

The Pacesetter Way

It is everyone's individual responsibility to appropriately encourage and help all associates consistently follow these behaviors.

2. Address Customer Wants: Know your customers, both as a company and as individuals. Always take the opportunity to learn something new about them. Actively listen. Ask questions. Learn their business. Know who they are. Understand their culture, the challenges they face, and the goals they have defined.

I had a conversation with a vendor of ours recently. I told them that I felt like our relationship changed over the past year since we had a new rep involved from having been a partnership to being a sales relationship. The difference... In a partnership, our suppliers get to know us. They look out for what we want and need and provide collaborative solutions that address our problems. In a sales relationship, a supplier attempts to constantly sell us the newest and shiniest whether or not it addresses our needs. As a customer, I hate being sold to. As soon as I feel that is the case, I deprioritize any decisions involving that supplier and explore other options. When a supplier gets to know our business, our objectives, our Vivid Vision, and gets in collaborative discussions with us on our problems and our opportunities, I engage. I put time and energy towards that relationship. I see value and I look for ways to support that supplier in their objectives as well.

I believe there is a natural tendency to shy away from those who are selling you and an even stronger human tendency that brings you to those who take a real interest in what you do and why you do it. That true honest interest in a customer is how you best understand their wants and needs. One must listen, engage and collaborate with their customers. We must understand their objectives, their vision, and the challenges they must overcome to make that vision a reality.

Think about the relationships you have with people at the places that you repeatedly shop or eat. Why do you go back over and over again to that specific place?

For me, it is a personal connection that builds beyond just a surface relationship. Someone has taken the time to get to know me on a personal level. They understand my wants, needs, and expectations. They don't waste time talking about their products or even their solutions until they know that I know they care about me. Over time they get to know me better by learning about me, watching my behaviors, and remembering things that are important to me. This shows they care, builds up trust, and leads me to engage with them. Then we can discuss how they can help.

*Ted's Montana Grill is one of those places for me. My husband Michael and I have determined this to be "our place" and you can ask any teammate of mine from the office where one of my favorite restaurants is and Ted's will likely be the first one they name. This comes from multiple experiences with individuals at two particular locations. At Cumberland Mall, a server named Marva has gotten to know my husband and me personally. When she is working, we will wait to be seated in her area even when there is no wait at the restaurant. I have food allergies and not only does she remember my allergies and know many things about our personal life, she looks out for me every time we are there. If I am there without Michael, she asks about him and makes sure I tell him hello. She has worked late to take our table instead of heading out at a normal hour. Marva is amazing and it's not solely her. The manager now knows us and always stops by to say hello; he also checks my orders with the kitchen. It's not only the Cumberland location. The Kennesaw location has gotten to know me, as well. Not to the same extent, but the servers know me and remember me. They go out of their way to make sure my needs are met and I am pleased every time. And when you have allergies, needs being met is a **SERIOUS MATTER**. I believe Ted's must have incredible training and development of their team over the behavior of addressing customer wants. It seems to be engrained in their team members.*



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