

Customers Vote With Their Feet

By T. Scott Gross

Customers vote everyday with their feet. The polling booth is a little thing called a cash register and every time you spend a buck, that buck gets counted as yet another positive affirmation. Like Sally Fields at the Oscars, all those wrinkled dollars are shouting, "You like me. You really do like me!"

If you want to make customer service better, stop doing business with folks who aren't treating *you* like a customer! You might complain about Wal-Mart, but you probably still manage to spend a lot of money at the house that Sam built. You harp over the demise of customer service yet you can't remember the last time you paid extra for someone to top off your tank. (Young readers are thinking, 'You could do that?')

Once you get out of the business of accepting poor service, you have to grow into the habit of actually seeking those who are willing to cater to you. *And* you have to make the conscious decision to pay for better-than-average service.

Here are four good questions to consider:

1. How much further would you be willing to drive to get great service?
2. How much longer would you be willing to wait?
3. How much more would you be willing to pay?
4. Are you a good customer?
 - Have you ever attempted to exchange an item at a store where you did not make the purchase?
 - Have you ever attempted to get service on an item that was out of warranty?
 - Have you ever lied about age in order to get a discount?

· If you really need something by Friday do you tell the server your deadline is Wednesday?

· Have you ever slipped extra sugar packets into your purse?

If you are feeling guilty, 91 percent of Americans say they lie regularly, and a whopping 25 percent say that for \$10 million they would abandon their family. Compared to that, what are a few sugar packets?

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