

Decide what you want

Talking with your staff about applying customer service

***“A satisfied customer doesn't count these days...
Today you need raving fans.”***

Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles
Raving Fans

Today is the first of three Marketing Corners suggesting some discussion points for you and your team—both paid and volunteer—from the customer service book I recommended for this summer's read, *Raving Fans*.

"Decide what you want. Remember you are the source." p. 23

For most topics I believe you should get the input of your staff—both because they have insights and because you need their active support and participation. However, I share the authors' belief that setting your school's vision for customer service needs to start with you. Remember: "the secret doesn't say you have to be perfect. It tells you to imagine perfection centered on the customer." p. 42

Once you have envisioned this ideal customer experience, use the following categories and questions for discussions with your staff.

"Trouble is, most people don't believe they need help. They don't really care about customers." p. 40

- If all our current parents were "raving fans," how would that affect our school? Our volunteerism? Our word of mouth referrals? Our financial support?
- Do you think they currently are "raving fans?" Would it be worth our effort to help them become "raving fans?"

"...bring the vision of perfection down to the level of what [is] actually happening and then see where the bumps and warts [are]." p. 48

- From your conversations with parents, which of their interactions with the school are not ideal? For example: simpler registration or re-registration process, clearer information on student behavior expectations, the ability to see their child's progress or pay their bill online, etc.
- Which of those concerns do you think we could tackle and fix for parents this year? Which would *they* think are most important? Which are most doable?

"All good customer service is the result of nifty systems." p. 16.

- What systems can we change or create so we are not having to intervene and make an exception in order to offer great customer service, but the system is set up to satisfy customers inherently?
- Which systems would be used by the most customers and so create the "biggest bang for our buck" (time, effort, money)?

"One customer out of a thousand steals something... Next day the store puts up a sign offending the other 999 customers and making one crook laugh." p. 26

- What policies do we have which address issues with one percent of our parents and risk offending the other 99%?
- How can we restructure those policies to be both fair welcoming? Or if they simply can't be restructured, can we word them in a manner that explains their positive purpose and how they benefit our mission?

"It's nice to do a good job and be recognized for it." p. 25

- Since our school doesn't have the same opportunities for promotions and pay incentives as retail businesses, what would be the most meaningful ways *to you* that we could recognize excellent customer service?
- How can we, as a school, track good customer service so we can reward it?

Delegating:

You need to envision perfect customer service for your school. And you need to lead the discussion with your team first and your board second. Once your school has determined what you are going to tackle, please do delegate specific projects to teachers, board members, volunteers or teams including some of each.

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?