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Excuses are among all of us, some people more than others, but at some point in each person’s life, they’ve reached into a bag of excuses and pulled one out. In the service world, though, an asserted effort should be made on behalf of everyone to avoid excuses, especially when dealing with customers or clients.

Corporations may have official policies stating the “customer is always right” or “customer is number one,” but these quickly become meaningless platitudes unless procedures are developed and communicated to all employees for them to be followed when confronted with a problem or a question from a customer.

Academic researchers and professors Duncan Dickson, Robert Ford, and Bruce Laval revealed the top ten excuses for bad service in their publication *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 34, Issue 2. These excuses can sabotage a company’s strategy and send valued customers or clients to the competition. How many times have you heard the following excuses when you received poor service? Or how many times have you personally given one or all of these excuses?

#10. Customer Complaint: Why do I have to wait so long for service?

Excuse: To get service as good as ours, sometimes you have to wait; our guests expect that.

#9. Customer complaint: Why didn’t your service meet what I expected?

Excuse: Nobody’s perfect; we simply can’t make every customer happy.

#8. Customer complaint: Why didn’t you let us have it “our way”?

Excuse: We’re sorry, but if we did it “your way” for all our customers, we could crash our systems and overextend our already overworked employees.

#7. Customer complaint: Service wasn’t as good this time as it was the last time we were here. *Excuse:* Everybody has good days and bad days; we’re doing our best to please you, but we can’t always be perfect.

#6. Customer complaint: Your place is dirty, dated, and worn. *Excuse:* We do our best to keep it clean and up to date, but we can’t afford to follow every customer around to make sure we pick up everything, nor can we refurbish our place all the time.

#5. Customer complaint: I placed my order a while ago, why is it taking so long? *Excuse:* Sorry, but we are very busy right now. You came at our “busy” time and you must be patient.

#4. Customer complaint: Your server did not seem to know what he/she was doing and made a mess of my

experience. *Excuse:* Unfortunately, with all the turnover we are having right now, we just didn’t have the time to train everyone up to our standards.

#3. Customer complaint: Your employee was rude to me and has a bad attitude. *Excuse:* We do apologize for the unfortunate attitude of a few employees.

#2. Customer complaint: The server didn’t seem to be interested in doing what he/she was supposed to do. Why can’t he/she do it the right way? *Excuse:* We are sorry. While we trained them to do it the right way, sometimes they just seem to ignore what we taught them.

#1. Customer complaint: We expected something different from your company and we are really disappointed. *Excuse:* You must be misinformed, as we have been successful for a long time and obviously know exactly what our customers want and need.

These types of excuses are frustrating when you experience them. And it can seem easy to give in and give them, but don’t! Try to conduct your business in a manner that makes excuses nonexistent. If you treat your customers and clients right, you won’t need excuses, and there’s a much greater chance they’ll return for repeat business or service.

~ The End ~