yet, very good in the delivery of service, or having a product that does the job right consistently is the single most important factor to ensuring a profitable brand.

How can you help your company be more consistent to improve success?

Start by identifying the top three to five things your customers really want. Is it responsive service, product quality and design, innovative thinking or simply friendliness?

List a few of the key benefits that your company currently provides customers. Then take a moment to think about how consistently employees are doing the things necessary to support these benefits.

Next, investigate how consistent the current experience is for customers by challenging employees and leaders to uncover how the company could do better.

- What parts of service delivery are the most inconsistent?
- What makes a very good purchase experience as opposed to one that is merely adequate or even dissatisfying?
- What little things can be done to make customers more loyal?

Getting on the path to being more consistent shouldn't be an overwhelming process.

I know a retail bakery and coffee shop that had tremendous success simply by choosing two things the owners believed customers wanted delivered consistently: friendliness and responsiveness.

Employees in this company knew that to delight customers, they needed to "out behave" the competition. To define how to do that, they came up with three actions to deliver desired benefits:

- Know the customers' names.
- Know what repeat customers like and show them you care by remembering preferences.

- Smile and be nice to customers all the time.

To make sure employees could deliver these benefits daily, the company hired individuals who wouldn't shy away from smiling, who proactively asked customers what they wanted, and who cared enough to remember the food and drinks that regular customers ordered.

The consistent experiences the employees provided made every customer feel like a king or queen. And, in turn, the customers rewarded the company with the tremendous loyalty and repeat sales that elevated the bakery to a leading provider in the region.

If you want your customers and company to be "king," make sure employees know that it's not OK to be great sometimes and not so great other times. We all crave consistency — we want it in our relationships, in our daily routines and, most of all, from the trusted brands and businesses that we buy from.

So give it to us.

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