

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

BUSINESS STRATEGY SKILLS TRACK

**Business Strategies
... 'Retha-Style!**



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R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

You have a customer and why we lose them

Great philosophers: Stephen R. Covey, Og Mandino, Peter Drucker, Aretha Franklin

When you sing R.E.S.P.E.C.T., you hear:

We want to say to the customer:

What _____. Baby, _____!

What _____. Do you know _____?

The customer wants us to know:

All I'm asking for is _____ R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Just _____!)

Find out what _____!

Basis contained in these lines:

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. :
Relating to
Every
Single
Person (Customers and co-workers)
Exceeding
Customers'
Thinking

The four C's: Concern, Compassion, Care and Customer service

SOAP: Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan

We earn respect when we...

Under-promise, over-deliver
Be the person that you were hired to be
Proactively communicate
Apologize when you make a mistake

When you make a decision...
When you take action...
What would 'Retha do?



Solving problems with SARA

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in an employee-review program for a local company. They give each of their employees great latitude in resolving customers' needs by Educating each employee in a technique entitled "SARA." Take a look at how the acronym SARA can be adapted to your business.

S stands for "scan." Ask the customers questions about their wants and needs. Many times these two words can be very different. Their "want" may have been created by talking with others, but their "need" is far from that. What about the customers who walk in wanting to buy a certain type of product? How do they know this is the best choice for them?

What type of product are they currently using, and why do they want to replace it? Too often the choice is made based upon their friend's being a more knowledgeable person, and they think the new product will help them improve.

A stands for "analyze." From the questions asked, your employees should be able to gather the facts and draw a conclusion. Of course, this gives a hearty endorsement for the idea of having team meetings for your employees. But while we are providing product knowledge, let's also talk about sales techniques.

In this example, your salesperson might know the right answer immediately. But how much confidence will the customer have in the answer that may appear to be "off the cuff"? Asking additional questions, taking a few notes, and responses such as "I see," or "I understand," gives a customer a distinctly different impression of your salesperson's skills and efforts.

Most customers will think your employee is genuinely interested in their wants and needs. The answer may be the same as if the employee had answered in the first 30 seconds, but customers are more likely to appreciate the additional conversation and eventually the answer.

R stands for "respond." What would it look like if a salesperson were to ask all of these questions and then show the customer several products? Not only have we asked questions and given verbal responses, but now we are demonstrating to the customer each of the possible solutions your salesperson has found.

In regard to the salesperson's utilizing this technique, what if they were to respond to the customer with, "In light of what you have told me, these are the three products that will best suit your purpose; please allow me a moment to explain the differences."

This technique sure beats walking the customer to the shelves of products and saying, "We must have 40 or 50 different variations in here. You are sure to find what you want among these. Call if you want any help."

Returning to our first response example, this would also be an excellent time to suggest an add-on sale. "We have some lovely accessories that would accent your new purchase. May I show them to you?"



Solving problems with SARA (continued)

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

A stands for "assessment." Review your current style of sales approach and consider making some of these changes. In your shop, what would your customers think about your business if they received a phone call a week later to ask how they liked the product they had purchased?

What would your sales look like if the next question you asked during this phone call was for the names and numbers of anyone else who had expressed an interest in that product. For as surely as someone has purchased something and is pleased with it, you know he or she will be telling others about that purchase.

I have seen stores that have an assigned staff person to call people and ask these types of questions. They developed this technique after researching their customer database and were surprised at the number of people who had not shopped in their business in the previous six months.

Every weekday, they made a point to make 10 calls. Their message was they had noticed the customer had not made any purchases of late and that they were giving a personal invitation to come in and shop. Of 100 calls, their results were fairly consistent: two people would say they were unhappy with the business and were not planning to return.

While no one wants to hear this, the shop was at least provided the opportunity to try to again earn the customer's business.

The surprising part of these phone calls came with the remaining 98 calls; 16 of the 98 people called actually walked into the business within the next two weeks.

Can this SARA and follow-up phone call technique work for you? Absolutely! Does any of your competition do this? If not, then more than advertising, SARA and a phone call will do more to differentiate you from all the competition in your trade area.

Think again about what differentiates you from your competition. If one of the differences is price, then may I suggest you have a problem, for someone is always cheaper on everything you sell. If you use SARA and a follow-up phone call, you will probably be the only business in the community that does so.

And if you are unique, you have no competition.