

21st Century Customer Service

South Central Regional Library Council

June 15, 2011

Alan Kirk Gray

Schedule

- “Simple, but not easy” One hour
 10 minute break
- The Service Matrix One hour
 10 minute break
- Team Support One hour

Things I expect we can
agree on:

Customer Service

- All libraries say they provide good customer service [and most intend to]

Customer Service

- All libraries intend to provide good customer service
- Our patrons know what good customer service is

Customer Service

- All libraries intend to provide good customer service
- Our patrons know what good customer service is
- They have learned to expect good customer service

Customer Service

- All libraries intend to provide good customer service
- Our patrons know what good customer service is
- Our customers expect good customer service

Can we agree on this?

Saying “No” with a smile is not customer service, it’s gate-keeping

Gate-keeping isn't an employee's fault

It's an administrative responsibility

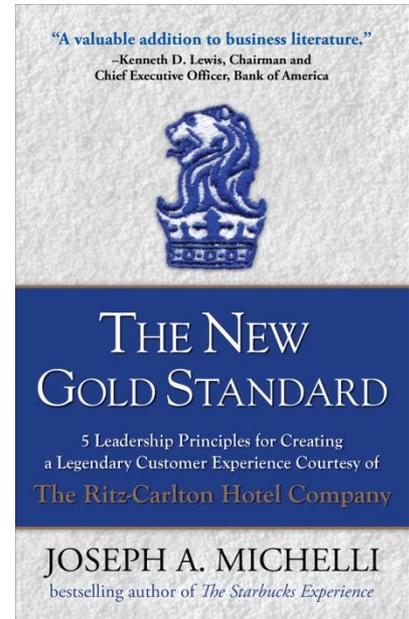
If you are working with staff on how to say “no” you need to figure out how they can say “yes” more often.

So what is customer service?

“Service is:

- **A flawless product**
- **Delivered exactly as a member wants**
- **In an environment of caring”**

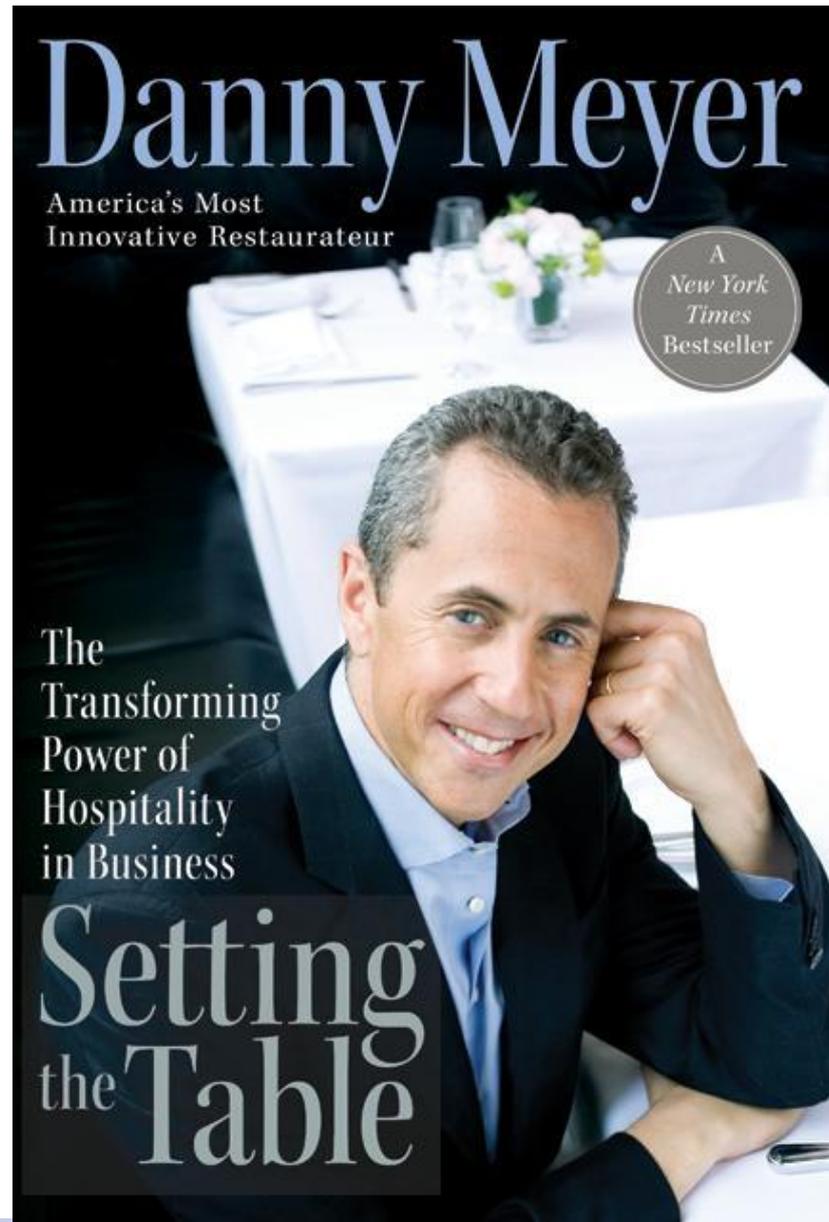
Joseph Michelli
OCLC Symposium
July 10, 2009



And

Setting the Table

Hospitality is the Watchword



And

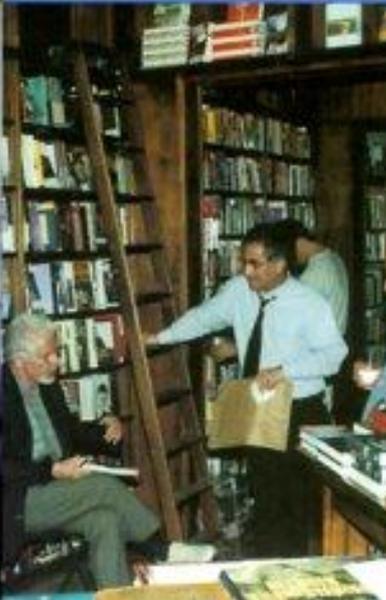


T · H · E
**G R E A T
G O O D
P L A C E**

CAFÉS, COFFEE SHOPS,
BOOKSTORES, BARS,
HAIR SALONS AND
OTHER HANGOUTS AT THE
HEART OF A COMMUNITY

RAY OLDENBURG

*"Well written, informative, and often entertaining."
—Newark Star-Ledger*



Apple's Store Philosophy

Approach customers with a personalized warm welcome

Probe politely to understand all the customer's needs

Present a solution for the customer to take home today

Listen for and resolve any issues or concerns

End with a fond farewell and an invitation to return

21st Century Customer Service

- Is all about the basics of
 - Quality
 - Hospitality
 - Comfort
 - Convenience

21st Century Customer Service

Requires active staff
engagement

To enlist patron respect

21st Century Customer Service

It's not defensive and careful

It's proactive and positive

21st Century Customer Service

It's thoughtful and engaged

And requires full buy-in to
succeed

21st Century Customer Service

It redefines success as the result of staff initiative rather than the defense of administrative policies

The customer service hierarchy

- Relationship between a customer and a library employee
- Services provided by the library to all customers
- Services provided to the community as a whole
- The Library as a good citizen of the community

The Customer Service Matrix

	Standard	Extended	Innovative
Individual Customer Service			
The Library as Service Provider			
Service to the Community			
Leadership in the Community			

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	Standard	Extended	Innovative
Individual Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waive fines		
The Library as Service Provider			
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Individual Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waive fines 		
The Library as Service Provider			
Service to the Community			
Leadership in the Community			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay open until 11 pm for three nights when half of the Town's residents were without lights or power.

The Customer Service Matrix

	Standard	Extended	Innovative
Individual Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waive fines 		
The Library as Service Provider		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of grace on due dates 	
Service to the Community			
Leadership in the Community			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay open until 11 pm for three nights when half of the Town's residents were without lights or power.

The Customer Service Matrix

	Standard	Extended	Innovative
Individual Customer Service			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any staff member can override any Library rule at any time
The Library as Service Provider		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of grace on due dates 	
Service to the Community			
Leadership in the Community			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay open until 11 pm for three nights when half of the Town's residents were without lights or power.

The Customer Service Matrix

	Standard	Extended	Innovative
Individual Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waive fines • Extend due dates • Online reserves, renewals and payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Break the rules on Express books” • Accompany patrons to the stacks • Call other libraries to reserve items for customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any staff member can override any Library rule at any time • Arrange Non-fiction collection in “glades” to make browsing easier.
The Library as Service Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 Book return • Remote access to data base resources • Accept on-line reserves for on shelf items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of grace on due dates • Order any book a patron requests • Circulate laptops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference by appointment • Provide resources to 95 book groups • Get just-returned items as patron waits
Service to the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread children’s programs adopted by schools • Host for local Genealogical Society collection and databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework assignment forms for use by teachers • School reading lists posted on web site for on-line review and reservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop website-based children’s book review and commenting software for use by elementary schools for summer reading tracking
Leadership in the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host weekly early morning networking and job search group with all library employee time volunteered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support to community groups, and host the web sites of 45 of the organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay open until 11 pm for three nights when half of the Town’s residents were without lights or power.

The Customer Service Matrix

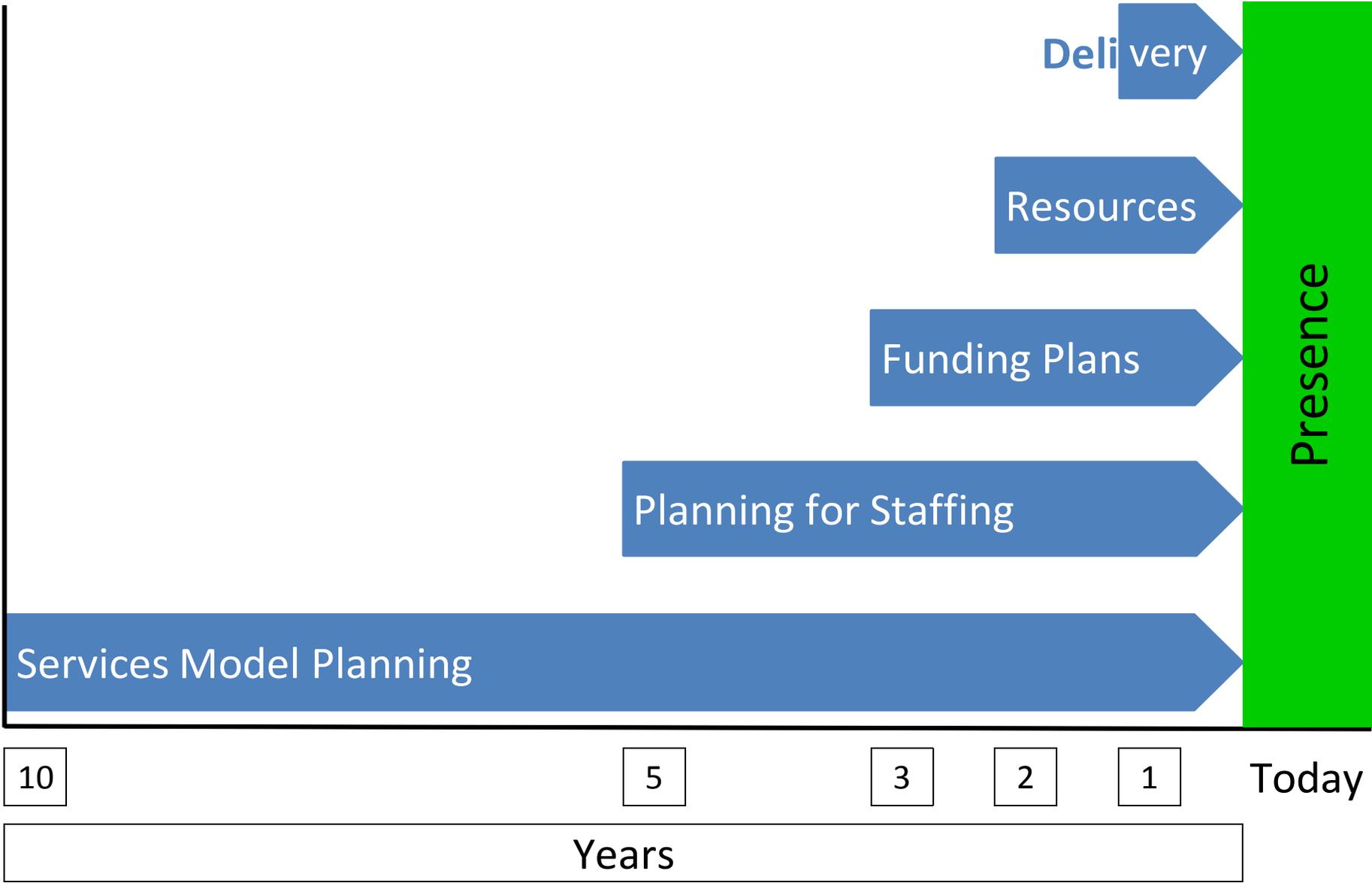
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Individual Customer Service			
The Library as Service Provider			
Service to the Community			
Leadership in the Community			

Where does the matrix lead you?

- Measure success in every transaction with a customer
- Assess the performance of every employee
- Ask every customer to evaluate service
- Determine priorities and resource allocation

Working with patrons

Every engagement between a staff member and a library user is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity



10

5

3

2

1

Today

Years

Delivery

Resources

Funding Plans

Planning for Staffing

Services Model Planning

Presence

How Do You Implement Extreme Customer Service?

You get to “yes”

By getting rid of “no”

Face to Face with Patrons

- **EVERYONE** is “frontline staff”
- Success depends on first-time actions
- Take responsibility for the solution of the problem, don’t hand it off
- “It’s not your fault, but it **IS** your responsibility”

Lesson learned digging ditches

“Look around, and if you see something that needs doing, and if you know how to do it, do it.”



Main Street





SIGN UP HERE
FOR
SUMMER
READING!

JULY
RAFI
for KIDS
JUMM
READING
CLUB

Kids
Reading
Club

brother



It starts with wanting to.....

- Hold a two-way conversation with your customers
 - At the Circulation Desk
 - At the Reference Desk
 - In a sustained reference research project
 - On the web or OPAC
 - On IM, Twitter or Facebook
 - On this webinar 😊

Leadership Planning

- Set staff members up for success by allocating resources effectively:
 - Desk time is for contact with patrons
 - Task off-desk staff to respond “virtual” reference queries when you can schedule so [Think “butt in seat”]
 - Off-desk time is for program planning and journal reading

Leadership Commitment

No staff member will ever, *ever*, EVER be criticized if an action they take results in better customer service.

Focus staff on success

No staff member will ever be criticized if an action they take results in better customer service.

- Front line staff take the safest option when they don't know what to do
- Library leaders need to make sure that the safest option is the one that results in better customer service

An Overall Policy

- Make customer service the most important element of your library activities
 - Then....look at any policies that require the staff to say no, and change them
 - And.....keep looking!

Policies and Practices to Change

- Creating policies that affect all users when only a few abuse the system
- Rules on limits of service
- Rules based on the fact that “it’s our library, not yours”
- Rules just because we’ve always done it that way
- Putting out signs to substitute for staff management of library activities

Customer Service doesn't need to cost money....

- Use positive language
- Do not reprimand users
- Listen to users and be flexible
- Place customer needs first
- Don't substitute signage for personal engagement

Customer service builds
appreciation in your
community, and results in
more support.....and more
funding.

Esprit de corps – your “corporate culture”

- Staff meetings
 - Cite examples of good customer service by staff
- Bad examples from other organizations:
 - “We would never do anything like that”
- Change agents
 - Leadership by key staff, role playing, videotaping
- Who is the keeper of your “culture”?

Customer service: the basis for every decision:

- Remind yourself: “Whose library is it?”

Whose library is it?



My Mother-in-law's Rule

People enjoy themselves at a party if the hostess is having fun

Power

Power is 80% taken, and 20% given

OK, now your policies are in order....

Questions to ask yourself



Danny Meyer's 5 A's

- How to Address Mistakes
 - Awareness
 - Acknowledge
 - Apologize
 - Act
 - Additional Generosity

“Alibi” is not one of the 5 A's

Power to Front-line Staff

Administration needs to organize activities so that front-line staff can provide service to each person they meet

Power to Front-line Staff

Then allow front-line staff to make decisions based on what is best at that time.

Power to Front-line Staff

Don't set up front-line staff by requiring them to *multi-task**

* The other way of defining *multi-task*:
“continuous partial attention”

Power to Front-line Staff

Set up desk schedules so that staff are doing one job and one job only: face-to-face with users

In my experience, most problems are caused by too many staff scheduled on desk

Power to Front-line Staff

Don't set up public-facing staff schedules so they have to answer emails, twitter, read journals, do book selection, etc.

Schedule that for off-desk hours

Power to Front-line Staff

Count your “butt in seat” reference stats and you’ll be surprised by how large the proportion is of queries that don’t need to be answered at the public reference desk.

In our experience, 24.5% of “touches” are virtual

Front-line staff in position to

Make a difference when they understand they will be the prime engines of success.

They will then take the initiative

And, by the way, there's been a study on how to do that.

Effectiveness

Effective team members have nine skills

Citation

Harvard Business Review

“How Bell Labs Creates Star Performers”

by Robert E. Kelley, Janet Caplan

12 pages. Publication date: Jul 01, 1993

The Nine Skills

1. Initiative
2. Networking
3. Self-management
4. Perspective
5. Followership
6. Leadership
7. Teamwork
8. Organizational Savvy
9. Show-and-Tell





Credit for the bridge metaphor:

Jack Dorsey, founder of Twitter and Square, speaking to the Square “TownSquare” meeting on his 34th birthday.

<http://techcrunch.com/2011/03/24/jack-dorsey-golden-gate-bridge/>

What do we know?



Thank you

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Dewey Reorganization

- Children's Groups

- Concepts
- Favorites
- Growing Up
- Nature
- Celebrations
- Transportation
- Folk and Fairy Tales
- Rhymes and Songs
- Stories
- Learn to Read

- Adult "Glades"

- Art
- Literature
- Body&Soul
- Finance
- Home
- Lives
- Nature
- Places
- Play
- Times
- Work