

'Moments of truth' separate the good, the bad, the ugly in service

Doing only what the customer expects, even if you do it well, will get you only a 'C' from a client.

■ Why are some lawn care companies able to charge more for their services and still build market share while competitors struggle?

Service. They make it easy for customers to do business with them. That's what Ron Zemke, a nationally known business consultant, says.

He also says that businesses that place a premium on service:

- 1) charge, on average, 10 percent more for their basic products and services.
- 2) grow market share at 6 percent compared to 1 to 2 percent for those who don't.
- 3) have a return on sales of about 12 percent compared to 3 to 4 percent for those who don't.

Zemke this past February led about 250 green industry professionals through the building of "service-centered" organizations at the Associated Landscape Contractors Association (ALCA) Executive Forum in Tucson, Ariz.

Crucial to service success, says Zemke, is how well an organization manages the "moments of truth." He describes a "moment" as *any* time a customer comes in contact with some aspect of your business and has an opportunity to judge your company's service quality.

First in a series on Zemke and quality service

If your organization does everything a customer expects, that client gives you only a "C" on their report card. If the client has an experience with your company that annoys them, then your company gets a "D" or "F" grade, he says.

Your organization must develop and put "enhancers" into its service to develop a loyal and satisfied client. Give clients more than they expect to get an "A."

"The only way you learn about these moments of truth is by setting down and asking the right questions of your customers," says Zemke.

- ✓ What is it you expect from us?
- ✓ What is it you've experienced from our organization?
- ✓ What has made you unhappy with our service?
- ✓ What has been an exceptional experience you've had in dealing with us or someone like us?
- ✓ And, what did we do to make that a memorable experience?

For information about Ron Zemke: Performance Research Associates, 821 Marquette Ave., Suite 1820, Minneapolis, MN 55402; (612) 338-8523.

—Ron Hall



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TURF EQUIPMENT LIMITED

23324 Woodbine Avenue
Keswick, Ontario
Canada L4P 3E9

Tel. (416) 476-4311
Fax (416) 476-5867