

**Title:**

Creating a New Standard of Excellence - Six Things You Can Do

**Word Count:**

660

**Summary:**

Below are six steps that you can take to continue to raise your own standards of excellence. These steps will make it easier than ever to stand out, be noticed, and have greater levels of success and satisfaction.

**Keywords:**

excellence, standards, expectations, exceeding expectations, success

**Article Body:**

Recognizing that the time had come to replace our hot water heater, my wife called our plumber to schedule an appointment. She placed the call at about 11 a.m. When the agent asked, "Would you be available between one and three?" Lori asked, "Which day?" The agent replied "Today of course."

Hearing a strange noise coming from our furnace, another call was placed. Again, the appointment was made and the problem was solved the same day. (Are you surprised that the furnace and the plumbing company have the same ownership?)

Earlier this week my wife had a problem with her knee and after seeing our family doctor she was referred to a knee specialist - a specialist considered one of the best in Indianapolis. When she called for an appointment, I feared the worst. Instead, she had an appointment within 24 hours.

My guess is that as you read each of these short stories. You are surprised at the service we received. The fact is, this level of service should be the norm, but sadly isn't. Our experience has lowered the expectations of most of us.

<b>The Good News</b>

The good news in these examples is that it is easier than ever to stand out. When you are good, people will notice. When you are excellent, they will rave.

This goes for us personally, professionally, or as an organization.

Below are six steps that you can take to continue to raise your own standards of

excellence. These steps will make it easier than ever to stand out, be noticed, and have greater levels of success and satisfaction.

### <b>What You Can Do</b>

1.       <b>Get a current check on performance.</b> Talk to those you served, whether your family, coworkers or Customers. Find out from them, how well you are doing in meeting their expectations. Listen to their feedback. Don't justify your current performance or blame others. Simply listen.
2.       <b>Determine the standard they want.</b> Again, ask your Customers or those you serve for their input. Listen to their needs, wants and hopes.
3.       <b>Determine the standard you want.</b> Remember that their expectations may not be very high based on their experience. Take their feedback and ideas into account, but remember that it is your responsibility to set the level of excellence you want to reach. Set the bar as high as you wish.
4.       <b>Under promise and over deliver.</b> Taking the first three steps will heighten awareness and likely raise expectations immediately. As you work to grow your standards remember that you can reach your goal in small steps. Make promises based on your current capacity, not your fondest wish. Make the promise, then deliver more, then raise the level of your promise a bit the next time. Steady and slow wins the race - and remember it won't take long to leave those you are racing with far behind. This approach will help you raise your standards, and the trust others have in you too.
5.       <b>Ask "what's not excellent?"</b> This question will help you continue to find ways to improve your standards and delivery. Ask this question of yourself, of your teammates, and of other interested parties.
6.       <b>Measure performance.</b> You've set new standards for yourself. The only way to reach them and maintain them is to measure your performance against those standards. Depending on the standards you are setting this may be very simple or quite complex. Don't make the measurement more difficult than necessary, but remember to measure.

It is clear that these steps have obvious application for serving Customers better. While I encourage you to consider their applications to customer service, I also hope you will consider using them in other areas on your life.

It's time to raise the bar. It's time to set new standards. Standards won't raise themselves; we must raise them consciously and consistently. The steps

above will help you take that conscious action.