


Spring-clean your business

By Aki Kalliatakis

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Spring is a great time to re-energise your business and a good time to reorganise and spruce up what your customers' experience. Here are six top tips to revitalise the experiences that they have:

1. What bugs are lurking in the corners, affecting your customers and your business? Now is the time to do something about all of the dumb things that all businesses do that frustrate and upset customers. Look out for all the actions and processes that cause unnecessary delays, that lead to mistakes, or that confuse or hurt customers. No matter how well oiled your corporate machine has been over the years, there is always room for improved performance. It is time to mend everything that is broken now and stitch up those small holes that you have neglected.
 2. Create fun and enthusiasm for your team so that they can share this with your customers. Teach them - again - how to be courteous and friendly so that they in turn inspire customers to return repeatedly. Also, show them how to say "thank you," and how to say "sorry." Customers will forgive you for occasional mistakes but they do need to be asked. However, it is more important that they leave your business with a smile on their faces.
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3. Generate a sense of urgency so that everything is done with more speed and responsiveness to customer needs. What are the lead times? How quickly are customers served? How long do they have to wait for calls to be answered?
 4. Make it easy to do business with you. The things that complicate customers' lives and make it hard are physical barriers, (where you need the strength of an Olympian athlete to get things done) intellectual/cognitive obstacles that confuse customers and challenge all rational logic, and emotional nuisances which cause frustration and aggravation. If you do not know what these are, ask your customers, for they will be delighted to tell you.
 5. Change and upgrade. Time to remove what is outdated and no longer practical, making any changes and/or upgrades required. Are you aware of the tools you are using to create great customer service? Are you using practices that are outdated but seem to do the job when a new approach would be more effective?
 6. Maybe it is time to spruce up the physical environment too. Take an objective look at your business from your customers' perspective. Do you need a lick of paint here, some uncluttering there? What does the paperwork look like by the time it gets to your customers? Are they bored with the "same old, same old"? In addition, while you are at it, when was the last time you refreshed your website, your staff uniforms, the music and the advertising?

When you make the decision to spring-clean your customers' experiences, look in every nook and cranny for opportunities to perk up your company, but always look towards the ultimate goal: making your customers happier than they were when they woke up that day.

ABOUT AKI KALLIATAKIS

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