

Look where the glasses are “half empty”

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We’ve all heard the phrases “glass half full” and “glass half empty” and most everyone understands what they mean. The first one, of course, is associated with a perception of optimism and the latter with pessimism. With the glass “half full,” something is there. With the glass “half empty,” something is missing.

Let’s face it though, in mathematical quantity, there is no difference between the “glass half full” and the “glass half empty,” but the meanings of these two statements are totally different, and so are their consequences. When someone sees the glass as “half empty,” it is generally because they perceive that something is missing or they previously had a bad experience or unexpected failure with the glass or its contents. Likewise, when the glass is viewed as “half full,” it’s because something of value is perceived or success or good experiences are associated with the glass or its contents.

In the business world, consumers typically look for products or services where they perceive glasses as “half full” and avoid spending their money on glasses that are “half empty.” Therefore, you, as a business leader or manager, should ensure your products or services are perceived as glasses “half full.” If you’ve achieved that perception, then always strive to deliver a “full” glass. This is called under-promising and over-delivering--a great tactic that delights customers and increases your chances that they become repeat customers.

When it comes to seeking out opportunities, keep your radar turning in search of places where glasses are perceived as “half empty” because this means there are dissatisfied or unfulfilled customers who want or need what’s missing from the glass. In these instances you should be putting plans into motion to provide these customers what they want or need.

An example of a company that exploited situations where glasses in its

industry were perceived as “half empty” is Southwest Airlines. When travelers became increasingly disappointed by poor customer service from unfriendly employees on various other airlines, Southwest revamped its hiring policies to bring in employees who are upbeat, positive, and have a passion for helping customers. And when customers of other airlines complained about increasing prices, Southwest eliminated many of the amenities most frequent flyers didn’t really care about, enabling them to lower their prices. When other airlines penalized customers for canceling flights, Southwest chose to allow customers to cancel flights as close as 30 minutes prior to a flight without any financial penalty. As a result, Southwest became a popular and profitable airline.

So go out and look where the glasses are perceived as “half empty” and somewhere nearby will be an unsatisfied customer. Find those unsatisfied customers and turn them into satisfied customers!

~ The End ~