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CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

Brightening the day for your customer service reps

by Ed Wandtke

• An inside customer service representative's time is spent handling customer complaints, solving problems, and performing some telephone sales or taking orders each day. This job is often one of many frustrations and very few thankyous.

The challenge as an owner or manager is motivating these individuals and helping them maintain a positive attitude while dealing with customers.

These individuals are extremely important since they are your front line in customer communications. Having them come to work upbeat, excited about dealing with customers, and coming across concerned about customer needs on the phone is very necessary.

If your company service reps do not have a very positive attitude, I am sure your company maintains a below-average level of customer satisfaction.

Money has proven to be very ineffective in motivating most customer service representatives.

The most effective methods of reinforcing customer service qualities and the values you want your representative to reflect when communicating with the customers is to repeat these qualities and values to the employees often. In addition, you should try some of the following techniques:

1) Send customer service personnel to training seminars

in your local community. For example, "positive thinking" seminars have typically enhanced their day-to-day performance on the job.

2) Hold regular meetings with customer service personnel to keep them informed about what is going on in the company. Particularly pay attention to how the company's performance could be affecting this person.

For example, if there have been a lot of "reworks" as a result of customer complaints, this could cause your service rep more stress than is typical for the job. Be aware and lend a hand if necessary.

3) Ask customer service personnel how the company can improve, and reward them for their ideas—even if all of them are not practical. Remember: the more ideas you get, the better the chances you find one that is exceptional. A good reward could be taking that person to lunch away from the office.

4) Provide an upbeat, enjoyable setting for your customer service personnel to work in. A good way to keep people upbeat is to purchase a calendar with a joke a day. At least this way, each day there will be something different and humorous about the job.

Can't you always tell when you are talking to a person with a smile?

A conscious effort each day to sincerely check up on how your office personnel are doing can prove invaluable in the long run.

-Ed Wandtke owns Wandtke & Associates, a green industry consulting firm. His services are available by writing 2586 Oakstone Dr., Columbus, OH 43231, or by phoning (614) 891-3111.



OCTOBER

8-10: American Society of Consulting Arborists annual meeting, Biltmore Estate, Asheville, N.C. Telephone: (303) 466-2722.

9: Target Specialty Products' annual fall seminar and exhibit, Red Lion Hotel, Ontario, Calif. Telephone: (800) 352-3870.

12-14: Production of Field Grown Nursery Stock, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. Telephone: (703) 231-5445.

19-20: Pacific Horticultural Trade Show, Los Angeles (Calif.) Convention Center. Telephone: (916) 567-0200.

21-23: Golf Summit, Marriott Orlando (Fla.) World Center. Telephone: (407) 744-6006. **21-24:** Atlantic Seedsmen's Association Convention, Charleston, S.C. Telephone: (814) 237-0330.

22-23: Xeriscape '92, San Diego (Calif.) Convention Center. Telephone: (619) 443-1756.

22-24: International Society of Arboriculture Rocky Mountain Chapter annual meeting, Town House Inn, Great Falls, Mont. Telephone: (406) 721-7275.

23-25: New Jersey Tree Expo, Sheraton Poste Inn, Cherry Hill. Telephone: (908) 246-3210.

26-27: Fertilizer Outlook '93: Ana Hotel, Washington, D.C. Telephone: (202) 675-8250.

29-31: Texas Association of Landscape Contractors annual conference and exposition, Infomart/Loews Anatole Hotel, Dallas. Telephone: (214) 241-1399.

NOVEMBER

1: Southwest Outdoor Power Equipment Show, Arlington (Tex.) Convention Center. Telephone: (512) 443-7999.

1-4: International Irrigation Exposition, New Orleans, La. Telephone: (703) 524-1200.

1-4: Southern Agricultural Chemicals Association annual convention, Hilton Head Island (S.C.) Hyatt Regency Hotel. Telephone: (912) 995-2125.

1-5: New Tree Biology Seminars, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. Telephone: (704) 262-3045.
3: Florida Chapter, Sports **Turf Managers Association meeting**, Pompano Stadium. Telephone: (305) 938-7477 or (305) 938-0217.

7-9: American Society of Landscape Architects annual meeting, Washington (D.C.) Grand Hyatt Hotel. Telephone: (202) 686-2752.

8-10: Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association annual meeting, King & Prince Hotel, St. Simons Island. Telephone: (404) 769-4076.

8-11: National Institute on Park and Grounds Management annual educational conference, Richmond, Va. Telephone: (414) 733-2301.

11-15: New Tree Biology Seminars, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. Telephone: (704) 262-3045.

GREEN INDUSTRY SHOWCASE

Golf course industry gets new bentgrass

Lofts Seed Inc. has added Southshore creeping bentgrass to its line of turfgrass varieties.

Southshore became available this fall for use on golf course greens, tees and fairways.

It was developed through a breeding program of Dr. Richard Hurley, Lofts' research director, in cooperation with Rutgers University. Hurley and Dr. C. R. Funk of Rutgers University collected its derivative plants from old putting greens located in New Jersey, New York, California, Arizona and Pennsylvania.

An attempt was made to identify putting greens in old, established golf courses that had been subjected to many years of wear, close mowing, disease, heat and moisture stress.

From the original highly tolerant collection, further selection was based on attractiveness, disease resistance, moderate aggressiveness, upright growth, medium-bright green leaf color and medium-



RODUCT

fine leaf texture that produces less grain.

In university trials, Southshore is displaying excellent resistance to brown patch and producing a very desirable medium-bright green color with excellent overall turf quality.

Next year, it will be included in National Turfgrass Evaluation Program tests.

Southshore can be used alone on putting greens, or in combination with other improved bentgrass varieties for fairway and tee overseeding.

It is being used on golf courses in various parts of the country, sometimes as a blend. Pine Valley has seeded its new nine holes with Southshore.

"It's been doing very well for us," says Lofts turfgrass agronomist John DeMatteo. "Its overall quality on golf courses is great."

DeMatteo says that Southshore is in the same "elite" category as some of the other newer bentgrasses.

Circle No. 191 on Reader Inquiry Card

New software version for lawn maintenance

L-W Software says that a significantly improved version of "Clip" lawn maintenance software was released last month. The new version, 4.0, has been tested by seven different-sized lawn maintenance companies for more than six months. The company says the program greatly increases management productivity.

According to L-W, all companies that tested the software agreed that the new version is an unprecedented success. The the Clip software has gone through two substantially improved versions, each the result of ongoing customer/programmer interaction. The new version will retail for the same price as its predecessor: \$695 for up to 125 customers and \$1190 for the unlimited (up to 99,999 customers) package.

Circle No. 192 on Reader Inquiry Card

Monitor trucks daily, accurately, affordably

The Vehicle Monitoring System company in Orlando announces a low cost Electronic Monitoring System to help keep accurate records of the coming and going of trucks and company cars.

REVIEW

The Time Keeper is described as a low cost, solid state vehicle monitoring system that monitors daily vehicle movements including daily start time, number of and duration of stops, and ending time for each day. The unit installs on any vehicle, has no moving parts and does not require a personal computer.

It consists of three parts: the recording unit is placed in the vehicle; a memory module is plugged into the recording unit, and one reader unit in the office extracts the recorded information from the memory module in seconds.

Circle No. 193 on Reader Inquiry Card

In-tank mounting system accommodates 4 sensors

Flowline's "Smart Trak" is an in-tank mounting system which enables a user to install and adjust up to four Flowline sensors, of any technology, to any depth, along the entire length of track. Smart Trak is made entirely of 20 percent glassfilled polypropylene and is available in two, four or six foot lengths.

Each Smart Trak section may be cut to any length.

Smart Trak mounts vertically, through the top wall of the tank, installed with a two-inch NPT fitting or to the side wall of the tank, installed with Flowline's side mount bracket .Smart Trak is mixer compatible, with velocities up to 1.5 fps.

Each kit includes everything necessary to install one sensor, less the fitting and conduit termination.

Circle No. 194 on Reader Inquiry Card

PRODUCT REVIEW

Flow sensor design serves in harsh environments

The Signet insertion flow sensor is made to provide reliable and accurate signals, while offering ease of use and flexibility. Using the proven insertion design principle, the Signet 8500 Flow Transmitter features a two-wire, isolated, process-ready, 4-20 mA output signal that is computer-compatible. The 8500 is totally self-contained in a waterproof housing to remain precise, even in exteme conditions involving temperature, hmidy and moisture.

The rugged consturction will extend service life by resisting harsh applications created by acides, salt solutions and alcohols.

The Signet product line includes a full range of plastic pipe fittings, valves, tank linings, heat exchanges and flow-monitoring and process control information. **Circle No. 195 on Reader Inquiry Card**

Tractor series expands to widen job capabilities

Kubota Tractor Corporation has added five models to its popular L-Series tractor line-up. The new L2350 model and the aditional clutch and trasmision packages available on the L23650, L2450 and L3650 models give greater range to the L-Series line, according to the company.

The 20.5 PTO horsepower L2350 is equipped with the basic features needed for efficiency in standard agricultural and light construction applications.

The tractor's performance is enhanced by power steering and durable, wet disc brakes. Both 2WD and 4WD models are available, with standard gear transmissions for eight forward and two reverse speeds.

Glideshift Transmission is available on the L2650, L2950 and L3450 tractors, with clutchless shifting through eight forward and eight reverse gears.

Circle No. 196 on Reader Inquiry Card

Maintenance software uses IBM-compatible system

Omni Comp, Inc. has released a new version of its best-selling Service Call Maintenance Management software for IBM compatible microcomputers.

The new version incorporates the latest programming technologies and adds dozens of significant enhancements, including: mouse support, color, extensive pop-up windows and memos, networking, report macros, speed keys, new methods of generating preventive maintenance work orders, and browse windows.

Omni-Comp says it has formed a joint agreement with Deluxe Computer Forms for multi-part maintenance requrest and work order forms.

OmniComp says Service Call is used at more than 500 sites for tracking corrective and preventive maintenance work orders and spare parts inventory.

Circle No. 197 on Reader Inquiry Card





Finally, a quality lightweight with plenty of mowing muscle.

At less than 10 PSI ground pressure, the all-new Jacobsen LF-3810 treads lightly on the most delicate fairways. Yet its 5 heavy-duty

7" diameter, 10-blade reels deliver the high torque to handle all kinds of grasses and conditions beautifully. Plus, 26" balanced reels and our unique rear roller down pressure system produce tournament quality results at production mowing speeds, hugging undulations other machines would scalp.

Accessibility you'll flip over.

The entire operator platform and rear hood flip up, completely out of the way, for easy access to all key components. Also, the center cutting unit slides back, for quick, easy adjustments.

Comforting news for operators.



The LF-3810 is loaded with operator comfort features, including: full suspension seat with armrests; 5-position tilt, power steering; easier two-pedal hydrostatic drive; full instrumentation; even holders for their favorite soft drink and personal items.

Transverse engine mounting helps you handle

slopes with confidence. This up-front automotive design produces surprising traction and excellent climbing ability in a 2-wheel drive unit.

ACOBSEN



Exclusive SynchroLift control-Cross cutting at its easiest & most productive.

A simple push or pull of the synchronized lift levers is all it takes with this system. The machine automatically raises the reels to turning height, then lowers them for nimble, flawless cross cutting.

Maintain a spotless reputation on the fairway with GreenSentry.™

Our advanced oil leak detection system is standard, to give you every advantage possible on the fairway.

The list goes on and on.

Variable-speed, power backlapping; 3, 4 or 5 gang operation; heavy-duty hydraulic system; a 38 hp, liquidcooled Kubota diesel . . . the quality features just never seem to quit.

For a complete list of features and benefits, as well as a complete demonstration, contact your Jacobsen distributor today.

> THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE ON TURF.

Shown with optional roll over protection structure JACOBSEN TEXTRON Jacobsen Division of Textron, Inc.

Circle No. 108 on Reader Inquiry Card

THE FIRST TRULY HEAVY-DUTY LIGHTWEIGHT.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Buffalograss marketers promise low maintenance

The Turf Farms of Crenshaw & Doguet have introduced two buffalograsses it says are improved strains from Texas A&M and the University of Nebraska. According to the Texas Water Commission, buffalograss requires water every 21-45 days under normal conditions. The species fills in quickly after being placed in sod or plugs.

Buffalograss grows thick and lush, but gains height very slowly, reducing the need to mow.

Tough and durable, buffalograss lessens the need for weed and pest control because it is dense and competitive.

Circle No. 198 on Reader Inquiry Card

Tractors made to do the job, the tougher the better

The GT series of tractors from Simplicity combines rugged construction and dependability with maneuverability, ease of handling and modern styling. A 14hp shift-on-the-go gear model and a 16-hp hydrostatic unit are available.

All-steel hoods completely enclose the



tractors' air-cooled engines. The overhead valve engines with oil filters and full pressure lubrication are mounted to a massive welded steel mainframe.

Seven gauge frame rails absorb the heavy shocks of tilling and pulling loaded attachments for long hours of use. Simplicity says its gear model provides on-the-go shifting through a unique sixspeed transmission design.

Circle No. 199 on Reader Inquiry Card

New walk-along trencher has three engine options

The Model 1020 is a new walk-along trencher from Ditch Witch.A 10-hp class unit the 1020 is a compact machine that is extremely easy to operate, is productive, reliable and easy to maintain.

The 1020 has mechanical powered digging chain and hydraulic ground drive. Three engine options are available

The 1020 replaces the Ditch Witch 1010.

According to the company, the new model offers a greater value than the model 1010.

Circle No. 200 on Reader Inquiry Card



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68 Landscape Management, October 1992

MARKET SHOWCASE

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FOR SALE

Contact: **Richard P. Bersnak**, President or

Jeanne Bartkus

Circle No. 188 on Reader Inquiry Card

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BOX NUMBER REPLIES: Mail box number replies to: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, Classified Ad Department, 120 W. 2nd St., Duluth, MN 55802. Please include box in address

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SPORTS TURF MANAGER: Sports Turf Manager with Horticultural degree and 14 years experience in landscape and sports turf. Experienced in televised events, NCAA championship and regional competitions, college bowl games. Contact: Chuck Garcia, California State University-Fresno, Fresno, CA 93740-0088. (209)278-2373. 11/92

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LANDSCAPE GARDENER. Young, energetic professional seeks relocation to Northwest. 14 years experience in all phases of Landscape Maintenance. Prefer Estate or Management company with expanding market. contact Gardener, P.O. Box 550398, Birmingham, AL 35255. 10/92 LOOKING FOR A HOME: Hard working, reliable, honest, landscaping & irrigation professional of 15 years with "Hands on Philosophy" looking to relocate to the Rocky Mountain Region. Seeking employment with a company compilited to accel

cate to the Rocky Mountain Region. Seeking employment with a company committed to excellence. Desires to work toward partnership. Ken Mencel, 85 Woodmere Road, Bridgeport, CT 06610 (203)372-7828 FAX (203)372-7175. 10/92

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