

Discover what the customer wants

Talking with your staff about applying customer service

“When a customer complains, you know you're hearing the truth. Listen to him. When a customer is a Raving Fan and is enthusiastic, listen to him too. But when a customer is silent or says 'Fine' with a smile, you have to really perk up your ears. You've got a problem. If nothing else, that customer isn't a Raving Fan.”

Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles
Raving Fans

I believe the most critical point of this chapter is that customers who are silent or who answer "fine" when asked about their experience, are a warning sign.

Here are my discussion ideas for your pre-session conversations with your team.

"...You have to discover who your customers are." (p 57)

- Who do we interact with but don't think about as customers?

"Those who decide to really try to give good service often aim to be everything to everybody. That doesn't work." (p 53)

- In what areas are we, as a school, trying to be a sports car, off-road vehicle and delivery van rolled into one?
- What is core to our vision and do we need to narrow our vision?

"Ask them." (p 56)

- Many parents, in particular, are hesitant to share negative input because they fear possible repercussions for their kids. How can we, as a school, overcome that concern?
- What percentage of our parents are being silent? And therefore are not raving fans?
- What percentage of our parents are telling us things are "fine?" And therefore are also not raving fans?

- How can we demonstrate that we will listen to their input, act on it and thus make it worth their time and effort to communicate with us?
- How can we ensure we are "hearing" not only what they are verbalizing, but also what they are implying which may be more important?

"...Talk to customers and use internal benchmarks." (p 71)

- What can we measure, simply and accurately, to gauge how well we are meeting customer needs?
- Are these lead metrics or lag metrics?

"If you don't look after your people, they won't look after your customers." (p 71)

This is an area in which you need to think about how you can serve your team in a way that is meaningful to them. This is important both in modeling for them what customer service looks like and in motivating them to pass this service on to their students and parents.

Delegating:

This needs to be a team effort. You should lead these discussions but you can, and should, delegate implementation components to your team (staff, board members, volunteers).

Credits:

Raving Fans by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles

Binder tab: July

School size: All

Marketing process step:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?