

The Holy Grail Of Customer Service

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For a customer service fanatic it was like seeing the zenith, the summit, or maybe even the Holy Grail! Yes, I have now experienced the standard by which all other customer service is to be judged.

Robin, my wife, let me tag along with her and the boys on a Disney Cruise last month (they needed somebody to take pictures), and, as someone who notices everything, it's impossible to truly describe how impressive, and fun, it was. It's amazing to see how details, no matter how miniscule, can be addressed so perfectly, especially in an operation of that magnitude.

Of course, if any company could do it, it would be Disney. Anybody that can buy their own Caribbean Island, dock their cruise ship there, unload 2700 passengers and entertain them, young and old alike, knows what customer service is all about. No where else could you park your ship right next to the Flying Dutchman... the real pirate ship from the movie!

Our designated stateroom caretaker checked our room numerous times every day. The waiters specifically assigned to our family for dinner every night were incredible. It was impressive when they cut up Grant's steak for him, and when they poured the ketchup for Landon.

The boys were so enamored with the kids program, and their assigned counselor, that we rarely saw them. When we left some things in a restaurant one night, a passenger care agent went to unbelievable lengths to replace them and personally bring them to us.

To boil the whole thing down to the essence of what made it all so spectacular, and the nugget we can all use in business, the key ingredient in all of it was actually everyone's attitude and demeanor. Just about every person we had any contact with was just plain nice, friendly, and obviously happy to be there.

Yes, the extraordinary Disney experience is that simple: genuinely friendly and happy people. There's no faking it, they really are glad to see you when they say "Good Morning" or "Have a Magical Day." What makes it even more amazing is the crew of 980 came from 54 different countries, yet even with that kind of diversity, everyone had the same wonderful attitude.

No doubt they are well trained (which, by the way, anybody can do), but there's more to it than just that. I learned that when I asked someone who had been with Disney for 17 years what it was like to "work" there. He was quick to say "We don't use that word around here... remember, my boss is a *mouse*."

Sadly, it had to come to an end, but the real exclamation point came with the first person I had contact with back home when I paid for parking at the airport. There was nothing really unusual about the transaction for around here; however, the indifference and annoyance just rolled into my truck window like heat from a blast furnace. On top of such a warm welcome home, I was charged for 7 days instead of the week rate.

Wow, do I miss Disney! Friendly, nice, happy people... what a concept!!