



# latest word

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## Customer perception, your reality

***“Do what you do so well that they want to see it again.” Walt Disney***

Fundamentally financial success, prosperity and security is related to service. The more you serve, the more you earn.

However the quantity of those earnings will be directly related to not just the quantity of service but to the quality of service.

How you do what you do will determine whether you're invisible in a crowded competitive market or differentiate yourself from the crowd.

Whether you are employed or self employed, your job prospects, career progression, number of clients, customer loyalty or client referrals will be determined by how well you do what you do. As Steve Martin once put it, “Be so good, they can't ignore you”.

In reality, it's often the smallest of details that separate the best from the rest.

Question, are you an “also ran” in your industry? Now take a look at your pay slip or your profit and loss account? What is that telling you?

How can you expect any more than average achievement or success, financial or otherwise when the performance is average? Sounds silly right, but day in, day out people are looking for shortcuts, you've met them and so have I, far too often. The world of average is a crowded place. Too many people are looking to put in 50% and take out 100%.

You know what, some will succeed, at least in the short term, but on average, average input, average performance equates to average rewards.

You know what else, average is ok if that's what you want, but don't be foolish enough to believe you can put in less and take out more.

As long as the industry you are in exists, you have the opportunity to be, do and have more in that industry.

It doesn't really make a difference if you are big or small, local or international, if you raise the quality of your service, you can have more success, recession or no recession.

Being human, it's the smallest things that will make the biggest difference. A smile, a thank you, a thought just to get started. Does that all sound too simplistic? Well the next time you are less than happy with the service you receive somewhere, ask yourself what would have made the difference?



I recently purchased some paint from a hardware store. Not quite one of the big chains (wanted to shop local) but a modern well appointed store. I had a list and was spending best part of €1,000. Now if I'd bought a €1 doorstop, I would have felt as appreciated. Everything from a lack of friendliness, a lack of care and poor delivery of service will ensure they won't be seeing me again. They made the sale but not a customer.

Every time you make a sale but not a customer, you jeopardise your long term prosperity. (Now go tell your family.)

Ok so there is the basic level of service that we pretty much all recognise such as being friendly and professional but there are some things that you do that may either drive your customer mad or they love you for it.

Do you know what those things are? Would they be good to know? Will I tell you? I can't, you will have to ask your customer or your prospective customer.

Your customer and/or prospective customers know what you do well and more importantly what you don't do well. They know what the frustrations are with your competitors and your industry.

As Bill Gates has said, "you're most unhappy customers are your greatest

source of learning".

Do you want to know something else? Even when you are convinced that you are doing something excellent for your customer, they don't always see it that way. Their perception is your reality. So you've got to connect with them and find out how they perceive you and your service.

Reflect on your own experiences as a customer, which ones do you remember? Most of them are unmemorable and you'll tell people about the

times you were wow-ed and the times when you were p-ed off.

Now if you are a business owner, don't blame your staff. You're the leader, you set the tone, you set the standards. Look at Superquinn for example. If you have been a customer, compare Superquinn under the leadership and direction of Fergal Quinn and under the subsequent owners. Same name, same staff, different experience.

Experience is the key word. Defined as "a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something".

So how often if ever do you consider your customer/client experience, including if you are a paid employee (that just means you only have one client).

I'd go as far as saying that there is no industry or job that cannot not more financially rewarding if you focus on the quality of your service.

Ever had that feeling that you regret giving your business to a certain company or individual, well make sure you are not creating that feeling in somebody else.

Service is an attitude, not a process.

Raise your standards and you'll raise your bank account too.



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Feedback on our newsletters is always welcome and gratefully received. [joe@fwf.ie](mailto:joe@fwf.ie).

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