

Community Comment – August 29th, 2016

By Jon Sapper

Customer Service is Important

In the past, I've given a few comments about my experiences with, let's say, "interesting" customer service. Well, I have another story. I don't know if I'm different than other folks when it comes to the receiving end of customer service or if I'm just a youthful version of Rodney Dangerfield. You know, the comedian guy that never got any respect. I don't want to say current version of him, because he's dead. Anyway,

Here's the story. I needed to get a bunch of widgets from a local business. It's the only place around here I could get them and if I said what the widgets were, you'd know the business. Anyway, I called at 4:40 and asked how late they were open. They said 5. I replied, "Ok, I'll try to get there quickly. I need 325 widgets." They said, "We have them, but that's a lot of widgets for us load up just before closing. It would take 10 minutes." I said I'd help. I drove fast and got there three minutes before 5. I noticed as I pulled up, the open light was on, but the side gate was closed. When I walked in, there were 3 folks standing around and one leaning back in his chair behind a desk. They just looked and didn't greet me or say hello. When I spoke up saying I was there to get the widgets, the guy in the chair said, "It's three minutes to 5, we're not getting the widgets. We'll be open in the morning." I asked if I could get 25 or 30 to start my work and he curtly said, "No, we're going to close in a minute." I was not a happy camper and decided if I had to pay double to get the widgets somewhere else outside the area, that's what I would do.

The next morning I called a business out of the area asking if they had the widgets. They said they did and would be ready for me. Great, I'll drive several hours to get them. When I arrived, the widgets were ready. Only one problem, they weren't the color I confirmed twice on the phone with the guy. When I brought that up, he said, "Hmmm, I guess you're right." I mentioned I had driven this long distance after we talked on the phone just to get the widgets. He looked around and said, "We have a few of 'em." I said, "OK" and after loading the few, I drove home. I called the next day at 3:30 in the afternoon asking when the next order of widgets would be in. He said, "I have to send you to the office for that," which he did. I spoke to a lady who said, "I just logged out of my

computer and I'm going home. You can call back tomorrow and I'll get you the information." Seriously, it was several hours before their closing. I think there's a little room here for some good customer service training.

As Zig Ziglar, the motivational speaker said, "The only thing worse than training employees and losing them, is not training them and keeping 'em." I don't think these folks were trained and have probably been around a long time. I think I'll try amazon.com. At least my computer won't tell me to come back later.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.