

Title:

The Moment of Truth

Word Count:

661

Summary:

*You only get one Moment of Truth with customers. Will it be a moment of misery or a moment of WOW?

Keywords:

Customer Service

Article Body:

Every customer contact is a Moment of Truth that creates a Moment of Misery, a Moment of Mediocrity, or a Moment of WOW. In the Moment of Truth you can create customers for LIFE or you can initiate a slow and painful demise of your company one customer at a time.

A Moment of Mediocrity is what most often occurs in business to customer interactions and this is where the customer's expectations were met - and those may even be low expectations. Customers who experience a Moment of Mediocrity, feel "satisfied" but will not reward the company with loyalty. These customers are only your customers because they haven't found a better experience.

A Moment of Misery is created each time you fail to meet the customer's expectations. Often, Moments of Misery result in damaging and highly persuasive negative word-of-mouth advertising and customer defection.

A Moment of WOW is created when you exceed the customer's expectations. Service must be truly outstanding and service providers have to go "Beyond WOW" to create the Moment of WOW. Moments of WOW create a profitable base of loyal customers, which results in growth, increased profits, and lasting value. (For hundreds of ideas on how to create Moments of WOW, pick up my brand new book, Beyond WOW by going to Beyond WOW.)

Two years ago I stayed in a luxury hotel in Miami with a corner ocean view room. I paid \$179 for a one-night stay and my expectations for service were high. I experienced a myriad of problems during my short stay and one situation stands out. The morning of my departure I called the Concierge to arrange transportation to the airport. Here's a summary of this Moment of Truth:

Me, the Customer: "I need to be at Miami International Airport by 5:00 pm for a

6:00pm flight. Can you arrange transportation with Super Shuttle for me? " Simple request - or so I thought.

Concierge: "Ma'am, you have to give at least a 24 hour notice for a shuttle to the airport. I cannot call for you. You can take a taxi or we can arrange a car for you for \$99. "

Me, the "paying" customer:"Why do you need a 24 hour notice for a routine ride to the airport?

Concierge: "It's our procedure. You can take a taxi or I can arrange a car. Those are your choices."

Me, the customer/ the reason you have a job: "Okay, can you just veer away from "procedure" and see if the shuttle can pick me up eight hours from right now?"

Concierge: "I can give you the number and you can call."

I called Super Shuttle and the representative said, "Sure, the royal blue van will meet you out front at exactly 4:30." See how easy that was? Why couldn't the Concierge just pick up the phone and check?

Here's what the Concierge should have said upon my request for a shuttle: "Ms. Golden, typically Super Shuttle requires a 24 hour advance notice, but I'll see what I can do. If I cannot arrange transportation with the shuttle, we can get you to the airport by taxi or private car. Let me check on that and I'll call you right back." This response would have made the Moment of Truth a Moment of Mediocrity and perhaps I would have considered another stay at the hotel. But my moment was Misery and not only will I not return, but like every customer, I'll spread negative word-of-mouth advertising.

A Moment of Misery is created every time you:

*Tell a customer "No" without first telling them what you can do

*Quote policy

*Fail to follow-up/follow through

*Make the customer tell and retell their story with unnecessary transfers

*Respond to complaints with an accusatory or interrogatory style

*Refuse to take responsibility for problems

*Fail to apologize to customers

*Tell a customer they are wrong - even when they are wrong

*Cut a customer off

*You only get one Moment of Truth with customers. What will it be?