

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

My past two commentaries have been dedicated to customer service. First, with me being the customer and secondly, me serving the customer. I could not leave the subject without relating my experiences with a postal customer back in the late nineteen sixties. Let's just call him "Joe" as there is no need to reveal his real name. 'Joe' maintained a post office box at the Clarke Street post office. He was also a friend of my immediate boss and would drop in to visit him once in a while. No problem there! It was not long before 'Joe' was showing up at the back door after the business lobby was closed. He would walk right in and hand his mail to one of the clerks, then hang around to watch his letters being processed. The operation was run on a tight schedule and the public was not allowed on the workroom floor for obvious reasons. Time after time he would be challenged by one of our clerks and asked to leave but it went right over his head. I kept warning my boss (Joe's friend), that this behavior had to stop. My boss finally had a talk with him and the unauthorized visits ceased. I thought that all was well until I received a phone call from the pilot that flew the Air Taxi, a contract service that flew our first class mail to San Francisco every week night. The pilot was beside himself. Night after night, when the pilot had buttoned up the aircraft and was ready to start the engines, there would be a banging on the plane's fuselage. There was 'Joe', waving his outgoing letters, wanting the pilot to open up and take the mail on board. Joe was delaying the flight and exposing himself to possible injury from the planes props. My boss had another talk with 'Joe' and that problem ceased. 'Joe' had no love for me because he knew that I did not tolerate such behavior. As I mentioned before, 'Joe' rented a post office box. The clerks informed me that when 'Joe' picked up his mail, he would leave the box door open, giving him a limited view of the workroom floor, and he would watch the clerks work. If he thought that someone was goofing off, he would complain at the service window. One morning, when I was making my rounds as a supervisor, I stopped to exchange pleasantries with the clerk working in the box section. The clerk had said something that I evidently thought was humorous and I must have chuckled. I was called in to the Postmaster's office and told that I had just humiliated 'Joe' by laughing in his face. I had no idea that he had been watching me through the open post office box door. No charges were brought against me as the Postmaster was aware of 'Joe's' antics. He finally settled down after that episode.

Fred Nelson for Community Comment