

Service Dialogue

The "I" in SERVICE; Your Personal Victory

"A ko o icheke' (check yourself!)"

When you understand that giving your customers exceptional service is not a nice thing to do, but a must do, then you are a square plug in a square socket, the right fit for your organisation. Some service providers tend to think that by assisting customers, they are doing them a favor, but that is not the case, they are fulfilling the purpose for which they are at the particular organisation.

Many a times we hear service providers making comments like *"Nka se go emele letsatsi lotlthe, ga o bone gore o a ntiya, nako yame e chaile rra wee, tla ka moso."* meaning "I can not wait for you the whole day, you are delaying me and my time is up, so just come tomorrow." Comments like these are unacceptable coming from any service provider who knows and understands their purpose in the organisation. Some of you will agree with me that, to be where you are now you first sat down, took a pen and paper, wrote the different addresses of the various organisation and your first line of the application letter was *"I hereby apply for a vacancy in you organisation. I am an energetic and eloquent young lady/man with exceptional customer service skills."* You were then hired and a few months down the line, apathy and taking customers for granted sets in.

Knowing what personal victory is and relating it to one's customer service role will go a long way in achieving one's personal and professional aspirations together with the objectives of the organization they work in. Individuals in organizations need spiritual renewal to embark on the process or journey to personal victory. All around us each day, we face the negative side of life staring us in the face. Escalating food, related expenses, a challenged economy, devastating weather conditions, even television and movies take us prisoner and saturate us with negativity. What we place our attention on is what we become. Therefore, spiritual renewal is absolutely necessary today for survival in the workplace. Character is generally regarded as moral competence and ethical uprightness. It includes a certain worldview that searches for purpose, meaning and understanding and attitude and integrity play significant roles in our character development. The attitude of service is not something you put on and take off when at work. It is something you carry with you throughout each day. Someone who truly has the attitude of service will always serve other people, no matter what the circumstances. Personal victory doesn't have to be an all-encompassing life-changing event. Instead, it's often a very private moment that you realize you have taken stock of your self, attitude and manner in which you serve others. Wise people have said "renewal is the principle and process that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement."

Serving customers is a calling for all service providers to ask themselves if they are confident about themselves and their abilities, willing to take necessary risks, can think positively in the face of challenges and understand that their attitude towards people plays a role in their success. A spiritually renewed service provider sees the positive qualities in other people, listens to others and understands that their attitude towards circumstances controls how they respond to challenges.

With customer service, there are two critical "Rs":

Receive: How you receive your customer is critical in that, it is the point where the customer builds his first impressions. There is a saying that goes; "You can never get a second chance to create first

impressions." It is upon you as a service provider to craft impressions that are for the good of your organisation. A service interaction once done can not be undone; it stays on the customer's mind forever.

React: Customers come to your organisation for one reason and one reason only, to seek our services. How you answer to a customer's initial cry for help tells the customer what your business is all about. The service you offer your customer can help you win the customer's heart and mind, hence assured of the customer's loyalty to you and your business. Like a wise man Aristotle once said; *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence therefore is not an act but a habit."*

Final Words

Dag Hammarskjold, past Secretary-General of the United Nations, said, "He who wants to keep his garden tidy doesn't reserve a plot for weeds." The law of the harvest governs, we will always reap what we sow--no more, no less *When you understand that you are in that office because your business has customers, then Exceptional Customer Service is not a nice to do but a must do!*

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