



# latest word

issue 34

june 2014

## Well nobody else complained ....

***"There is no failure, only feedback."***

I visited a local coffee shop and ordered a coffee and a scone. The coffee was fine but the scone was stale and dry, so I had a bite or two and left it. I didn't complain, and decided to put it down to a bad day at the bakery. I finished my coffee and went up to the cash till to pay on my way out. The staff member at the till asked me was everything ok, and so I decided to share my thoughts on my dining experience in expectation of a reasonable response. I politely told them about my stale and dry scone, to which the staff member responded *"well nobody else complained"*.

I've never visited that coffee shop ever again.

Why would I, there are so many other coffee shops I can go to for a bad experience. :-)

I may not have got the scone I wanted but did get a gem of a teaching story on SO many levels. (*Customer Service, Customer Experience, Customer Loyalty, Repeat Business, Profitability, Feedback ..... Success*)

There is a super quote from an American lady called Maya Angelou, an American Author & Poet, who recently passed away, that says *"People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did, but People will never forget how you made them feel."* Your whole approach to customer service could be shaped around this one powerful quote. It's the experience, you're so often selling. That's a whole other article.

So what's the moral of the story about the coffee and the scone?

In all my years of experience relating to business, personal or professional success, the ability to give, receive and use feedback ranks hugely on my list of critical success factors.



Without feedback there is ignorance, and guess what, ignorance isn't always bliss, and furthermore, it's expensive - it costs you money.

Feedback is so valuable that you should be paying for it, and if someone is offering it for free ..... it's such a no brainer that we should accept it very gratefully.

No path to a goal, whether that be business success, professional success or personal achievement is ever straight and simple, there are challenges, and there are failures along the way. Those failures are your feedback.

They inform you of what worked and what didn't. Brilliant quote - "there's no such thing as failure, only feedback." Another brilliant quote from our own Samuel Beckett - "Ever Tried. Ever Failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better."

Failure (aka Feedback) is our friend not our foe.

The famous Thomas Edison said "I have not failed, I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." That is the attitude and mindset of success. The famous management expert, Ken Blanchard, author of the "One Minute Manager" describes "Feedback" as "the breakfast of champions".

Feargal Quinn  
(Superquinn founder)  
turned customer feedback into an art form with his customer panels and actively encouraging customers to point out their "goofs" as he called them and rewarding the customer's efforts with gifts of extra points on their loyalty card scheme. I'm certain he would agree that this was a critical success factor for Superquinn. (homework - read his book: *Crowning the Customer*)

How much feedback we receive, in all aspects of our life and business, will be determined by how receptive we appear to be to feedback. Nobody wants to use their valuable time and opinion if they feel it's not going to be well received or may even cause conflict.

I can understand the reluctance of people to seek out feedback, and it's not always delivered in a positive polite way but what I look to do is to separate the central message from how it might have been delivered. If you've disappointed a customer or someone in your life, emotions may be running high and that feedback may not have been delivered in the best way but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater ..... What's the central message?

The intention behind the feedback is usually positive but not always, so again separate feedback from

the intention so you don't lose the central message. For example, our nearest and dearest often give us feedback in life and many of us seek to defend rather than listen. Worse still, many offer their own feedback in return in a type of feedback battle (aka: a good old row). Most of the time, when you think about it, their intention is very positive, even if it may not have been delivered in the best way or you may have responded in defence. My message is ..... 'don't lose the message', that's where the value is.

To conclude, nobody is perfect, we rarely get it right first time or indeed every time and that's because you are human so accept that as fact. To avoid knowing what we have got wrong is an act of ignorance and self delusion. What is the point in fooling ourselves? Failures and feedback are those little nuggets of gold that if we use them well allow us to incrementally improve, to grow, to get better and better and to achieve success. It's not just customer feedback, it's with the people we work with, live with and love.

To ignore feedback, to not seek it out means we only have one perspective, and that's ours.

One perspective is never enough and allows the gap between who we think we are and how others see us to get wider and wider. I like to call that gap the reality check.

Get real, get listening, get improving and get succeeding. *Fail fast, fail often.*



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Thanks for taking the time to read our "latest word"

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

Contributions to our monthly Framework Financial Newsletter are made from our Business & Professional Development Expert, John Byrne.  
(Email : [john@mindcoach.ie](mailto:john@mindcoach.ie) Phone or Text: 086 8116101)

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### framework financial:

Unit Ab1, Centrepont House, Rosemount Business Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 11  
Phone: 01 - 8829938 Fax: 01 - 8829772 Email: [info@fwf.ie](mailto:info@fwf.ie)  
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